

From Merchant to Messenger

**The Prophet Muhammad's
struggle for legitimacy as
revealed in the Koran**

Second Edition

Bernard Payeur

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To the incomparable Miss B.

Without her example of perseverance in the face of adversity, her dedication to her craft and her invaluable assistance in improving my writing I might not have found, after my wife's passing, the motivation to complete a revitalized *Koran Six*¹, of which *From Merchant to Messenger* is the culmination.

¹ *Women and the Koran, Jihad in the Koran, The Islamic Hereafter, Shared Prophets, Getting to Know Allah, and From Merchant to Messenger*. These six books, which contain and explain the entire Koran, can be read in any order.

Other books on Islam by Bernard Payeur

THE KORAN

Jihad in the Koran

Getting to Know Allah

The Islamic Hereafter

Women and the Koran

Shared Prophets

Let Me Rephrase That

Children and the Koran

Teach Your Children Well

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Love, Sex and Islam

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Introduction to the Second Edition

In this edition I have added an appendix (Majid Fakhry vs. Yusuf Ali and Others) that compares Fakhry's English rendition of the Koran, from which *The Koran Six*² is derived, to popular mainstream translations. These other translations by non-native Arab speakers just don't measure up if you want a translation that is easy to read and faithful to the original. I have also included a chapter of only hadiths, with some references to Koranic text about the Prophet's passing, which some may consider out of place in a book about "Muhammad's struggle for legitimacy as revealed in the Koran."

Since the last edition, new evidence has been published surrounding the death of Muhammad. I have summarised some of the findings of Tunisian University Professor Hela Ouardi, author of *Les Derniers Jours de Muhammad* (The Last Days of Muhammad), Albin Michel, 2016, and that of Professor of Religious Studies at Oregon State University, Stephen J. Shoemaker, author of *The Death of a Prophet - The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) in a closing chapter.

Finally, an Afterword that asks my Muslim readers to believe their own eyes.

² *Getting to Know Allah,
Shared Prophets,
Jihad in the Koran,
The Islamic Hereafter,
Women and the Koran,
From Merchant to Messenger*

Revelations and Generalizations

THE PEOPLE

114 An-Nâs

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

114:1 Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of the People,

114:2 "The King of the people,

114:3 "The God of the people,

114:5 "From the evil of the slinking whisperer [Satan],

114:6 "Who whispers in the breasts of people,

114:7 "Both jinn and men."

Both jinn and men. That is it, the last verse of the Koran. What a read! What a revelation! What is a jinn? It is a spirit that inhabits another dimension. There are good and evil jinn. The caricature of the genie is probably based on this creature of the Koran.

When I decided to read and study the Koran with the intention of writing about it, I was determined to get a Muslim's interpretation, one that could only be viewed as favourable to Islam. I also wanted a translation that was easy to read and understand. The edition that seemed to satisfy these requirements was a translation by Majid Fakhry, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the American University of Beirut. In the translator's own words, "We have tried to express ourselves in a simple, readable English idiom." *Publishers Weekly* wrote of Fakhry's notable accomplishment that it "succeeds in expressing the meanings of the original Arabic in simple readable English." (For additional reasons why Fakhry's translations is the one I recommend, please see Appendix Majid Fakhry vs. Yusuf Ali and Others.)

My goals in reading the Koran were diverse. At the top of my list was gaining an understanding of what makes this book so special; to understand what makes the religion based on its content attractive to so many; and yes, to satisfy my curiosity about what God sounds like, or more accurately, reads like. I also read the Koran in the hope of dispelling prejudices and apprehensions I had developed after reading

about Islam from authors – devoted Muslims, most of them – who had nothing but praise for Allah and His “perfect religion.”

In my books on the Koran, I prefer letting Allah speak for himself via His spokesperson, the Prophet Muhammad, offering only an informed layman's opinion or an expert's explanation where I feel one is warranted. When Fakhry's crisp translation is not sufficient, it is Moududi I most often turn to. Abul A'la Moududi's (also spelt Maududi) [1903-1979] credentials as a pre-eminent Islamic scholar are impeccable: journalist, theologian, Muslim revivalist, Islamist philosopher, and first recipient of the *King Faisal International Award* for his services to Islam and Islamic studies. Of the more than 120 books he wrote, he is most famous for his magnum opus, *The Meaning of the Qur'an*.

The Koran is the book upon which the Taliban, the Islamist fundamentalist movement that ruled most of Afghanistan from 1996 until 2001, based their concept of God's government on Earth. Members of the Taliban, like all believers, are required to at least attempt to commit to memory the entire Koran. Believers are also expected to accept Allah's Revelations in their totality without question. This has not been my approach in presenting my impressions, as a former Catholic, now an agnostic, upon first reading the Koran. As an unbeliever, I hope I can safely express my opinions about Islam's core religious text and the Prophet Muhammad, although nothing is certain. It is an unfortunate fact of life that authors who choose to write about the Koran or the life of the Prophet must tread carefully lest believers perceive their writings as an insult to Allah or Muhammad. I hope that I have achieved that fine balance of respect and critique, if such an equilibrium is even possible when Islam is the topic.

Translations of the Koran are usually called interpretations because believers claim that only the Arabic version of the Koran can convey the true meaning of God's words. If you can't read the Koran in the original, they say, you are bound to misinterpret Allah's revelations. Do they have a point, or is this just pre-emptive rationalisation, a ready excuse for some of the frightening disclosures contained within the Muslim Holy Book, revelations that may leave some unbelievers wondering if these are the words of God or those of His nemesis? The Koran is written in verses or ayats, therefore it is true that you cannot appreciate the rhythm and rhyme that only the original can convey; however, any good translation will be able to communicate the true meaning of the author's words, and the meaning of the words

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is what you should be concerned with. An English translation of the Koran adds up to about 77,700 words, the approximate size of a standard 300-page book. This is a book, Allah reveals, in which you can study “whatever you choose.”

68:35 Shall We consider those who submit like those who are criminals?

68:36 What is the matter with you; how do you judge?

68:37 Or do you have a Book in which you study?

68:38 Wherein there is whatever you choose.

It is a bold statement for a relatively small book where boundless repetitions occupy space that could, perhaps, be put to better use. Take away the reiterations and the restatement of the same accusation ad nauseam such as that of worshipping or associating other gods with Allah and the Koran would be the length of a novella at most.

The Koran is made up of 114 chapters; when referring to these, I use the Arabic transliteration (conversion from one alphabet to another) of chapter, which is surah. Each surah is further divided into verses, a term I have chosen to retain over the Arabic transliteration of ayat. Despite its brevity, the Koran is somewhat disorganized: there is no timeline and the only allowance given to any kind of order is the sequencing of most of the 114 chapters from longest to shortest. Because little attention appears to have been given to arranging the chapters and verses in chronological order, readers often receive answers to questions that have yet to be asked. For example, in Chapter 9, Verse 114 we are told that Allah refused Abraham’s plea to forgive his father for not believing.

9:114 Abraham asked forgiveness for his father, only because of a promise he had made to him; but when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, he disowned him. Indeed Abraham was compassionate, forbearing.

The actual request made by Abraham, and the promise made, is revealed ten chapters later:

19:47 [Abraham] said: “Peace be upon you. I will seek forgiveness for you from my Lord. He has, indeed, been gracious to me.”

There are 6,346 verses in the Koran if you include the 112 unnumbered Basmalahs, the formulaic invocation “in the name of Allah, the

Compassionate, the Merciful,” which appears at the beginning of every surah except the first and the ninth. I refer to passages by the surah and verse numbers—for example, 2:282 is Chapter 2, Verse 282—or by surah name and verse: The Cow, Verse 282. A verse can be just a few words long or more than 200 words, such as the aforementioned, the longest verse in the Koran which instructs the believer, among other things, on the number of witnesses required to legitimize the contracting of debt.

Just a few editorial notes before we get down to business and let God speak for Himself. All quotes from the Koran are from Majid Fakhry’s interpretation unless otherwise indicated. Text added by Fakhry within a quoted verse to improve understanding is enclosed within square “[]” parentheses or brackets. Other clarifications by Fakhry, including footnotes, are enclosed in round “()” brackets. On rare occasions, you will find italicised bracketed comments within a verse: those are mine, usually included to identify someone whom Allah does not explicitly name and, when it is not evident to the casual reader, whom He is informing when He tells Muhammad how to respond to questions and observations. Any underlining for emphasis is also my doing, not Fakhry’s. I hope Majid will forgive my use of the more familiar Koran instead of his preferred spelling, Qur’an.

Where warranted, verses are accompanied by the Prophet’s recorded sayings or descriptions of actions, called hadiths. (Ahadith, often used to indicate the plural form of hadith, is not used herein.) Hadiths, of which there are more than ten thousand in the Sunni canon, are hearsay evidence collected approximately 200 years after Muhammad’s passing that describe what he said and did, including the silent approval of actions done in his presence. An authentic (sahih) or good (hasan) hadith, i.e., one that can be traced to a legitimate witness, passed down via of chain of reliable transmitters, is usually considered a legal precedent so long as it does not contradict the Koran.

Sunni Islam gives credence to the hadiths collected by six men (al-Bukhari, Imam Muslim, At-Tirmidi, Ibn Majah, Abu Dawood and An-Nisa’i), with the largest, the al-Bukhari collection, considered the most authoritative of the “six canonical collections.” Imam Bukhari (d. 870) is said to have gathered over 600,000 hadiths, of which 7,275 are considered authentic. The Koran and these “hadith collections” inform every facet of a believer’s existence.

When you encounter ‘say’ followed by a colon in a revelation (with no other qualifier, e.g., “they say” or, on rare occasions, “you

said”), assume this is Allah directing Muhammad. On other occasions, to avoid any doubt that it is Muhammad to whom Allah is speaking, his name is enclosed in round brackets (). This is made necessary because Muhammad is “named directly by God only four times in the entire Koran and always in the third person.”³ All quoted verses have been carefully reviewed to ensure that Fakhry's interpretation has been faithfully rendered. Many verses, such as 44:43-44, must be read together to form a complete sentence or thought; therefore, do not assume a typographical (typo) or grammatical error if a verse does not end with the expected punctuation.

44:43 The Tree of Zaqqum (the Tree of Bitterness) will certainly be

44:44 The food of the sinner.

Some of the quoted verses from Fakhry's interpretation of the Koran have no end quotations due to an often-misunderstood rule of English grammar. If a quote is more than one paragraph long, i.e., verses, opening quotation marks (“”) appear at the beginning of each verse but closing quotation marks (”) are only required at the end of the complete quotation. All translations consulted are from recognized Islamic scholars of the Koran. Finally, reference to content in other books in this series is usually in the form: (see *Book Title*: “Chapter,” Boreal Books).

³ Stephen J. Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet - The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012, p. 154.

Overarching Narratives

In summer, the Quraysh caravans travelled north to Syria and Palestine to trade because it was cooler and in winter, to southern climes such as Yemen (“The journey of the winter and summer,” Revelations 106:2). Allah took credit for the rise of the Quraysh from a scattered tribe living hand to mouth into the dominant tribe of Mecca (Revelation 106:4); for that He expected them to worship Him, “the Lord of this House,” i.e., the Ka’ba, even during their travels.

QURAYSH

106 Quraysh

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

106:1 For Quraysh’s customary journey,

106:2 The journey of the winter and summer,

106:3 Let them worship the Lord of this House,

106:4 Who has fed them when they were hungry and secured them against fear.

The Koran contains two overarching complementary narratives. The first is all about Allah’s frustrations with other gods and those who worship them or associate them with His Omnipotence, such as Christians with their concept of the Trinity (see *Getting to Know Allah: “Allah vs. Alleged Associates,”* Boreal Books). The second is Muhammad’s struggle to convince his Meccan kin, the Quraysh, that the angel Gabriel had informed him that he had been personally chosen by the one-and-only God to be His ultimate emissary to mankind. Unless they listened to what he had to say without dismissing it as nonsense, they were doomed. The Meccans thought this was a ruse concocted by their kin to get himself made absolute ruler of the ten tribes that co-operatively governed the city—the dignitaries in the following revelation:

38:6 And the dignitaries among them went forth saying: “Go on and be steadfast regarding your gods. This is indeed a

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matter premeditated (Muhammad [wants] to subjugate us and rule us as his subjects, *Moududi*).

Not so, said God. Muhammad is asking you to be My servants, not his.

3:79 It is not given to any mortal that Allah should give him the Book, the judgement and the Prophethood and then he should say to the people: "Be servants to me, rather than to Allah"; but rather: "Be learned men, by virtue of what you used to teach of the Book and what you used to study."

The same goes for My angels and the prophets, e.g., Jesus, whom I have sent before.

3:80 Nor would he enjoin you to take angels and the Prophets as lords. Would he enjoin you to be unbelievers after you have become Muslims?

In 622, the Meccans had had enough of Muhammad denigrating, in his newfound god's name, their gods and goddesses and those of their ancestors.

2:170 When it is said to them: "Follow what Allah has revealed", they say: "We would rather follow that which we found our fathers doing." What, even though their fathers understood nothing and were not rightly guided!

5:104 And if they are told: "Come now to what Allah has revealed and to the Messenger", they reply: "Sufficient unto us what we found our forefathers doing", even if their forefathers knew nothing and were not rightly guided!

31:21 If it is said to them: "Follow what Allah has sent down", they say: "Rather, we will follow what we found our fathers doing." It is as though Satan was summoning them to the punishment of Hell.

They decided to do away with him. Having gotten wind of their intentions, Muhammad prudently – along with his closest collaborator, Abu Bakr – removed himself to the oasis city of Medina 210 miles (338 kilometers) as the crow flies north of Mecca, later to be joined by his followers. Muhammad would eventually have his way with his detractors when he returned to Mecca in 630 A.D. at the head of an army of believers as the Prophet Muhammad. *From Merchant to Messenger* is not about this military take-over of Mecca, and shortly thereafter, the entire Arabian Peninsula (that is the subject matter of

Jihad in the Koran, Boreal Books) or the forced conversions that followed, but about how the budding prophet tried to cajole his kin and fellow citizens of Mecca into accepting him as a legitimate legate of the Almighty, and therefore deserving of their unwavering, unquestioning obedience. Muhammad's appeals were almost always laced with threats of a horrible punishment, if they did not do as they were told, from the god for whom he claimed to speak. These threats would lead to possibly the first linking of Islam with terrorism.

50:45 We know better what they say and you are not a tyrant terrorizing them. So, remind, by the Qur'an, him who fears My Warning.

In the hadiths:

Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Apostle said, "I have been sent with the shortest expressions bearing the widest meanings, and I have been made victorious with terror."

Bukhari 52.220

Genealogy

Son of a Drop-Dead Handsome Man

An often-quoted eyewitness description of Muhammad is that of Umm Ma`bad, who gazed upon his unavoidable brilliance as he passed by her tent.

Muhammad was imposing and majestic. His face was luminous like a full moon. I saw a man who is handsome, of glowing countenance, and of good proportions, with neither a large stomach nor a small head. He is smart of appearance, with balanced features, deep black eyes, and long eyelashes. His voice is not coarse. He has a long neck, a full rounded beard, and thick eyebrows that meet each other.

Muhammad came by his good looks honestly. He may have been good-looking but his father was literally to-die-for gorgeous.

Not only does Arab tradition laud how handsome was Muhammad, but how exceptionally attractive was his father and the women they married. It was said that when the breathtaking Abdulla married Amina the Prophet's mother, 200 virgins of Mecca died of a broken heart, not only because the handsome Abdulla had not picked them, but because they would not be the mother of Muhammad the future Prophet.

From *La Vie de Mahomet*, Virgil Gheorghiu (my translation), Robert Laffont, 1962.

Grandpa Strikes a Deal With God

Muhammad owed his very existence to a promise his grandfather made to God, which was later amended with far-reaching consequences. Abd al-Muttalib was a man without sons. In another variation of an old story, he promised to sacrifice his tenth son if Allah gave him ten male heirs. Ask and you shall receive. When the time came for Muttalib to keep his side of the bargain, he consulted a dervish to find out if he could fulfil his promise to God in some manner that did not involve killing his tenth son, Abdullah, the future father of

Muhammad, of all people. The dervish that Muttalib consulted was no ordinary soothsayer; he was a dervish with jinn in his employ, jinn who specialized in eavesdropping on God's conversations with His angels. They would fly as close as possible to the lowest of the seven levels of heaven, the one closest to the earth—dodging rocks, i.e., meteorites, thrown by the angels to keep them away—to find out what Allah had to say about what was happening down below (see *Getting to Know Allah: "Allah and the Jinn,"* Boreal Books).

To address his client's question, the dervish, in a time-honoured tradition, sent his jinn to listen in on God. One reported that Allah, conversing with an angel, had indicated that He would be happy with a sacrifice of camels. *But how many camels?* The dervish then threw some dice (bone fragments of some type) to find out. The answer provided was one hundred camels as the price of a human life, an equivalent price that is still in effect today in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iran. Muttalib paid and avoided having to sacrifice Abdullah, as promised.

A Birth Spectacular

John the Baptist announced the coming of Jesus; Jesus would announce the coming of the Prophet Muhammad.

61:6 And when Jesus, son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel, I am Allah's Messenger to you, confirming what came before me of the Torah, and announcing the news of a Messenger who will come after me, whose name is Ahmad." Then when he (Ahmad i.e. Mohammad) brought them the clear proofs, they said: "This is manifest sorcery."

In an account by ibn Sa'd [784 – 845], Amina, like the Virgin Mary, was informed that the child she was carrying was special, with a disembodied voice adding that she should be wary of Jews.

The child to whom you will give birth will be a prophet and a law promulgator to the Arab people. Be wary of the enmity and the jealousy of men; especially the Jews. Seek refuge with God.

The birth of Muhammad in Mecca, like that of Jesus, was announced by a star first noticed by the Jews of Medina.

I was a child of about seven or eight years when I heard the Jews of Medina who had gathered in the street speaking loudly. One of them climbed onto a roof and called over his

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coreligionist, telling them to come together. Once they had assembled in the street, the one who had climbed on the roof shouted: "This night, the star which announced the birth of Ahmed appeared in the sky. Ahmed is born!"

Hassan ibn Thabit d. 674

Another alleged spectacular and widespread phenomenon that heralded the birth of God's ultimate spokesman, which traditional historians then overlooked, was a blinding light that illuminated much of the then known world.

At the moment of Prophet's [birth] a blinding light floods the planet. Amina spots the silhouettes of camels in Bosra more than a thousand kilometers away and the streets of the souks of Damascus as if she was there. The Palm trees of Yatrib (Medina) are lit up as if by giant projectors. The fires of in the temples to Zoroaster in Persia go out.

ibn Sa'd

The birth of the last and greatest of them all is said to have occurred during the year Mecca was attacked by an army that was defeated by squads of sparrows. It is reported in the Traditions that in 570, the year of Muhammad's birth, Abraha, Christian ruler of the principality of Saba' in Yemen (then part of the Abyssinian Empire), marched on Mecca. This was after the Meccans allegedly tried to burn down a church he had built, which the Meccans feared would attract more converts to Christianity. On the approach to Mecca, the elephant Abraha was riding stopped, knelt on the ground and refused to go any further. Suddenly, out of the sky appeared squadron after squadron of sparrows armed with tiny stones with which they bombed the army of Abraha, killing all the estimated 60,000 men and their elephants, camels, and horses. This unlikely defeat of a large assembly of armed men by flocks of small birds is mentioned in the Koran.

THE ELEPHANT

105 Al-Fil

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

105:1 Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the Companions of the Elephant?

105:2 Did he not turn their cunning into perdition?

105:3 And send upon them swarms of birds;

105:4 Hurling upon them stones of clay;

105:5 And so He reduced them to munched blades of grass.

The Cleansing

Like all those who came before him except for Jesus, the devil touched the future Prophet Muhammad while he was in the amniotic sac shortly before he exited through the birth canal, leaving a mark on his heart the size of a 'pepper grain'.

Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet said, "When any human being is born. Satan touches him at both sides of the body with his two fingers, except Jesus, the son of Mary, whom Satan tried to touch but failed, for he touched the placenta-cover instead."

Bukhari 54.506

You would need a magnifying glass to see it even if you knew where to find this still-elusive mark. Muhammad had the blemish removed while still a boy so that God could, decades later, communicate His final instructions for mankind via a flawless human being. How Allah got rid of this apocryphal mark enthralls believers to this day. Virgil Gheorghiu's account of the cleansing, as revealed in ibn Hisham's biography of the Prophet:

Halima (the Prophet's foster mother):

Muhammad was among the sheep and lambs in our tents, when Mesrouth came running to tell us "my brother the Quraysh, two men dressed in white robes took him. They threw him to the ground. They opened his body and are right now searching inside it with their hands."

His father⁴ and me ran towards him. We found him standing up all pale. I held him close. His father held him close.

We asked him, "did they hurt you my son?"

"Two men dressed in white came," answered Muhammad,

⁴ This was before God changed established customs (made it illegal to claim your adopted sons as your own) to allow Muhammad to wed Zaynab b. Jahsh, the wife his adopted son Zaid prudently divorced after God's Messenger expressed an interest in her (see Appendix Wives of Muhammad - Zaynab b. Jahsh for the relevant revelations).

"they opened my body looking for I don't know what."

Halima and her husband, history has not revealed his name, are afraid. Later in life the Prophet would elaborate on what actually happened.

He said: "I was first taken from the clan of Sa'd-ben-Bakr, on a day when I was with my brother in a tent sheltering sheep when two men dressed in white approached with a bowl filled with snow. They seized me, opened my body, took out my heart and extracted a black pebble which they threw away then washed my heart and body with the snow, purifying both."

A Book Revealed

4:173 But as for those who believe and do good deeds, He will give them their rewards in full and will increase them from His Bounty. And as for those who disdain and are arrogant, He will inflict on them a very painful punishment, and they will not find for themselves, apart from Allah, any friend or supporter.

4:174 O people, a proof from your Lord has come to you, and We sent down to you a clear light (the Qur'an).

4:175 As for those who believe in Allah and hold fast to Him, He will admit them into mercy and bounty from Him and guide them to Himself along a straight path.

2:2 This is the Book which cannot be doubted and is a guidance to the God-fearing,

6:55 And thus We expound the revelations so that the way of the criminals becomes clear.

38:29 It is a Blessed Book that We have sent down to you (*Muhammad*), that they may ponder its Verses, and that those possessed of understanding may remember.

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It is a fundamental belief of Muslims that the Holy Koran is truly from God. A person is not a Muslim if he or she does not hold this belief. Muslims believe the Holy Koran is the perfect, eternal and unchangeable word of God. It is a fact the word of God has been preserved in the Holy Koran, and no change whatever has occurred in it since its revelation. It is also a promise of God, and a firmly held belief of all Muslims, that no change will ever occur in the last book of God.

Abdul Rashid, *Ottawa Citizen*, January 30, 2010

## 24 From Merchant to Messenger

At forty-something, the merchant Abū al-Qāsim Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hāshim suffered what we might call a midlife crisis; this crisis may have been exacerbated by a severe sunstroke suffered while helping with renovations of the Ka'ba and from which he almost died. A hadith to that effect:

### **Narrated Jabir bin Abdullah:**

When the Ka'ba was rebuilt, the Prophet and Abbas went to carry stones. Abbas said to the Prophet "(Take off and) put your waist sheet over your neck so that the stones may not hurt you." (But as soon as he took off his waist sheet) he fell unconscious on the ground with both his eyes towards the sky. When he came to his senses, he said, "My waist sheet! My waist sheet!" Then he tied his waist sheet (round his waist).

*Bukhari 58.170*

It was after one of these life-threatening traumas that the man who would achieve immortal fame as the Prophet Muhammad received his first visit from the angel Gabriel in a cave overlooking Mecca, where he had gone to spend the night in prayer and meditation. The celebrated angel informed him that he had been chosen as God's ultimate spokesman to deliver the Almighty's final message for mankind as to how He should be worshipped and how humanity must behave lest His Anger destroy them all. It was all in a book in Arabic that God had authored called the Koran, the most accepted meaning being "to recite," which He keeps close by at all times in Paradise for safekeeping and consultation.

## ADORNMENT

### **43 Az-Zukhruf**

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

43:1 Ha - Mim (no consensus on meaning of symbols).

43:2 By the Manifest Book.

43:3 We have made it an Arabic Qur'an that perchance you may understand.

43:4 And, indeed, it is in the Mother of the Book, with Us, lofty and wise.



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A saying of the Prophet would place the Tablet on Allah's Lap or within arm's reach.

**Narrated Abu Huraira:**

Allah's Apostle said, "When Allah completed the creation, He wrote in His Book which is with Him on His Throne, 'My Mercy overpowers My Anger.'"

*Bukhari 54.416*

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The Koran contains no "crookedness."

18:1 Praise be to Allah, Who revealed the Book to His servant and did not leave in it any crookedness.

18:2 He has made it straight to warn of severe punishment from Himself and announce the good news to the believers, who do righteous deeds, that they shall have a good reward (Paradise).

18:3 Abiding therein forever.

The actual Koran was not available in book form until the reign of Caliph Uthman, the third successor to Muhammad as leader of the believers (the meaning of caliph). Therefore, when you see Allah saying people were reading from the Book, they were actually repeating what Muhammad had preached or, as in the following, mimicking what he was saying.

3:78 And there is a group of them who twist their tongues while reading the Book, so that you may suppose it is part of the Book; whereas it is not part of the Book. They also say: "It is from Allah", whereas it is not from Allah; they only speak falsehoods against Allah knowingly.

Allah's Book tells the truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God.

23:62 We do not charge any soul beyond its capacity; and We have a Book which utters the truth, and they shall not be wronged.

23:63 But their (*Meccan unbelievers*) hearts are in confusion with respect to this (the Qur'an); and they have works (misdeeds, *Moududi*) other than that, which they continue to do.

## 26 From Merchant to Messenger

23:64 Until We seize those who live in luxury among them, and then they groan.

23:65 Do not groan today; you shall not be supported against Us.

23:66 My Revelations were recited to you, but you were turning upon your heels in flight;

23:67 In arrogance, talking nonsense about it by night.

What their illiterate tribesman told them about what was written in this book in the sky, the Meccans considered the rantings of a man possessed (more about this accusation in the next chapter).

23:68 Have they not pondered the Word (the Qur'an); or have they received what was not given to their forefathers?

23:69 Or have they not recognized their Messenger, and so they are denying him?

23:70 Or do they say: "He is possessed"? Rather, he brought them the Truth, but most of them hate the Truth.

The Truth is a corruptible thing!

23:71 If the Truth followed their whims, the heavens and the earth would be corrupted, together with everything therein; but We have brought them their reminder, yet from their reminder they turn away.

The Koran was not only sent to correct errors in the transmission of the Bible but to reveal what was concealed of Allah's original Message. What was left out, and why, is unclear, but it doesn't matter; "seek His Good Pleasure" by accepting the "clear book" and he will forgive you for whatever you've done.

5:15 O People of the Book (Jews and Christians), Our Messenger came to you to show you much of what you used to conceal of the Book (the Scriptures) and to pardon a great deal. Indeed, a light and a clear book (the Qur'an) has come to you from Allah.

5:16 Allah guides with it those who seek His Good Pleasure to the paths of peace, brings them out of the shadows of darkness into the light, by His Leave, and guides them to a straight path.

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35:31 What We have revealed to you of the Book is the truth, confirming what preceded it. Allah is Well-Informed about His servants, All-Seeing.

The Koran was sent not simply to correct errors but to remind about what Allah had revealed earlier that had not been corrupted.

21:48 And We gave Moses and Aaron the criterion (the Torah) and a light, and a Reminder for the righteous,

21:49 Who fear their Lord Unseen and are apprehensive of the Hour.

21:50 This is a blessed Reminder (the Qur'an) we have revealed. Are you, then, going to deny it?

The errors in the Torah arose out of a disagreement among the Jews.

45:16 In fact, We gave the Children of Israel the Book, the Judgement and the Prophecy. We provided them with the good things, and preferred them to all other peoples.

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6:154 Then We gave Moses the Book, completing Our Grace on Him who would do good, making plain everything and serving as a guidance and mercy, so that they (the Children of Israel) may believe in the encounter with their Lord.

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45:17 And We gave them clear proofs of the Decree, but they did not diverge except when the knowledge came to them, out of spite among themselves. Surely your Lord shall judge between them on the Day of Resurrection, regarding that over which they diverge.

That is why, according to Moududi, "the mission that had been entrusted to the children of Israel before you has now been entrusted to you [Muhammad]" in his explanation of the next revelation.

45:18 Then, We set you on a right course of the Decree (religious matters, *Moududi*) so follow it and do not follow the fancies of those who do not know.

The Koran should have settled the argument, but it didn't. This is why, as Allah again reminds us, He will deal with "what they differ on" personally on Judgement Day.

## 28 From Merchant to Messenger

27:76 This Qur'an relates to the Children of Israel most of what they differ on.

27:77 And it is, indeed, a guidance and mercy to the believers.

27:78 Your Lord will decide between them according to His Judgement. He is the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.

These corrections were first sent to the Meccans, those upon whom God "bequeathed the Book," in the next revelation:

35:32 Then We bequeathed the Book upon those servants We chose; but some of them wronged themselves, some are lukewarm and some are forerunners in good deeds, by Allah's leave. That truly is the great distinction.

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Allah may have had second thoughts about delivering His Koran to the Arabs.

43:5 Shall We then divert the Reminder from you mercifully, because you are an extravagant people.

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Allah singled out the Arabs for His corrected message so that they could not claim ignorance of what He had sent before.

6:155 This Book (the Qur'an) which We sent down is blessed; so follow it and fear God, so that you may receive mercy.

6:156 Lest you should say: "The Book was revealed only to two sects (the Jews and Christians) before us, and we were unaware of their reading."

6:157 Or lest you should say: "Had the Book been revealed to us, we would have been better guided than they." A clear proof has come to you from your Lord, and a guidance and mercy, too. Who, then, is more unjust than he who denies Allah's revelations and turns away from them? We will surely inflict on those who turn away from Our Signs grievous punishment, because they turned away.

The Arabs to whom Muhammad gradually made known Allah's Revelations were not impressed.

## 50 QÂF

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

50:1 Qâf (*no consensus on meaning*).

By the glorious Qur'an.

50:2 Yet, they marvel that a warner has come to them from among them, and so the unbelievers say: "This is a strange thing!

50:3 "What, when we are dead and have become dust – that is a far-off return!"

50:4 We know well what the earth shall swallow up of them; for We have a recording Book.

50:5 Yet, they have denounced the Truth when it came to them, and so they are in a confused state.

It did not matter that Allah had taken the time to make an Arabic Koran so as to ensure the contents of the book Muhammad was revealing on His behalf were easy to remember.

44:58 We have made it (the Qur'an) easy in your own tongue, so that they may remember.

44:59 So wait and watch; they are waiting and watching.

Allah's discourse leaves a palpable, if harsh, imprint followed by a mellowing effect on both the skins and hearts of those who hear it.

39:23 Allah has sent down the fairest discourse as a Book, both insistent and corroboratory, from which the skins of those who fear their Lord shiver. Then their skins and hearts mellow at the mention of Allah. That is the guidance of Allah whereby He guides whomever He wishes; and he whom Allah leads astray will have no guide.

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46:12 And before it, came the Book of Moses, as a guidance and a mercy; and this is a corroborating Book in Arabic tongue to warn the wrongdoers and serve as good news to the beneficent.

\*\*\*

If you don't believe that this Koran is from Allah, you are deeply mistaken.

41:52 Say: "What do you think? If it (the Qur'an) is from Allah and then you disbelieve in it, who is more astray than one who is given to profound contention?"

The pre-Islamic Arabs were a practical, sceptical people; gods, as far as they were concerned, did not have conversations with mortals. To persuade them otherwise, Allah tells Muhammad to remind the Arabs *Who* revealed “the Book” to Moses before its follow-up, the Koran.

6:91 They do not show proper regard for Allah’s Greatness when they say: “Allah has not revealed anything to a mortal.” Say: “Who revealed the Book which was brought by Moses as a light and guidance to mankind? You put it in scrolls which you reveal, while you conceal much. And [now] you are taught (in the Koran) what neither you nor your fathers knew.” Say: “Allah [revealed it].” Then leave them to revel in their nonsense.

Those who believe in a Hereafter also believe in the Koran!

6:92 And this is a Book which revealed. [It is] blessed and confirms what preceded it, that you may warn therewith the Mother of Cities (Mecca) and those around it. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in it and observe their prayers.

With Allah not willing to part with the only copy He made of His Book, Muhammad was expected to memorize what the angel Gabriel, the Messenger to the Messenger, told him was in the Koran, then to regurgitate for his Meccan audience what he had committed to memory. Muhammad wasn’t sure, when they first met—after he had spent a sleepless night in prayer in a cave above Mecca<sup>5</sup>--whether his out-of-this-world visitor was sent by God or Satan. Scared out of his wits, he rushed home and asked his wife Khadija, who took him to see a Christian cousin who knew about these things.

#### **Narrated Aisha:**

The Prophet returned to Khadija while his heart was beating rapidly. She took him to Waraqa bin Naufal who was a Christian convert and used to read the Gospels in Arabic. Waraqa asked (the Prophet), "What do you see?"

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<sup>5</sup> A lack of sleep produces a natural form of LSD. This has been one explanation given for saints of the Catholic experiencing visions of whom or to what they were praying after a night in devotion.

When he told him, Waraqa said, "That is the same angel whom Allah sent to (the Prophet) Moses. Should I live till you receive the Divine Message, I will support you strongly."

*Bukhari 55.605*

Unfortunately, Waraqa died shortly thereafter and wasn't available to reassure Muhammad when Gabriel appeared to him the next time, in the open, in all his imposing splendor. The angel, 600 wings and all, followed Muhammad home to convey to him that day's content of the Koran. The apparition in a hadith:

**Narrated Abu Ishaq-Ash-Shaibani:**

I asked Zir bin Hubaish regarding the Statement of Allah: "And was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) nearer; So did (Allah) convey The Inspiration to His slave (Gabriel) and then he (Gabriel) conveyed (that to Muhammad)." (53; 9-10)

On that, Zir said, "Ibn Mas'ud informed us that the Prophet had seen Gabriel having 600 wings."

*Bukhari 54.455*

In another hadith, Gabriel is "sitting on a chair between the sky and the earth" (see Appendix Muhammad's Introduction to Christianity: Waraqa).

The apparition in the Koran:

53:1 By the star when it goes down,

53:2 Your Companion (Muhammad) has not gone astray or erred,

53:3 And he does not talk capriciously.

53:4 It (the Qur'an) is only a Revelation being revealed,

53:5 Taught him by a mighty one (the angel Gabriel),

53:6 Possessed of steadfastness. And so he arose,

53:7 While he was on the highest horizon;

53:8 Then, he came closer and hovered around;

53:9 Coming thus within two bows' length or closer.

53:10 Then (Allah) revealed to His servant what He revealed.

Again, Muhammad looked to his wife Khadijah for reassurance. Like everyone else, she was not party to her husband's visions.

### **Narrated Aisha:**

Allah's Apostle said, "O Aisha! This is Gabriel sending his greetings to you."

I said, "Peace, and Allah's Mercy be on him."

Aisha added: "The Prophet used to see things which we used not to see."

*Bukhari 73.220*

Nonetheless, to reassure her husband that it was indeed an angel and not Satan, she told him to get undressed. She did the same and they embraced. Do you still see him, she asked? No, replied her cowering spouse! Then it must have been an angel, she said, because an angel would not have remained to stare at a naked couple embracing. Reassured, her husband began meeting with Gabriel on a regular basis and learning what this Koran was about.

## **The Enwrapped**

In The Enwrapped, God recommends to Muhammad that he spend only half the night or less keeping watch and the remainder sleeping, during which, it is assumed, he will be visited by Gabriel with the latest "weighty discourse" (Revelation 73:5).

### THE ENWRAPPED

#### **73 Al-Muzzamil**

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

73:1 O enwrapped one (that is Muhammad, who used to be 'wrapped up' when the Koran was imparted to him by the Angel Gabriel),

73:2 Keep vigil throughout the night, except for a little while;

73:3 Half of it, or a little less;

73:4 Or add a little thereto and chant the Qur'an loudly.

73:5 Indeed, We shall deliver unto you a weighty discourse.



73:6 Surely, the early hours of the night are more onerous and more amenable to straight talk.

73:7 You have during the day a long-drawn business.

73:8 Remember the name of your Lord and devote yourself fully to Him.

73:9 He is the Lord of the East and the West; there is no god but He, so take Him as your guardian.

73:10 And bear up with what they say, and forsake them graciously.

73:11 And let Me deal with those who deny and live in luxury; and give them a little respite.

A hadith (among others) about verses from the Koran being communicated while Muhammad slept, when he would have been 'enwrapped'.

Narrated Safwan bin Ya'la bin Umaiya from his father who said: "A man came to the Prophet while he was at Ji'rana. The man was wearing a cloak which had traces of Khaluq or Sufra (a kind of perfume). The man asked (the Prophet), 'What do you order me to perform in my Umra (the lesser pilgrimage)?' So, Allah inspired the Prophet divinely and he was screened by a place of cloth.

I wished to see the Prophet being divinely inspired.

Umar said to me, 'Come! Will you be pleased to look at the Prophet while Allah is inspiring him?'

I replied in the affirmative.

Umar lifted one corner of the cloth and I looked at the Prophet who was snoring. (The sub-narrator thought that he said: The snoring was like that of a camel.)

When that state was over, the Prophet asked, "Where is the questioner who asked about Umra?"

Put off your cloak and wash away the traces of Khaluq from your body and clean the Sufra (yellow color) and perform in your Umra what you perform in your Hajj (i.e. the Tawaf round the Ka'ba and the Sa'i between Safa and Marwa)."

*Bukhari 27.17*

None ever witnessed Gabriel actually reading from the Koran to Muhammad, therefore those who waited with him during that part of the night were not there to see Gabriel but to say the night prayer with their prophet while waiting for him to fall asleep. In Revelation 73:20, which concludes Surah 73 (see *The Islamic Hereafter: "Judgement Day,"* Boreal Books for Verses 73:12-19), God tells Muhammad to "Read, then, what you can of the Qur'an." This should not be taken literally, as His spokesman was an illiterate and there was no book that Muhammad could physically lay his hands on. Gabriel, in dreams and lucid visions, read passages carved on a tablet in Paradise, which Muhammad may have been allowed to scan, in order to commit it to memory and recall in a sermon which he normally delivered that day.

73:20 Your Lord knows that you keep vigil a little less than two-thirds of the night, and a half or a third thereof, together with a group of your followers. Allah determines the measure of a night and day; He knows that you will not keep it all, and so He has absolved you (Allah measures the night and the day. He knows that you cannot keep an accurate count of it, so He has shown mercy to you, *Moududi*). Read, then, what you can of the Qur'an. He knows that there will be, among you, sick people and others who journey in the land, seeking part of Allah's Bounty, and still others who fight for the Cause of Allah. Recite, then, what you can of it, perform the prayer, give the alms and lend Allah a fair loan. Whatever good you forward for your soul's sake, you shall find it with Allah growing into greater good and a greater wage. Seek Allah's forgiveness; Allah is indeed All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.

Fakhry, in a footnote, explains that "lend Allah a fair loan" means "spend money in His way." There are at least five revelations about giving Allah a fair loan. These verses are often used in fundraising campaigns. One example from a fundraising letter:

I am writing to you on behalf of Canberra Islamic Centre (CIC) Executive Committee in the holy month of Ramadan to seek your financial support and prayer for ongoing Islamic project in our National Capital... Your donation is an investment in the path of Islam that will benefit to the Muslim generations in Canberra/Australia. As mentioned in the Holy Qur'an (64.17) "If you lend Allah a fair loan, He will

multiply it for you and forgive you. Allah is All Grateful, All Clement.”

### **The Koran Is Not the Work of the Devil**

An argument could be made that the Koran is the devil’s work, due to the obvious pleasure God takes in the pain He inflicted in the past and will inflict on Judgement Day when He confines all His detractors to burn in Hell for an eternity (see *The Islamic Hereafter: “Hell” and “Judgement Day,”* Boreal Books). Hell, in the Koran, is not the Devil’s own but rather God’s personal torture chamber where He will ensure that those confined to its depths will always experience the maximum amount of pain possible.

4:56 Those who have disbelieved Our Signs, We shall surely cast them into the Fire; every time their skins are burnt, We will replace them by other skins, so that they might taste the punishment. Allah indeed is Mighty and Wise!

Allah assures us that the Koran is not the devil’s work and explains why.

81:24 He (*Muhammad*) is not, regarding the Unseen niggardly;

81:25 And it is not the discourse of a devil, accursed.

81:26 Where, then, will you go?

81:27 It is only a Reminder to all mankind;

81:28 To whoever of you who wishes to reform their ways.

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26:210 And this (the Qur’an) was not brought down by demons.

26:211 They should not and could not.

26:212 For they are barred from hearing.

The demons, however, have been known to make people believe they are doing good when they are doing bad.

16:63 By Allah, We sent forth [Messengers] to nations before you (*Muhammad*). But the Devil made their foul deeds seem fair to them. He is their patron, and they shall have a painful punishment.

16:64 We have not revealed to you the Book but that you may make clear to them that wherein they differ, and as a guidance and a mercy to a people who believe.

## **What Does Grammar Have To Do With It?**

### THE PROPHET HUD

#### **11 Sûrat Hud**

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

11:1 Alif – Lam – Ra.

[This is] a Book with Verses which are elaborately formulated and clearly expounded from the Wise, the All-Aware.

11:2 That you should worship none other than Allah; I am truly a warner and a bearer of good news to you from him;

11:3 And ask forgiveness from your Lord; then turn to Him in repentance, that He may allow you a fair enjoyment [in this life] for a fixed term, and may bestow His Bounty on every worthy one; but if you turn away I fear for you the punishment of a Great Day.

11:4 Unto Allah is your return, and He has power over everything.

The Koran may be the work of a god with a sense of humour.

4:82 Do they not, then, ponder over the Qur'an? Had it been from someone other than Allah, they would have found in it many inconsistencies.

Clearly expounded? Yes, for the most part, and some inconsistencies were undoubtedly removed; however, it took a lot of work by ordinary mortals over a long period of time to make it so. They could not, or would not, of course, remove what Allah admits are deliberate ambiguities.

3:7 It is He Who has revealed to you the Book, with verses which are precise in meaning and which are the Mother of the Book, and others which are ambiguous. As to those in whose hearts there is a vacillation, they follow what is ambiguous in it, seeking sedition and intending to interpret it. However, no one except Allah knows its interpretation.

Those well-grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in it; all is from our Lord"; yet none remembers save those possessed of understanding!

All modern translations of the Koran, including the one used in this series, are produced from what is known as the Cairo edition prepared at al-Azhar University in the 1920s. "It is based on one of the seven readings permitted by Ibn Mujahid, that of Abu Bakr 'Âsim (d. 745) as transmitted by Hafs b. Sulayman (d. 796)."<sup>6</sup> The first official edition of the Koran, known as the Uthman Codex (644-61), was distributed during the tenure of the third caliph (the third successor to the Prophet Muhammad). No evidence of this codex exist. "Scholars agree that there is no evidence of the Koran until 691 —59 years after Muhammad's death— when the Dome of the Rock mosque in Jerusalem was built, carrying several Koranic inscriptions,"<sup>7</sup> which has led to speculation about a late origin of much of the Koran. What survived were oral traditions, and one of these is what the Cairo edition is based on.

Uthman's act of standardization succeeded in reducing textual variation, but did not eliminate it altogether. The text established by Uthman accommodated multiple readings.

Because the script in which the early Korans were written lacked most of the vowels and marks that could distinguish several of the consonants, it was possible to read the text in different ways.

To be sure, oral tradition placed a check on variation, disallowing many otherwise feasible readings. Nonetheless, numerous variant readings arose. Some of these affect the meaning, but none change the basic ideas of the Koran.

For example, reciters disagreed over whether verse 57 in surah 6 says God "tells" the truth (yaqussu) or "judges" truthfully (yaqdi), two words that look similar in the Arabic script. But since both ideas are ubiquitous in the Koran, the overall message of the scripture is not affected by either reading.

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<sup>6</sup> *Forgotten Witness: Evidence For The Early Codification Of The Qur'an*, Estelle Whelan, Columbia University.

<sup>7</sup> "Scholars Are Quietly Offering New Theories of the Koran," Alexander Stille, *NYT*, March 2, 2002.

"The origins of the Koran: From revelation to holy book,"  
Behnam Sadeghi, Stanford University, *BBC News*, 23 July  
2015.

Not all are in agreement that the impact of a lack of diacritical marks did not significantly impact the message.

Scholars like Mr. Luxenberg and Gerd-R. Puin, who teaches at Saarland University in Germany, have returned to the earliest known copies of the Koran in order to grasp what it says about the document's origins and composition.

The original copies of the Koran were "written without vowels and diacritical dots that modern Arabic uses to make it clear what letter is intended. In the eighth and ninth centuries, more than a century after the death of Muhammad, Islamic commentators added diacritical marks to clear up the ambiguities of the text, giving precise meanings to passages based on what they considered to be their proper context."

In many cases, the differences can be quite significant. Mr. Puin (taught at Saarland University in Germany) points out that in the early archaic copies of the Koran, it is impossible to distinguish between the words "to fight" and "to kill." In many cases, he said, Islamic exegetes added diacritical marks that yielded the harsher meaning, perhaps reflecting a period in which the Islamic Empire was often at war.

"Scholars Are Quietly Offering New Theories of the Koran,"  
Alexander Stille, *New York Times*, March 2, 2002.

# Christianity as a Reason Not to Believe

38 SÂD

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

38:1 Sâd (one of three surahs which open with symbolic letters). By the Koran which contains the Reminder (admonitions, or which serves as a reminder, *Moududi*).

38:2 But the unbelievers are steeped in arrogance and strife.

38:3 How many a generation We have destroyed before them? They called out, but time was past escaping.

38:4 They marvelled that a warner has come to them from their own, and the unbelievers said: "This is a lying sorcerer.

38:5 "What, has he made the gods one single God? This, indeed is a very strange thing."

The "latest religion" in Revelation 38:7 did not mention anything about another saviour and another Message, which led many to suspect that their kin's claim to being a messenger of God was a ploy to become their de facto dictator.

38:6 And the dignitaries among them went forth saying ("The allusion is to the chiefs who got up and left Abu Talib, an uncle of the Prophet, when they had heard what the Holy Prophet said," *Moududi*): "Go on and be steadfast regarding your gods. This is indeed a matter premeditated (Muhammad... [wants] to subjugate us and rule us as his subjects, *Moududi*).

38:7 "We have not heard about this in the latest religion (Christianity). This is only a mere invention.

They may think that now, but wait till they taste "My Punishment."

38:8 "Has the Reminder been sent down upon him (Muhammad) alone, apart from us all?" Indeed, they are in

## 40 From Merchant to Messenger

doubt regarding My Reminder. But, they have not yet tasted My Punishment.

38:9 Or, do they possess the treasures of your Lord's Mercy, the All-Mighty, the All-Giving.

38:10 Or do they have the dominion of the heavens and the earth? Let them, then, ascend its rungs (try to reach the Divine Throne, *Moududi*).

38:11 A host of the Confederates will be defeated there (Mecca, *Moududi*).

38:12 Before them, the people of Noah, 'Ad, Pharaoh of the Pegs (a metaphor for power or grandeur);

38:13 And Thamud and the people of Lot; as well as the Companions of the Thicket (probably the people of Madyan), such were the Confederates.<sup>8</sup>

38:14 None of them but denounced the Messengers, and so My Retribution struck them.

Judgement Day can't come too soon for those who believe that because the Koran is not mentioned in the Gospels, it is an invention of Muhammad.

38:15 These are only awaiting a single cry (the blast of the Trumpet signaling the end-of-times) which will not cease.

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<sup>8</sup> Tribes who joined the Meccans against the Muslims at the battle for Medina (see *Jihad in the Koran*: "Medina," Boreal Books). Their inclusion here is anyone's guess.



# Slander

2:151 Just as We sent forth to you a Messenger (Muhammad) from among you reciting Our Revelations (the Qur'an) to you, purifying you (from polytheism), instructing you in the Book (the Qur'an) and the wisdom, and teaching you what you did not know.

6:51 And warn with it (the Qur'an) those who fear that they will be gathered before their Lord, other than Whom they have neither a protector nor an intercessor, so that they may be God-fearing.

14:1 A Book which We have revealed to you (*Muhammad*) so that you may, with the will of their Lord, bring mankind from darkness to light, to the Path of the Mighty, the Praiseworthy One.

It took almost ten years before a significant number of Muhammad's contemporaries warmed to Allah's ideas for a new world religious and domestic order. During those difficult years of his ministry, God's self-proclaimed spokesman was the object of much scorn, derision, and accusations of the most hurtful kind.

TAHA

**20 Tâ Hâ**

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

20:1 Ta Ha (*no consensus on exact meaning*).

20:2 We have not revealed the Qur'an to you (*Muhammad*) so as to make you unhappy.

20:3 But only as a reminder to him who fears.

20:4 A revelation from Him Who created the earth and the high heavens.

**He Made It Up**

THE PROSTRATION

### 32 As-Sajdah

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

32:1 Alif – Lam – Mim.

32:2 The revelation of the Book from the Lord of the Worlds,  
wherein there is no doubt.

32:3 Or do they say: “He invented it?” Rather, it is the truth  
from your Lord, so as to warn a people to whom no warner  
came before you, that perchance they might be well-guided.

In his alleged fabrication of the Koran, Muhammad was accused of  
receiving assistance from the Jews.

25:4 The unbelievers say: “This (the Qur’an) is nothing but  
deceit, which he (Muhammad) has invented and was assisted  
therein by other people (the Jews).” They have simply come  
up with wrongdoing and falsehood.

Did the Jews do for Muhammad what God accused them of doing with  
His Torah: making things up, then saying it was from Him to make  
some money?

2:79 Woe unto those who write the Book (rabbis,  
*islamicstudies.info*) with their hands, then say that it is from  
Allah in order to sell it for a small price. Woe unto them for  
what their hands have written, and woe unto them for what  
they have earned.

2:80 And they say: “The Fire will only touch us for a few  
days.” Say: “Have you received a pledge from Allah, and  
Allah does not revoke His Pledge, or are you imputing to  
Allah what you do not know?”

2:81 Indeed, whoever commits a sin and his sin takes  
complete hold of him is one of the people of Hell, wherein  
they will dwell forever.

2:82 Those who believe and do good works are the people of  
Paradise, where they will dwell forever.

That Muhammad had friends among the Jews is well documented. The  
most infamous was a Jewish rabbi and convert by the name of  
Abdullah bin Salam who was his main source of information on Jewish

law. The witness in Revelation 46:10 is believed to be Abdullah bin Salam.

46:10 Say: "Have you considered? What if it be from Allah and you disbelieve in it, while a witness from the Children of Israel bears witness to the like of it and believes, whereas you wax proud? Surely, Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people rightly."

Muhammad's preaching initially attracted people from the lower strata of Meccan society, prompting their better-informed brethren to dismiss their conversion.

46:11 The unbelievers say to the believers: "Had it been any good, they would not have beaten us to it", and since they have not been guided by it, they will certainly say: "This is an old fabrication."

Some of the accusations of fabrication may have been the result of Allah changing his mind. The logic of an omniscient god who knows everything, including the future, and is never wrong, changing His mind was simply inconceivable. It was profoundly illogical! They simply did not buy God's argument in Revelation 2:106 that abrogating, i.e., replacing one revelation with another because He did not get it right the first time, was His prerogative (Allah would annul or modify more than 240 of His Revelations, all documented in *Let Me Rephrase That!*, Boreal Books). A stupefying concept in and of itself.

2:106 Whichever verse We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring instead a better or similar one. Do you not know that Allah has the power over all things?

It did not matter that Allah said that He knows what He is doing when He replaces one unassailable truth by another.

16:101 And if We replace a verse by another – and Allah knows best what He reveals – they say: "You are only a forger." Surely, most of them do not know.

16:102 Say: "The Holy Spirit (*Gabriel*) has brought it down from our Lord in truth, in order to reassure the believers, as a guidance and good news to those who submit.

Some accused Muhammad's slaves of helping him fabricate the Koran. "In this connection," according to *Islamicstudies.info*, "traditions mention the names of several persons, one of whom is Jabar. According

## 44 From Merchant to Messenger

to the disbelievers of Makkah he taught the Prophet (peace be upon him). However, one thing particularly noteworthy about all these persons is that they were non-Arab slaves.”

16:103 And surely a mortal teaches him.” The tongue of him to whom they allude is foreign, whereas this is a clear Arabic tongue.

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Gabriel appears to have only spoken Arabic to Muhammad.

26:192 And this (the Qur'an) is the revelation of the Lord of the Worlds;

26:193 Brought down by the Faithful Spirit (Gabriel),

26:194 Upon your heart (O Muhammad), so that you might be one of the warners;

26:195 In manifest Arabic tongue.

Research into the origins of the Koran, such as that conducted in Germany by Christoph Luxenberg (pseudonym), has revealed a great number of words in Aramaic and/or Syriac which would indicate that many verses have a Christian or Jewish origin. Allah may be indirectly recognizing this fact in the following revelations where He acknowledges the contribution of the Torah to the Koran and the work of Jewish scholars.

26:196 And, it is, indeed, in the Scriptures of the ancients.

26:197 Is it not a sign for them that the scholars of the Children of Israel recognized it?

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God cannot be bothered leading those who will not be led. This is His trademark explanation when instructions delivered by Muhammad on His behalf fail to convince people to *follow the Guide*. For not doing so: the inescapable promise of a painful punishment.

16:104 Those who do not believe in Allah's Revelations shall not be guided by Allah, and a very painful punishment awaits them.

If you say often enough that those who refute the Revelations are liars, and the Koran repeats it often enough, the disparagement will eventually be accepted as the truth. Trump understood that logic only too well.

16:105 It is those who do not believe in Allah's revelations that fabricate falsehood. It is they who lie.

If the Koran is a fabrication, it is a fabrication only a god could produce. Allah challenged anyone to produce a single chapter like one found in His Book.

10:38 Or do they say: "He (the Prophet) has forged it." Say: "Come up, then, with a single Surah like it, and call upon whomever you can, apart from Allah, if you are truthful."

Maybe someone did, and God raised the ante.

11:13 Or will they say: "He has forged it (the Qur'an)." Say: "Come up then with ten forged surahs like it, and call upon whomever you can, apart from Allah, if you are truthful."

11:14 But if they do not answer you, then know that it (the Qur'an) was revealed with Allah's knowledge and that there is no god but He. Will you then submit?

What if jinn and men got together to produce a Koran?

17:88 Say [O Muhammad]: "Were men and jinn to band together in order to come up with the like of this Qur'an, they will never come up with the like of it, even if they back up one another."

Only the ingrates would deny a book that contains "every kind of example."

17:89 We have indeed given mankind in this Qur'an every kind of example (different ways to make the people understand the Message, *Moududi*), but most people insist on being ungrateful.

If Muhammad invented it, Allah would be pissed, so why would a messenger tasked with delivering a clear warning risk His wrath?

46:8 Or do they say: "He invented it." Say: "If I have invented it, you have no means of helping me against Allah. He knows best what you are expatiating upon. Let Him suffice as a witness between me and you. He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful."

46:9 Say: "I am not the first of the Messengers and I do not know what will be done with me or with you. I only follow what is revealed to me and I am only a manifest warner."

Muhammad did not always have a revelation handy to respond to the taunts and accusations of his detractors, prompting them to tell him to make one up; this is what they believed he did all the time.

7:203 And if you do not bring them a revelation, they say: "Why don't you yourself invent it?" Say: "I only follow what is revealed to me from my Lord. This (the Qur'an) constitutes a clear proof from your Lord and a guidance and a mercy to those who believe."

### **Accusations of Plagiarism**

23:78 It is He Who created for you ears, eyes and hearts; but how little you give thanks.

23:79 And it is He who created and multiplied you in the land, and unto Him you will be gathered.

23:80 It is He who gives life and causes death, and His is the alternation of night and day. Do you not understand?

23:81 No, they said just what the ancient said.

23:82 They said: "What, when we are dead and become dust and bones, we will be brought back to life?"

23:83 "We have been promised this, we and our fathers before. This is merely legends of the ancients."

The Koran was revealed during the period known as the *Dark Ages* to a desert-dwelling people. It was a time and place where facts, fiction and superstitions were effortlessly mixed into stories told and repeated, often around a campfire, with countless variations, then passed down from generation to generation in what is known as *oral traditions*. The fantastical stories of the trials and tribulations of the Jews, of which you find many variations in the Koran, would have been a favorite topic of conversation during stopovers when Muhammad led caravans north from Mecca to Syria and back. Many of these stories, repeated by Muhammad as revelations from Allah (see *Shared Prophet: "Biblical Figures in the Koran,"* Boreal Books), were dismissed by his Arab brethren as "fables of the ancient."

8:31 And when Our Revelations are recited to them, they say: "We have heard. Had we wished, we would have uttered the like of this; this is nothing but fables of the ancients."

16:24 And if it is said to them: "What has your Lord revealed?" they say: "Fables of the ancients."

Allah acknowledged the accusations of plagiarism and responded with a revelation instructing Muhammad on what to say in rebuttal (more in Chapter "Allah's Response to the Slander").

25:5 And they say: "Legends of the ancients which he solicited their writing down. Hence they are dictated to him morning and evening."<sup>9</sup>

25:6 Say: "He Who knows the secret in the heavens in the earth has sent it down; He is indeed All-Forgiving, Merciful."

Often, when Muhammad's transmission of God's many messages fell on deaf ears, Allah took the blame so as not to discourage His spokesman, as He does here.

6:25 And some of them listen to you, but We have cast veils over their hearts, lest they should understand it (the Qur'an) and a deafness in their ears. And even were they to see every sign, they will not believe in it; so that when they come to dispute with you, the unbelievers will say: "This is nothing but fables of the ancients."

6:26 And they forbid others from [following] him (the Prophet), and they keep away from him, but they only destroy themselves, without perceiving it.

Saying the Koran is "merely legends of the ancients" is the opposite of doing something that will get your evil deeds pardoned.

46:16 Those from whom We accept the best of what they do and overlook their evil deeds shall be reckoned among the companions of Paradise, this being the promise of the truth which they were promised.

46:17 But as for him who says to his parents: "Fie upon you. Do you promised me to be raised up (from the dead), while

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<sup>9</sup> An example using a famous saying of Jesus: "It will be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 16:23)."

7:40 Indeed, those who have denied Our Revelations and rejected them arrogantly – the gates of heaven shall not be opened for them and they shall not enter Paradise until the camel passes through the eye of the needle. Thus we punish the wicked sinners.

generations have already gone before me?" They both call upon Allah to help them: "Woe unto you, have faith. Allah's promise is true." But he will say: "These are merely legends of the ancients."

## **Sorcerer**

JONAH

### **10 Yûnus**

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

10:1 Alif - Lam - Ra.

Those are the verses of the sound Book.

10:2 Is it a wonder to the people that We have revealed to one of them (*Muhammad*): "Warn the people and announce to the believers the good news that they have a sure footing with their Lord?" The unbelievers say: "This indeed is a manifest sorcerer."

That this Koran was some form of sorcery appears to have been a widely held belief among the Meccans, a belief reinforced by the fact that Muhammad was not held in high esteem.

43:29 Yet, I gave these (Meccans) and their fathers some enjoyment, till the Truth and a manifest Messenger came to them.

43:30 But when the Truth came to them, they said: "That is sorcery, and we are definitely disbelieving therein."

43:31 They also said: "If only this Qur'an had been sent down upon some outstanding man from the two cities (Mecca and Ta'if)."

The Truth as sorcery:

46:7 And when Our Clear Signs are recited to them, those who have disbelieved will say to the Truth when it comes to them: "This is manifest sorcery."

Another verse contains both accusations of sorcery and fabrication.

34:43 And when Our Signs are recited to them clearly, they say: "This is only a man who wishes to bar you from what



your fathers used to worship." They also say: "This is nothing but a fabricated falsehood"; and the unbelievers say of the Truth when it comes to them: "This is nothing but manifest sorcery."

### **Laughing Stock**

25:41 And when they see you, they only take you for a laughing stock: "Is this the one Allah sent as Messenger?

25:42 "He almost led us away from our gods, had we not stood fast by them." They will certainly know, when they see the punishment, who is more wayward.

25:43 Do you see him who has taken his fancy as his god? Will you, then, have to be his guardian?

25:44 Or do you suppose that most of them hear or understand? Indeed, they are merely like cattle; no, even more wayward.

### **Madman**

Some believed Muhammad to be quite mad, prompting God, on numerous occasions, to vouch for His spokesman's sanity and excoriate those who would make the accusation.

7:184 Do they not consider that their companion (Muhammad) is not mad. He is only a plain warner.

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15:6 They say: "O you, to whom the Reminder (the Qur'an) is revealed, you are indeed a madman.

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34:46 Say: "I only give you one exhortation, that you arise for Allah in couples and singly, then to reflect that there is no madness in your companion (the Prophet). He is merely a warner on the eve of a terrible punishment."

Muhammad, after he left the cave where he first met the angel Gabriel, reported seeing the angel's face on the horizon wherever he looked. This only increased the suspicion of his detractors as to his sanity.

81:22 Your companion is not mad;

81:23 He saw him (Gabriel) upon the luminous horizon.

## 50 From Merchant to Messenger

If it's any consolation, those who came before you were also accused of being mad.

51:52 Likewise, no Messenger came to those who preceded them but they said: "A sorcerer or a madman."

51:53 Have they attested to each other concerning him (Muhammad)? No, they are an unjust people.

51:54 So, turn away from them, you are not to blame.

51:55 And remind; for the reminder will benefit the believers.

Accusations of madness may have also been made in print.

### 68 Al-Qalam

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

68:1 Nûn (*No consensus on meaning*).

By the pen and what they inscribe,

68:2 You are not (O Muhammad), by the Grace of your Lord,  
a madman.

68:3 You will have a wage which is unstinted;

68:4 And you are truly a man of noble character.

Bear with me; those who accused you of being demented will get what is coming to them.

68:5 You shall see and they shall see,

68:6 Which of you is the demented one.

### Gullible

Others thought their kinsman gullible and tried to be nice, with some even pretending to believe him; they, too, would pay dearly!

9:61 And some of them molest the Prophet saying: "He hears [all what is said and believes what he hears]." Say: "He hears what is good for you. He believes in Allah and believes what he hears from the believers; and he is a mercy for those who believe." Those who hurt the Messenger of Allah will have a very painful punishment.

9:62 They swear to you by Allah to please you; but Allah and His Messenger they should rather please first, if they are true believers.

9:63 Do they not know that whoever opposes Allah and His Messenger, the Fire of Hell is reserved for them, abiding in it forever. That indeed is the great disgrace.

### **A Poet Possessed**

Muhammad was no poet, and you have God's Word on that!

36:69 We did not teach him (the Prophet) poetry, nor did it become him. It is only a Reminder and a Manifest Qur'an;

36:70 So as to warn those who are alive and the word may be fulfilled against the unbelievers.

God also promised a painful punishment for those who would accuse Muhammad of being possessed.

37:35 For when it used to be said to them: "There is no god but Allah", they would wax proud.

37:36 And they would say: "Are we going to forsake our gods for the sake of a poet possessed?"

37:37 Indeed, he brought the truth and confirmed the other Messengers.

37:38 You shall indeed taste the painful punishment.

Muhammad claiming to quote from a book beyond anyone's reach written by God obviously elicited strong emotions, as could be expected.

68:51 The unbelievers will almost strike you down with their glances, on hearing the Reminder (the Qur'an) and will say: "He is truly possessed."

68:52 It is only a Reminder to all the Worlds.

### **Liar**

34:44 We did not bring them (*the Arabs*) heretofore any Books to study and We did not send them before you (Muhammad) any warner.

34:45 Those who preceded them denounced the Messengers, although they have not attained the tenth of what We gave them; yet they denounced My Messengers as liars. How, then, was My Wrath?

In the Koran, vestiges of cities such as Petra (see *Getting to Know Allah: Salih and the Destruction of Thamud*, Boreal Books) are places Allah claims to have destroyed because their inhabitants called the messengers He sent them liars (see *Getting to Know Allah: "Allah Days – A Litany of Death and Destruction,"* Boreal Books). Then there were the people of Noah, Lot, etc., and for some reason Abraham, (see *Shared Prophets*, Boreal Books), whom He annihilated for denouncing His Messengers. If He did that to avenge Muhammad's predecessors, imagine what He would do to those who called His last and greatest a liar.

22:42 If they denounce you as a liar, then the people of Noah, 'Ad and Thamud have denounced before them;

22:43 And the people of Abraham and the people of Lot, too;

22:44 And the people of Midian. And Moses was denounced. Then I reprieved the unbelievers; then I struck them down. How, then, was my punishment?

22:45 How many a city We destroyed when it was doing wrong; and now it has fallen down upon its turrets; and how many a deserted well, and lofty palace?

22:46 Have they not travelled in the land, so as to acquire hearts to reason with; or ears to hear by? For it is not the eyes which are blind, but the hearts within the breasts.<sup>10</sup>

22:47 They ask you to hasten the punishment. Allah will never break His Promise; but a day for your Lord is like a thousand years of what you reckon.

22:48 And how many a city have I reprieved, although it was unjust? Then I struck it down, and unto Me is the ultimate return.

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35:4 If they denounce you as a liar, surely they have

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<sup>10</sup> Like many classical philosophers, including Aristotle, Allah considered the heart to be the seat of reason, not the brain. Probably one of Allah's more confounding revelations was His statement about travel giving you a heart that is not blind.

denounced other Messengers before you; unto Allah all matters shall be returned.

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35:23 You are only a warner.

35:24 We have sent you forth in truth as a bearer of good news and a warner. There is not a nation to whom a warner has not come and gone.

35:25 If they denounce you as a liar; those before them have also denounced; their Messengers came to them with clear proofs, with scriptures and the illuminating Book.

35:26 Then I seized the unbelievers; how then was My wrath!

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39:25 Those who preceded them denounced as liars [the Messenger], whereupon punishment afflicted them from whence they did not know.

39:26 And so Allah made them taste disgrace in the present life; but the punishment of the Hereafter is surely greater, if only they knew.

He killed them all, and He will kill you Meccans if you continue ignoring His warnings after He made the Koran in your own tongue so as to render it easy to understand.

19:97 For We made it easy (the Qur'an) [to understand] in your own tongue, so as to announce the good news to the God-Fearing and warn through it (the Meccan unbelievers).

19:98 And how many generations before them We have destroyed! Do you perceive any one of them or hear any sound of theirs?

### **A Man Bewitched**

Some thought of Muhammad as a man bewitched.

17:45 When you recite the Qur'an, We will place between you and those who do not believe in the Hereafter a hidden curtain.

17:46 And We have placed veils upon their hearts and deafness in their ears lest they understand it. And if you

mention your Lord alone in the Qur'an, they turn their backs in aversion.

17:47 We know best what they listen to when they listen to you, as they confer secretly when the wrongdoers say: "You only follow a man bewitched."

17:48 See how they coin similes for you and so go astray and are unable to find their way.

Moududi:

This is to say that they expressed different opinions at different times which contradicted each other. Sometimes they said, "You are a sorcerer" and at other times, "You have been bewitched by someone, or you are a poet or you are possessed of some evil spirit." These contradictory things were a proof that they did not know the reality.

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25:7 And they say: "What is the matter with the Messenger? He eats food and strolls in the markets. If only an angel had been sent to him to be a warner with him;

25:8 "Or a treasure had been cast upon him, or he was given a garden from which he could eat." And the wrongdoers say: "You only follow a man bewitched."

25:9 See how they invent the parables for you, and so they err, and they cannot find their way.

### **Not Worthy**

The tribal leaders of Mecca, given their importance, thought that they were just as worthy of receiving revelations, "scrolls unrolled" in Revelation 74:52. Until that happened, they would not believe.

74:49 Why are they running away from the Reminder (the Qur'an)?

74:50 As though they were startled asses,

74:51 Fleeing from a lion?

74:52 Rather, each one of them wishes to be given scrolls unrolled.

74:53 No, they do not fear the Hereafter.

74:54 No, it is indeed a Reminder.

74:55 So that he who wishes might remember it.

74:56 But they will only remember if Allah wishes. He is worthy to be feared and worthy to forgive.

### **An Object of Curiosity**

In a strange conversation between Allah and Muhammad where God appears to be swearing by God (Revelation 70:40), we learn that Muhammad was obviously, for many, an object of curiosity who attracted large enough crowds for some to have to stretch their necks to get a glimpse of the man.

70:36 What is it with the unbelievers stretching their necks towards you?

70:37 From the right and the left banding together?

What appears to be a question from Muhammad:

70:38 Does every one of them hope to enter the Garden of Bliss?

God, in answering the question asked, swears by Himself (Revelation 70:40: "No, I swear by the Lord of the East and the West") that He is capable of doing what He insists, by God, He can do. WOW!

70:39 Not at all. We have created them from what they know.

70:40 No, I swear by the Lord of the East and the West that We are Capable,

70:41 Of Replacing them by many who are better than they; and We shall not be outstripped.

70:42 So leave them to romp and play till they meet their Day, which they have been promised.

70:43 The Day they will come out of their tombs hastily, as though they are hurrying towards their idols;

70:44 Their eyes cast down; overwhelmed by humiliation. That is the Day which they were promised.

### **A Poor Man**

If Muhammad is who he says he is, an intimate of the Almighty, why has Allah, or the knowledge imparted by God, not made him a wealthy man?

7:188 Say: "I do not have the power to benefit or harm myself, except as Allah pleases. Had I the knowledge of the Unseen, I would have acquired much good, and misfortune would not have touched me. I am only a warner and a bearer of good news to a people who believe."

### **Allah Mocked**

Muhammad was not the only one mocked. Those who made fun of the most effective of schemers by perverting His "Beautiful Names" (99 superlatives by which God refers to Himself in the Koran), Allah will surreptitiously lead "step by step" to their destruction.

7:180 And to Allah belong the Most Beautiful Names; so call Him by them and leave those who pervert His Names. They shall be punished for what they used to do.

7:181 And among those We have created is a nation that guides by the truth, and by it the nation acts justly.

7:182 And those who deny Our Revelations, We shall lure them step by step to destruction, whence they do not know.

7:183 And I will grant them respite. Surely My Scheme is very effective.

The mocking may have had much to do with the god "in charge of everything" not willing to give any sign that His distraught "warner" is the genuine article.

11:12 Perhaps you are passing over (not reciting) a part of what is revealed to you, and your heart is distressed lest they should say: "If only a treasure was sent down upon him or an angel accompanied him!" You are only a warner, and Allah is in charge of everything.



## Allah's Response to the Slander

4:166 But Allah bears witness (to your [Muhammad's] Prophethood) by what He has revealed to you, that He revealed it with His Knowledge. The angels bear witness too, and Allah suffices as a witness!

4:167 Indeed, those who disbelieve and debar other from the path of Allah have gone far astray!

4:168 Those who disbelieve and act unjustly, Allah will never forgive them nor lead them to any path,

4:169 Other than the path of Hell, abiding therein forever. That for Allah is an easy matter!

4:170 O mankind, the Messenger has come to you with the truth from your Lord. If you believe, it would be better for you; but if you disbelieve then surely to Allah belongs what is in the heavens and on the earth. Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

### **Not a Soothsayer, Nor a Madman, Nor a Fabricator**

52:29 So remind [them]; for you (Muhammad) are not, by the Grace of your Lord, a soothsayer or a madman.

52:30 Or do they say: "A poet for whom we await an uncertain fate."

52:31 Say: "Await, I am indeed with you awaiting."

52:32 Or do their minds bid them to do this; or are they, rather, an aggressive people?

52:33 Or do they say: "He fabricated it?" No, they believe not.

Prove it!

52:34 Let them bring, then, a discourse like it, if they are truthful.

52:35 Were they created out of nothing, or are they like creators?

52:36 Or did they create the heavens and the earth? No, they do not believe with certainty.

52:37 Or do they possess the treasures of your Lord; or are they the domineering ones?

52:38 Or, do they have a ladder whereon they listen (to what is transpiring in the Higher Realm, *Moududi*). Let their listener, then, bring a manifest authority.

52:39 Or, does He have the daughters and you have the sons?

52:40 Or, are you asking them a wage; therefore they are weighted down with debt?

52:41 Or, do they do they have knowledge of the Unseen, and so they are writing it down?

52:42 Or, do they desire to scheme? The unbelievers are truly the object of scheming.

52:43 Or, do they have a god other than Allah? Allah will be exalted above what they associate!

Even if We had pieces of Paradise fall to the ground, the unbelievers would say they're cloud fragments, nothing to see here.

52:44 "If they see a lump falling down from the sky, they say: "A mass of clouds."

52:45 Leave them, then, till they encounter the Day on which they will be thunderstruck;

52:46 The Day when their cunning will avail them nothing, and they will not be supported.

52:47 And the wrongdoers shall suffer a punishment beyond that.

## **A Retribution Double Standard**

### THE RAMPARTS

#### **7 Al-A'râf**

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

7:1 Alif - Lam - Mim - Sad.

7:2 [This is] a Book revealed to you (Muhammad); let there be no gall in your heart because of it. [It is revealed] so that you may warn with it, and as a reminder to the believers.

7:3 Follow what has been revealed to you from your Lord and do not follow other patrons besides Him. How little you (O people, *Moududi*) heed the warning.

7:4 How many a town We have destroyed; Our might struck them at night or while they were napping.

7:5 Their only assertion when Our Might struck them was to say: "We have indeed been wrongdoers."

A town, a city, a civilization could not escape the cruel fate Allah had in store for it, as He explained to Muhammad, who may have wondered why, in his lifetime, God did not obliterate forthwith cities where people enjoyed life instead of humbling themselves before Him, as He had done so many times before.

50:36 How many a generation mightier than they have We destroyed before them? Search the land, then, is there any escape?

50:37 In that is a reminder to whoever has a heart or lends an ear, while he witnesses.

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30:7 They know the outward aspect of the present life, but they are heedless of the Hereafter.

30:8 Have they not considered within themselves that Allah did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them except in truth and at an appointed time? Yet many people disbelieve in the Encounter of their Lord.

30:9 Have they not travelled in the land to see what was the fate of those who preceded them? They were stauncher than them in strength, and they ploughed the earth and built it up better than they themselves built it up, and their Messengers came to them with the clear proofs. Allah would never wrong them, but they wronged themselves.

30:10 Then, evil was the end of those who committed the gravest sin; for they have denounced Allah's Signs and used to scoff at them.

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Allah commits “evil,” e.g., obliteration of cities and people, to terrorise the survivors into submitting (see *Getting to Know Allah: “Allah Days,”* Boreal Books).

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Allah’s claims to have utterly destroyed countless people simply for calling His messengers liars, while leaving unscathed the Arabs who relentlessly ridiculed Muhammad and his otherworldly book (which would eventually compel him to leave Mecca), only increased the mocking. Muhammad fled Mecca for Medina after getting wind of another plan to kill him, which could be interpreted as being cast out, as revealed by God in the following revelation.

47:13 How many a city that was mightier than your city (Mecca), which cast you out (Muhammad), have We destroyed, and they have no supporter?

47:14 Is he who relies on a clear proof from his Lord like one whose evil action has been embellished for him? They have simply followed their fancies.

Allah did not even interfere with the first attempt to kill His cherished spokesman through suffocation with the stomach of a dead camel, nor did He punish the perpetrators (see Appendix Rukaya Saves her Father). Instead of showing even a modicum of the fury He had unleashed in the past on those who were less brazen, God simply had Muhammad repeat many of the same questions and phrases that made him a laughing stock in the first place.

21:33 It is He who created the night and the day, the sun and the moon, each floating in its orbit.

21:34 And We did not grant immortality to any human before you. If you die, are they then (*the Meccan unbelievers*) immortal?

21:35 Every living soul shall taste death, and We test you by evil and good as a temptation and unto Us you shall be returned.

21:36 And if the unbelievers see you, they only take you as an object of mockery [saying]: “Is this the one who talks about your gods?” And they disbelieve in the mention of the Compassionate.

21:37 Man is created in haste. I will bring you My Signs; so do not hasten them.

21:38 And they say: "When will this threat come to pass if you are truthful?"

21:39 If only the unbelievers knew the time when they will not be able to ward off the Fire from their faces or their backs, and they will not be helped!

21:40 But it will come upon them suddenly confounding them, and so they will not be able to repel it, nor will they be respited.

21:41 Many Messengers before you were mocked; then those who scoffed at them were afflicted by that which they used to mock.

21:42 Say: "Who guards you night and day against the Compassionate?" Yet they turn away from the mention of their Lord.

21:43 Or do they have gods who will defend them against Us! They cannot help themselves and they will not be protected from Us?

21:44 No, We gave ease to those people and their fathers until they became advanced in age. Do they not see that We come upon the land [under their control] reducing it from its extremities (we are causing the influence of Islam to spread fast in the land and are thus reducing the boundaries of the influence of its opponents, *Moududi*)? Are they then the victors?

21:45 Say: "I only warn you through the Revelation; but the deaf people do not hear the call, when they are warned."

21:46 And if the least hint of your Lord's punishment touches them, they will surely say: "Woe to us; we have been truly wrongdoers."

21:47 We set up the just scales for the Day of Resurrection, so that no soul shall be wronged a whit; and even if it be the weight of a mustard seed, We shall produce it. We suffice as reckoners.

Allah reminds the mockers of their origins and wonders out loud, so to speak, as to whether those who mock will remember what was said to them by His Messenger.

37:11 So ask them: "Are they mightier in constitution than those We have created?" We have actually created them from sticky clay.

37:12 You rather wonder, while they mock.

37:13 If they are reminded, they will not remember.

37:14 And if they see a sign, they simply scoff.

### **You Are Not the First to be Mocked!**

Allah again acknowledges that all the messengers He sent before His latest and greatest were accused of not being 'right in the head' at least once during their lives in revelations meant to reassure Muhammad that he is not alone. That He again mentions that they were brutally dealt with while Muhammad's Arab detractors continue to mock him with impunity may not have helped.

6:10 Other Messengers before you were mocked; but those who scoffed at them were stricken with that at which they scoffed.

6:11 Say: "Travel in the land and look what was the fate of those who disbelieved [in the Messengers]."

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43:6 How many a Prophet have We sent unto the ancients?

43:7 But not a Prophet came to them whom they did not mock.

43:8 So We destroyed a people mightier than they in valour; and the example of the ancients was gone.

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13:30 Thus We have sent you (*Muhammad*) forth to a nation before which other nations had passed away, so as to recite to them what We revealed to you; and yet they deny the Compassionate. Say: "He is my Lord; there is no god but he. In Him I have put my trust and unto Him is my return."

13:31 Had there been a Qur'an by which the mountains are made to move, or the land cleft asunder, or the dead spoken to [they would not believe]. No, the whole affair is Allah's. Do not the believers know that had Allah pleased, he would have guided all mankind? As for those who disbelieve, disaster will not cease to afflict them because of what they did or will settle near their homes until Allah's Promise is fulfilled. Surely Allah does not break His Promise.

13:32 Many Messengers before you were mocked; so I gave the unbelievers a respite; then I seized them. How then was my retribution!

### **Bear With It**

Sticks and stones!

36:74 Yet, they have taken, apart from Allah, other gods that they might receive support.

36:75 But they cannot support them, although they are arrayed as troops for them.

36:76 Do not let their words cause you grief; We know what they reveal and what they conceal.

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6:33 We know that what they say grieves you. For they do not deny what you say; but the wrongdoers [continue to] deny Allah's Revelations.

6:34 Other Messengers were denounced before you, but they put up with the denunciation, and they were injured until Our Help came to them. None can change the Words (His Promises to support His Messengers) of Allah. Tidings have already been imparted about those Messengers.

6:35 And if you find their aversion unbearable, seek, if you can, a hole in the earth or a ladder to the sky in order to bring them a sign. Had Allah pleased, He would surely have led them all to guidance; so do not be one of the ignorant.

6:36 Only those who hear will respond, and the dead will be raised by Allah; and unto Him they shall be returned.

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6:37 And they also say: "Why has no sign (miracle) come down to him from His Lord?" Say: "Allah is surely Able to send down a sign, but most of them do not know."

6:38 There is no animal [crawling] on land or a bird flying with its wings, but are communities like yourselves. We have not left anything out in the Book. Then unto their Lord they shall be gathered.

6:39 And those who deny Our Revelations are deaf and dumb in total darkness. Whoever Allah pleases, He will lead astray; and whoever He pleases, He will lead onto a straight path.

Who are they gonna call?

6:40 Say: "Tell me, if Allah's Punishment overtakes you, or the Hour (Judgement Day) strikes, would you call upon any other than Allah, if you are truthful?"

6:41 Nay, upon Him you will call and if He will lighten that about which you call, if He pleases; and then you will forget what you used to associate with [with Him].

Don't be like Jonah if you want to avoid ending up in the belly of a fish (see *Shared Prophets: "Jonas,"* Boreal Books for all revelations pertaining to Jonas, also referred to as Jonah in the Koran).

68:48 Bear up with your Lord's Judgement, then, and do not be like the Man in the Whale (Jonah), when he called out fully distressed.

68:49 Had not a Grace from his Lord been meted out to him, he would have been cast out in the wilderness, fully despised.

68:50 But his Lord chose him and made him one of the righteous.

You are in Our Thoughts.

52:48 Bear with your Lord's Judgement, for you are in Our Thoughts; and proclaim the Praise of Your Lord when you arise;

52:49 And in the night glorify Him, and at the receding of the stars.

It's not all bad, so toil on, Muhammad, toil on.



THE DILATION

**94 Ash-Sharh**

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

94:1 Did We not dilate your breasts;

94:2 And lift from you your burden;

94:3 Which had weighted down your back?

94:4 Did We not exalt your name?

94:5 Surely, along with hardship is ease.

94:6 Surely, along with hardship is ease (*repeated, not a typo!*).

94:7 So when you have finished, toil on;

94:8 And unto your Lord, incline.

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74:6 Do not give in expectation of increased return,

74:7 And for the sake of your Lord, persevere.

**Be Patient**

11:110 And We have given Moses the Book, but discord broke out around it; and but for a Word that preceded from your Lord, the matter would have been decided between them. They are indeed in disturbing doubt with respect to it.

11:111 And your Lord will surely pay them all in full for their works. He is truly aware of what they do.

11:112 Be then upright as you have been commanded, together with those who repented with you, and do not be unjust; for He sees whatever you do.

11:113 And do not incline towards the wrongdoers, lest the Fire should touch you. You have no supporters apart from Allah, and you will not be helped.

11:114 And perform the prayer at the two ends of the day and [the first] watches of the night. Surely the good deeds will wipe out the evil deeds; that is a reminder for those who remember.

11:115 And be patient; for Allah does not waste the reward of the righteous.

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16:125 Call to the Way of Your Lord with wisdom and mild exhortation, and argue with them in the best manner. Your Lord surely knows those who stray from His Path, and He knows well those who are rightly guided.

16:126 If you punish, then let your punishment be proportionate to the wrong done to you. Yet should you forbear, that is truly better for those who forbear.

16:127 Be patient; yet your patience is only through Allah. Do not grieve for them (the unbelievers), and do not be distressed on account of what they devise.

16:128 Allah is with those who are God-fearing and those who are beneficent.

Muhammad would not heed God's advice in Revelation 16:26 to "let your punishment be proportionate to the wrong done to [him]." When came time to avenge those who had mocked him, Muhammad had those who used rhyme, the poets, assassinated (see *Jihad in the Koran: "Jews of Medina,"* Boreal Books) as well as young girls who had mocked him in songs (see *Jihad in the Koran: "Mecca Surrenders,"* Boreal Books).

### **Take a break**

37:167 Even though they might say:

37:168 "If we had been given a Reminder from the ancients,

37:169 "We would have been among Allah's sincere servants."

37:170 Then they disbelieved in it (the Qur'an). Surely they will learn.

37:171 Our Word unto the Messengers has already gone out.

37:172 They will surely be supported.

37:173 And Our Hosts (Allah's armies, *Moududi*) are the true victors.

37:174 So, turn away (O Muhammad) from them for a while.

37:175 And look at them; they shall soon be able to see (their defeat and your victory with their own eyes, *Moududi*).

37:176 Are they seeking to hasten our punishment?

37:177 When it descends upon their backyard, wretched is the morning of those forewarned!

37:178 And turn away from them a while.

37:179 And look, for they shall be able to see.

37:180 Exulted be your Lord, the Lord of Glory, above the allegations.

37:181 And peace be upon the Messengers.

37:182 And praise to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

### **It's Not Your Fault**

2:105 Neither the unbelievers among the People of the Book nor the polytheists wish to see any good (the Revelations) sent down to you from your Lord. Allah favours with His Mercy whomever He wishes, and Allah's Bounty is great.

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36:43 And if We wish, We would drown them; then there is none to deliver them, nor will they be rescued.

36:44 Except for a mercy from Us and enjoyment for a while.

36:45 If it is said to them: "Beware what came before you and what is behind you, that perchance you might receive mercy."

36:46 Yet, no Sign of their Lord's Signs comes to them but they turn away from it.

The difficulty in getting more people to accept his claim of speaking on God's behalf caused the budding Prophet, on more than one occasion, to doubt his ability to fulfil his mission. Numerous times, as previously encountered, Allah, to shore up Muhammad's morale, explains that if some refused to believe and obey him, it had nothing to do with the superbly drafted message and excellent delivery. It is only because He wants it that way; this is all part of the Plan, as He explains in Surah Yâ Sin, which Muhammad called the Heart of the Koran.

**It was narrated that Anas said:**

“The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah (sic) be upon him) said: ‘Everything has a heart and the heart of the Qur’an (sic) is Ya-Seen. Whoever recites Ya-Seen (sic), Allaah will record for him the reward of reading the Qur’an ten times.’”

*al-Tirmidhi*

In Yâ Sîn, Allah again reminds Muhammad that those whom He does not want as believers, such as the arrogant, He causes to remain unbelievers. In “the Heart of the Koran,” Allah reveals that He has restrained the arrogant from becoming believers by placing “invisible shackles upon their necks down to their chins; and so their heads are held high.” To be absolutely sure the arrogant never believe, He has “placed in front of them a barrier and behind them a barrier” and “covered their eyes so they do not see” so they are, therefore, oblivious to His Signs.

### 36 YÂ SÎN

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

36:1 Yâ - Sîn (came to be one of the Prophet’s names)

36:2 By the wise Qur’an.

36:3 You are truly one of the Messengers.

36:4 Upon a straight path.

36:5 It is the Revelation of the All-Mighty, the Merciful.

36:6 To warn a people, whose fathers were not warned and so they are heedless.

36:7 The sentence has been passed against most of them, for what they do not believe.

36:8 We have placed shackles upon their necks down to their chins; and so their heads are held high.

36:9 And We placed in front of them a barrier and behind them a barrier and We have covered their eyes so they do not see.

36:10 It is the same whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe.

36:11 You only warn him who follows the Reminder and fears the All Compassionate though unseen. Announce to him, then, the good news of forgiveness and a generous wage.

In Surah 10, The Cave, the "barrier" becomes "coverings upon their hearts" (Revelation 18:57).

18:56 We do not send Messengers except as bearer of good news and warners; yet the unbelievers dispute with falsehood, to refute the truth thereby; and they take My Revelations and what they were warned about as an object of mockery.

18:57 And who is more unjust than one who, upon being reminded of his Lord's Revelations, turns away from them, and forgets what his hands have done? We have placed coverings upon their hearts lest they understand it (the Qur'an), and put a deafness in their ears. If you call them to the guidance they will never be guided.

18:58 And your Lord is All-Forgiving and Merciful. Were He to call them to account for what they have earned, He would have hastened their punishment. However, they have an appointment from which they will find no escape.

18:59 And those towns, We have destroyed them when they did wrong, and We set for their destruction an appointed time.

If only those Allah wishes to lead will be led, it only makes sense for God to tell Muhammad to preach, so to speak, to the choir (Revelation 18:28).

18:27 Recite what was revealed to you from your Lord's Book; no one can alter His Words, and from Him, you will find no refuge.

18:28 And confine yourself to those who call upon their Lord, morning and evening, desiring His Face. And let not your eyes wander away from them, desiring the finery of the present life. And do not obey him whose heart We have made heedless of Our Remembrance, he has followed his own desires, and his case has become hopeless.

It's the Jews' fault.

2:75 Do you then hope that they will believe in you when a group of them (the Jews) did hear the Word of Allah, then after they understood it, they knowingly perverted it?

2:76 And when they meet those who have believed they say: "We believe," but when they come together privately, they say: "Will you tell them what Allah has revealed to you (about Muhammad) so that they might dispute with you concerning it before your Lord? Have you no sense?"

2:77 Do they not know that Allah knows what they conceal and what they reveal?

2:78 Among them are illiterate people who know nothing of the Book (the Scriptures) except illusory desires. Indeed, they are only conjecturing.

The Jews of Medina to whom Muhammad preached, along with the Arabs of the city and those who take them as friends, will get their comeuppance.

58:14 Have you not considered those who befriended a people (the Jews of Medina, *Moududi*) who incurred Allah's Wrath? They are not of you nor of them; and they swear in falsehood knowingly.

58:15 Allah has prepared for them a terrible punishment. Evil indeed is what they used to do.

58:16 They took their oaths as a smoke-screen, and so they debarred access to Allah's Path. Theirs, then, is a demeaning punishment.

58:17 Neither their possessions nor their children shall avail them anything against Allah. Those are the Companions of the Fire, dwelling therein forever.

58:18 On the Day Allah shall resurrect all and they will swear to Him as they swear to you, thinking that they have something to gain. Indeed, they are the liars.

58:19 Satan has taken a hold of them, and so caused them to forget the mention of Allah. Those are the party of Satan; indeed the party of Satan are the losers.

## **The Last Laugh**

Don't worry, I will take care of you. After all, the book I have imparted to you is a mercy in and of itself.

28:85 He Who imparted the Qur'an to you will surely return you to a safe resort. Say: "My Lord knows best who has brought the guidance and who is in manifest error."

28:86 You did not expect that the Book will be transmitted to you, except as a mercy from your Lord. So, do not be a partisan of the unbelievers.

Whatever happens, you and I will have the last laugh.

6:135 Say: "O My people, do whatever you can; and I shall do what I can. You shall surely know whose is the happy outcome in the Hereafter. Indeed, the wrongdoers shall not prosper."

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10:20 And they say: "If only a sign is sent to him from His Lord." Say then: "The Unseen belongs to Allah; so wait, I will be waiting with you."

I see and hear everything.

10:65 And let not what they say grieve you. All power is Allah's; He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

In Revelation 15:13, Allah admits there is nothing He can do about the mocking, for even with the examples of ancient civilizations destroyed for not taking His Messengers seriously, and even if He showed heaven to the mocking unbelievers by opening one of its seven gates, they would think themselves "bewitched."

15:9 It is truly We who have revealed the Reminder, and We are truly its guardians.

15:10 And We have sent forth Messengers before you to the sects of old.

15:11 And no Messenger came to them but they mocked him.

15:12 That is how We instill it into the hearts of the sinners.

15:13 They do not believe in him despite the example of the ancients.

15:14 And if We open for them a gate of heaven, so that they could continue to ascend through it;

15:15 They would simply say: "Our eyes have been covered over, or rather we are a people bewitched."

In a surah that has little to do with poets, its name notwithstanding, God reminds an "exhausted" Muhammad that if He had wanted to, He would have sent the unbelievers a sign that would have caused more than just a permanent cricked neck.

## THE POETS

### 26 Ash-Shu'ara'

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

26:1 Tah – Sin – Mim (the same letters occur at the beginning of Surah 28; the significance of this is not clear).

26:2 Those are the Signs of the Manifest Book.

26:3 Perhaps, you are exhausting yourself, because they will not believe.

26:4 If We will, We would send down on them from heaven a sign, so their necks will stay subjugated thereto.

26:5 No new reminder from the Compassionate ever comes to them but they will turn away from it.

A warning: what they used to mock will come back to haunt them, followed by a familiar boast as a sign.

26:6 They have indeed disbelieved; therefore, there will come to them the news of what they used to mock at.

26:7 Have they not considered the earth, how much We have caused to grow therein of every noble pair (fine vegetation, *Moududi*)?

26:8 There is surely in that a sign; but most of them will not believe.

26:9 Your Lord, indeed, is the All-Mighty, the Merciful.

As we approach the end of The Poets, Allah warns Muhammad about calling on other gods.



26:213 So do not call, with Allah, upon another god. For then you will be one of those chastised.

26:214 And warn your closest clan members.

26:215 And lower your wing humbly to those of the believers who follow you.

26:216 Should they disobey you, then say: "I am quit of what you are doing."

26:217 And put your trust in the All-Mighty, the Merciful;

26:218 Who sees you when you stand up;

26:219 And When you go around those who prostrate themselves.

26:220 He is indeed the All-Seeing, the All-Knowing.

What about those demons?

26:221 Shall I tell you upon whom do the demons descend?

26:222 They descend upon every vicious impostor.

26:223 They listen, but most of them are liars.

Revelations about actual poets who mocked Muhammad in rhyme brings a close to this surah. Poets were much admired in pre-Islamic Arabia, and some had a large following not unlike the rock stars of today. As aforementioned, Muhammad had the poets who mocked him assassinated.

26:224 And as to the poets, the perverse follow them.

26:225 Do you not see that they wander aimlessly in every glen?

26:226 And that they say what they do not do?

26:227 Except for those who believe and do the righteous deeds, mention Allah frequently, and are victorious after they were wronged. Surely, the wrongdoers shall know what outcome is ultimately theirs.

### **Angels Would Make No Difference**

There are signs to God's greatness you can see. Then, there are those you can't see because He won't let you, such as His angels—except for

those He chooses to speak on His behalf at different periods in time, such as Muhammad.

6:109 They swear by Allah most solemnly that, were a sign to come to them, they would surely believe in it. Say: "Signs are only with Allah"; but how do you know that, if those signs come, they will still not believe?

6:110 And We will divert their hearts and their sights [from the truth], as they failed at first to believe in it; and We shall leave them dumbfounded in their wrongdoing.

6:111 Even if We send the angels to them and the dead speak to them, and if We bring everything before them, they would not believe, unless Allah wills; but most of them are ignorant.

Muhammad's detractors asked him for angels that they, too, could see and engage with if he was indeed telling the truth.

15:7 "Why do you not bring us the angels, if you are truthful?"

Allah, as aforementioned, does send angels to deliver the truth to those who speak on His behalf.

15:8 We do not send the angels down except with the Truth; and then they will have no respite.

In Surah, The Criterion, Allah confirms that those who wanted to see the angels (or Him) before believing will indeed see them on Judgement Day, but they will be sorry they ever asked, for they will be treated like 'criminals'.

25:19 They have denounced you as liars regarding what you say: and so you are not able to divert the punishment or give support. Who does wrong among you, We shall make him taste a grievous punishment.

25:20 We never sent any Messengers before you but they ate food and strolled in the markets; and We made some of you tempters to each other. Will you stand fast? Your Lord is All-Seeing.

25:21 And those who do not hope for Our Encounter, say: "If only the angels were sent down to us, or we were made to see our Lord." They have grown arrogant within themselves and became most overbearing.

25:22 The Day they see the angels, there is no longer any cause for rejoicing for the criminals; and they (the angels) will say: "A firm prohibition [upon you]."

25:23 And We shall proceed to the work they did and turn it into scattered dust.

The angels themselves put in their angels' worth.

19:64 We (the angels) do not come down except at the Command of your Lord. His is what is before us, what is behind us and what is in between. Your Lord is never forgetful.

19:65 Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them. So worship Him and be steadfast in His Worship; do you know anyone who is worthy of the same name?

### **The Jinn Believe in Muhammad**

Allah would also have the jinn—invisible beings that even Muhammad could not discern (see *Getting to Know Allah: "Allah and the Jinn,"* Boreal Books)—rally to His spokesman's defence.

46:29 And when We dispatched towards you a group of jinn to listen to the Qur'an, and they attended to it, they said: "Listen", but when it was finished they returned to their own people to warn them.

46:30 They said: "O our people, we have heard a Book sent down after Moses, confirming what came before it and guiding to the truth and to a Straight Path.

46:31 "O our people, respond to the caller (Muhammad) unto Allah and believe in him, and He (Allah) will forgive you some of your sins and save you from a painful punishment."

46:32 He who does not answer the caller unto Allah will not thwart Him on earth and he will not have any protectors apart from Him. Such people are in manifest error.

46:33 Have they not seen that Allah, Who has created the heavens and the earth and has not been wearied by creating them, is Able to raise the dead? Yes, indeed, He has power over everything.

46:34 And on the Day that the unbelievers shall be exposed to the Fire [they will be asked]: "Is this not just?" They will say:

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“Yes, indeed, by our Lord.” He will then say: “Taste now the punishment for your disbelief.”

46:35 So bear patiently, as the Constant Messengers (Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus) bore up, and do not seek to hasten it (the punishment) for them. On that Day they shall see what they were promised, as if they had not lingered except for a single hour of the day. This is a proclamation. Shall any but the sinful people be destroyed?

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Muhammad would ask God to show him what the unbelievers were promised, i.e., Hell.

23:93 Say: “Lord, you would show me what they are promised.

23:94 “Lord do not reckon Me among the wrongdoing people”.

23:95 And We are surely Able to show you what We promised them.

23:96 Ward off evil with that which is fairer. We know best what they describe (utter against you, Moududi).

23:97 And say: “Lord, I seek refuge with you from the goadings (sic) of the devils.

23:98 “And I seek refuge with You lest they join me.”

## **Muhammad's Duty and His Fate if He Lied**

5:99 The duty of the Messenger is only to deliver the Message, and Allah knows what you reveal and you conceal.

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13:35 The likeness of Paradise, which the righteous have been promised is this: rivers flow beneath it, its produce and shade are permanent. That is the ultimate fate of those who guard against evil; but the fate of the unbelievers is the Fire.

13:36 And those (*Messengers who came before*) to whom We have given the Book rejoice in what was revealed to you but some of the factions deny a part of it. Say: "I have only been commanded to worship Allah and not to associate any one with Him; Him I call, and unto Him is my return."

13:37 And thus We revealed it [to be a Book of] judgement in Arabic; and were you to follow their desires after the knowledge which came to you, you would have neither a guardian nor a protector [to save you] from Allah].

13:38 And We have sent forth Messengers before you and given them wives and progeny; but no Messenger had the power to come up with a sign except with Allah's Permission. Every age as its own Book.

13:39 Allah blots out and confirms what He pleases; and with Him is the Mother of the Book.

13:40 And whether We show you part of what We promised them or cause you to die, your duty is to deliver the Message and it is for Us to do the reckoning.

13:41 Do they not see how We tackle the earth, causing it to shrink from its extremities? When Allah judges no one can reverse His Judgement. And He is Quick in calling to account.

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13:42 Those who came before them did scheme, but Allah is Master of all scheming. He knows what each soul earns, and the unbelievers shall know to whom is the happy end in the Hereafter.

13:43 The unbelievers say: "You are not a Messenger." Say: "Allah suffices as a witness between me and you, as well as those who have a knowledge of the Book."

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69:38 No; I swear by what you see;

69:39 And what you do not see.

69:40 It is the speech of a noble Messenger;

69:41 And it is not the speech of a poet. How little do you believe!

69:42 Nor the speech of a soothsayer; how little do you remember.

69:43 It is the revelations from the Lord of the Worlds.

69:44 Had he (Muhammad) imputed to us falsely some statements;

69:45 We would have seized him by the right arm;

69:46 Then cut off his great artery.

69:47 None of you would have restrained us from him.

69:48 Surely, it (the Qur'an) is a reminder for the God-fearing.

69:49 And We know that some of you will denounce it as lies.

69:50 And it is surely a source of grief for the unbelievers;

69:51 And it is surely the certain truth.

69:52 So, glorify the Name of your Lord, the Sublime.

Muhammad, at one time, must have nearly let himself be convinced to change God's Message.

33:1 O Prophet, fear Allah and do not obey the unbelievers and the hypocrites. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

33:2 And follow what is revealed to you from your Lord. Indeed, Allah is Well-Informed about what you do.

33:3 And trust in Allah; Allah suffices as a Guardian.

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17:73 They were about to lure you away from what we have revealed to you, so that you might replace it with false inventions against Us. Then they would have taken you for a friend.

17:74 Had We not enabled you to stand firm, you might have inclined towards them a little.

17:75 Then, We would have made you taste double [the punishment in life] and double the punishment after death, and then you would not have found any supporters against Us.

17:76 They were about to provoke you so as to expel you from the land. Then they would not stay after you except a little while.

17:77 This was Our Way with those Messengers We sent before you, and you will not find any change in Our Way.

17:83 And when We are gracious to man, he turns away and withdraws haughtily; and if adversity touches him, he is in despair (he loses hope in Allah's Mercy<sup>11</sup>).

17:84 Say: "Everyone acts according to his own manner, but your Lord knows well who is best guided on his way.

17:85 And they ask you about the Spirit (Gabriel, *Moududi*). Say: "The Spirit is of my Lord's Command, and you have not been given except a little knowledge."

Allah enabled Muhammad to stand firm in Revelation 17:74 but as He reminds him in Revelation 17:86, if He had wanted to, He could have manipulated him just like He manipulates those whom He doesn't care to lead to the Straight Path—Revelation 17:84 notwithstanding—and he would have been a goner.

17:86 If We please, We certainly can blot out that which We have revealed to you; then you would find no guardian to assist you against Us.

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<sup>11</sup> Yās (despair), to doubt Allah's Mercy, is the second greatest sin a Muslim can commit, the first being Shirk, associating other gods with Allah.

17:87 [But it was left] as a Mercy from your Lord. His favours upon you have surely been great.

Muhammad may not only have saved himself by telling the Truth and not changing the messages Gabriel delivered, but also the Arabs, who, had they not eventually believed, might have suffered the fate of other civilizations with the audacity to deny Allah's clear proofs.

10:13 And We have destroyed generations before you, when they did wrong and their Messengers brought them the clear proofs, but they would not believe. Thus We reward the wicked sinners.

10:14 Then We made you successors on earth after them, to see how you would behave.

10:15 And if Our revelations are clearly recited to them, those who do not hope to meet Us say: "Bring a Qur'an other than this one or alter it." Say: "It is not for me to alter it of my own accord. I only follow what is revealed to me. Indeed, I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the punishment of a Fateful Day (Judgement Day)."

10:16 Say: "If Allah had willed, I would not have recited it to you, and He would not have told you about it. I have dwelt in your midst a lifetime before it. Do you not understand?"

Muhammad remained steadfast in his duty to Allah, even as God revealed in Verse 39:36 that the unbelievers tried to frighten him with their idols.

39:36 Does not Allah suffice His servant? Yet they frightened you with those apart from Him (that is, idols). Whomever Allah leads astray will have no other guide.

39:37 And whomever Allah guides none will lead astray. Is not Allah All-Mighty, Vengeful?

39:38 If you ask them (*the Meccans*): "Who has created the heavens and the earth?", they will reply: "Allah." Say: "Do you see, then? What you call upon, apart from Allah, should Allah wish me ill, will they lift His ill? Or should Allah will a mercy for me, will they withhold His Mercy?" Say: "Allah suffices for me. In Him those who trust should put their trust."



39:39 Say: "My people, act according to your ability. I am acting; then you will know.

A little-known fact is that Allah also sent messengers to the common people, the "common nations" in Revelation 62:2.

FRIDAY, OR THE CONGREGATION

60 Al-Jumu'ah

*In the Name of Allah,  
The Compassionate, the Merciful*

62:1 Everything in the heavens and on the earth glorifies Allah, the King, the Holy One, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

62:2 It is He Who raised up from the common nations<sup>12</sup> a Messenger of their own, reciting to them His Signs, purifying them and teaching them the Book and the wisdom, although they had been in manifest error<sup>13</sup> before that;

62:3 And others from them, who had not joined them yet. He is the All-Mighty, the Wise.

62:4 That is Allah's Bounty which He imparts to whomever He pleases; and to Allah belongs the Great Bounty.

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<sup>12</sup> "al-Ummiyyun in Arabic which could also mean the illiterates, or the people of no revealed scripture, as against People of the Book, or Jews and Christians." *Fakhry*

<sup>13</sup> 39:22 Now, what of one whose breast Allah has dilated unto Islam, so that he basks in light from his Lord? Woe betide then the hard-hearted, upon Allah's mention. Those are in manifest error.

# **Rhetoric to the Rescue**

## **A Variation on the Socratic Method**

Answering a question with another question is known as the Socratic Method. In a variation of this technique, God instructs Muhammad to ask a question to his audience, predict the answer they will give, and then He offers him the follow-up question to ask that should leave the responders dumbfounded.

23:84 Say: "Whose is the earth and all those in it, if you really know?"

23:85 They will say: "Allah's"; say: "Do you not reflect, then?"

23:86 Say: "Who is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the Mighty Throne?"

23:87 They will say: "They are Allah's." Say: "Do you not fear God then?"

23:88 Say: "In whose hand is the dominion of everything, protecting and is not protected, if you really know?"

23:89 They will say: "[In] Allah's." Say: "How then are you bewitched?"

23:90 Nay, We brought them the truth, but they are liars.

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29:61 And if you ask them: "Who created the heavens and the earth and subdued the sun and the moon?", they will say: "Allah." Why then do they vacillate?

29:62 Allah expends the provisions for whomever He wishes of His servants or restricts it. Surely, Allah has knowledge of all things.

29:63 And if you ask them: "Who sends from heaven water [with which] He revives the earth after it was dead?", they will say: "Allah." Say: "Praise be to Allah." Yet most of them do not understand.

## **A Twist on Hypophora**

Hypophora is a rhetorical device where you answer your own questions. Muhammad, on instructions from God, used this often, as in the following:

6:13 To Him belongs whatever comes to rest in the day and in the night; and He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

6:14 Say: "Shall I take as guardian anyone other than Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, and Who feeds and is not fed?" Say: "I have been commanded to be the first to submit<sup>14</sup> and not to be one of the polytheists."

6:15 Say: "Indeed, if I disobey my Lord, I fear the punishment of a Fateful Day (Judgement Day)."

6:16 Whoever is spared on that Day has gained His Mercy, and that is indeed the manifest triumph!

6:17 And if Allah lets you suffer an affliction, no one can lift it except He; and if He accords you any good, He surely has power over everything.

6:18 And He is Sovereign over His servants and He is Wise, Well Acquainted with all things.

6:19 Say: "What (sic) has the greatest testimony?" Say: "Allah is Witness between you and me, and He has revealed this Qur'an to me so that I may warn you and whomever it may reach. Do you indeed testify that there are gods besides Allah?" Say: "I do not testify." Say: "He is indeed One God and I am innocent of the association of idols [with Him]."

In defending Muhammad, Allah is careful not to name names.

22:8 And of the people, there is one who disputes concerning Allah without any knowledge, or guidance, or an illuminating Book.

22:9 Bearing himself proudly so as to lead people away from Allah's Path. His is disgrace in the present world and, on the Day of Resurrection, We shall make him taste the agony of burning;

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<sup>14</sup> Adam was the first to submit (see *Shared Prophets*: "Adam," Boreal Books); Allah may be referring to Muhammad as the first Arab of his generation to submit.

22:10 That is what your hands have advanced in deeds and Allah is never unjust to His servants.

6:12 Say: "To whom does that which exists in the heavens and on earth belong?" Say: "To Allah. He has prescribed to Himself Mercy. He will certainly gather you on the Day of Resurrection, which is undoubted. Those who lost their souls will not believe."

The only antagonizer of Muhammad singled out by name in the entire Koran is Abu Lahab, who called out God's spokesman for wasting his time. He gets an entire surah, albeit a small one, in which you have the Compassionate at His sadistic best making Lahab's innocent wife part of the ghastly punishment in store for her husband (see *Getting to Know Allah*: "Allah's Mercy," Boreal Books).

### **Say, Say, Say!**

The most important modification made to the Koran to clear up any confusion—the introduction of diacritical marks notwithstanding—has to be the verb 'say' as a command from Allah, with the impact of literally putting words in God's mouth. The initial text of the Koran was first put together by a fellow by the name of Zaid bin Thabit after Muhammad's passing. Thabit did it, for the most part, by going around asking what people remembered about what their deceased tribesman said was written in that book in Paradise. Thabit's effort was later revised by a committee of three, of which he was a member, on the orders of Caliph Uthman (see *Shared Prophets*: "The First Korans," Boreal Books). Thabit's original collection would obviously not have included prefixing each response with something to the effect of "this is what God told Muhammad to say," but simply recorded what they remembered Muhammad preaching, which was usually in the form of a complete surah. For example, consider the following three revelations:

27:91 I was only ordered to worship the Lord of this city (Mecca) which He has sanctified. His is everything, and I was ordered to be one of those who submit [to Allah];

27:92 And to recite the Qur'an. He who is well-guided is only well-guided to his own advantage, and to him who goes astray, say: "I am only one of the warners."

27:93 And say: "Praise be to Allah. He will show you His Signs and then you will recognize them. Your Lord is not heedless of what you do."

Without the use of the verb "say" in the third revelation of this sequence, it could easily be misconstrued as Muhammad explaining why he was sent rather than God telling the angel Gabriel to provide him with His response. The most prolific use of the verb "say" is in the Koran's defence of the accusation of slander. The inclusion of the verb "say" will often leave the impression, as it does in the following revelations, that Gabriel is whispering Allah's retort to the slander in His spokesman's ear in real time. This is simply not the case.

6:56 Say: "I have been forbidden to worship those you call upon apart from Allah." Say: "I do not follow your fancies, or else I would have gone astray and would not be one of the well-guided."

6:57 Say: "I have clear proof from my Lord, and you deny Him. I do not possess that which you seek to hasten [punishment]. Judgement is Allah's alone; He determines the right, and He is the Best-Decision-maker."

6:58 Say: "If I possessed that which you seek to hasten, the matter between you and me would have been settled; and Allah knows best the wrongdoers."

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6:71 Say: "Shall we call, besides Allah, on what neither profits nor harms us and turn on our heels, after Allah has guided us?" [We shall then be] like one who, being tempted by the devils in the land, is bewildered though he has friends who call him to guidance [saying]: "Come to us." Say: "Guidance from Allah is the true guidance. And we are commanded to submit to the Lord of the Words;

6:72 "And perform the prayers and fear Him; for He is the One unto Whom you shall be gathered."

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6:147 If they accuse you of lying, say: "Your Lord has an All-Encompassing Mercy and His Wrath cannot be prevented from afflicting the guilty people."

6:148 The polytheists will say: "If Allah pleased, we would not have associated [other gods with Him], nor would our fathers; nor would we have forbidden anything." Thus those before them denied the truth until they tasted Our Wrath. Say: "Do you have any knowledge which you can produce for us? You only follow conjectures and you only tell lies."

6:149 Say: "To Allah belongs the decisive argument. Had He pleased He would have guided you all."

6:150 Say: "Produce your witnesses to testify that Allah has forbidden this." Then, if they testify, do not bear witness with them, and do not follow the fancies of those who deny Our Revelations and those who do not believe in the Hereafter and set up equals with their Lord.

6:151 Say: "Come, I will recite what your Lord has forbidden you: that you associate nothing with Him; that you show kindness to your parents; that you do not kill your children for fear of poverty; We will provide for you and for them; that you do not approach indecencies, whether open or secret; and that you do not kill a living soul which Allah has forbidden you to kill except for a just cause. This is what Allah command you to do, so you may understand."

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6:158 What! Do they expect the angels, or your Lord or some of your Lord's signs to come to them? The day some of your Lord's Signs come, faith will not avail any soul which did not already accept it, nor earned some good through its faith. Say: "Wait, we too are awaiting."

6:159 Surely, you are not in any way part of those who have differentiated between parts of their religion and split into sects. Their fate is in Allah's Hands. He will inform them about what they have done.

6:160 He who comes up with a good deed shall have ten times its like; and he who comes up with an evil deed will only be requited for it once; and they shall not be wronged.

6:161 Say: "My Lord has guided me to a Straight Path, a right religion, the creed of Abraham, an upright man who was no polytheist."

6:162 Say: "My prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death, are Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds.

6:163 "He has no associate, and thus I am commanded, and I am the first of those who submit."

6:164 Say: "Shall I seek a Lord other than Allah, Who is the Lord of all things? Every soul is accountable for what [evil] it

commits, and no soul shall bear the burden of another soul. Then, unto your Lord is your return; and He will inform you about that over which you used to defer.

6:165 And it is He Who made you successors on earth, and raised some of you above the others in rank, so as to test you regarding what He has given you. Your Lord is indeed Quick in retribution, and He is indeed All-Forgiving, Merciful.

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18:103 Say: "Shall We inform you about the greatest losers of their works?

18:104 "Those whose endeavour in the present life has gone astray and they still believe that they are doing well.

18:105 "Those who disbelieve in the Revelations of their Lord and in meeting Him. Their works are in vain and We will not take any account of them on the Day of Resurrection.

18:106 "That is their reward - Hell, on account of their disbelief and their taking my Revelations and my Messengers as objects of scorn.

18:107 "Indeed, those who believe and do the good works, the Gardens of Paradise shall be their dwelling.

18:108 "Abiding therein forever and not desiring to be ever removed therefrom."

18:109 Say: "Were the sea to become ink for my Lord's Words, the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord are exhausted, even if We were to bring its like to replenish it."

18:110 Say: "I am only a mortal like you. It has been revealed to me that your God is One God. Let him who hopes to meet his Lord, do what is good and associate none in the worship of his Lord."

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34:24 Say: "Who provides for you out of the heavens and the earth?", say: "Allah, and you or we are either rightly guided or in manifest error."

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34:27 Say: "Show me those you have attached to Him as associates. Allah is rather the Almighty, the All-Wise."

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38:65 Say: "I am only a warner and there is no god but Allah, the One, the Conqueror.

38:66 "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, the All-Mighty, the All-Forgiving."

38:67 Say: "That (this Qur'an) is great news,

38:68 "From which you are turning away.

38:69 "I had no knowledge of the Higher Host, when they were disputing among themselves (*this verse refers to a dispute between God and Satan, via an angel intermediary, as to whether the creation of humans was a good idea*).

38:70 "It is only revealed to me that I am a manifest warner."

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39:11 Say: "I have been commanded to worship Allah, professing to Him the religion sincerely.

39:12 "And I have been commanded to be the first of those who submit."

39:13 Say: "I fear if I disobey my Lord, the punishment of a great Day."

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39:45 If Allah alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter shudder; but if those apart from Him are mentioned, behold, they rejoice.

39:46 Say: "O Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the Unseen and the Seen, you shall judge between your servants regarding that whereon they used to differ."

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40:65 He is the Living One; there is no god but He. So call on Him professing sincerely the religion unto Him. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

40:66 Say: "I have been forbidden to worship those you call upon, apart from Allah; since the clear proofs have come to



me from my Lord and I have been commanded to submit to the Lord of the Worlds."

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64:5 Has not the news of those who disbelieved formerly come to you and so they tasted the evil plight of their condition? A painful punishment awaits them.

64:6 That is because their Messengers used to bring them the clear proofs, but they would say: "Will mortals guide us rightly?" So, they disbelieved and turned their backs. And Allah was well content. Allah is All-Sufficient, All-Worthy.

64:7 The unbelievers claim they will not be raised from the dead.<sup>15</sup> Say: "Yes indeed by my Lord, you shall be raised, then you will be informed about what you did. That for Allah is an easy matter."

64:8 Therefore, believe in Allah, His Messenger and the Light We sent down. Allah is Aware of what you do.

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67:24 Say: "It is He Who scattered you abroad in the land, and unto Him you shall be mustered."

67:25 They say: "When is this promise to be fulfilled, if you are truthful?"

67:26 Say: "Knowledge is with Allah; I am only a manifest warner."

67:27 When they see it (the punishment) close at hand, the faces of the unbelievers become grim, and it will be said to them: "That is what you boasted about."

67:28 Say: "Have you considered, what if Allah destroyed me and those with me or had mercy on us, who will protect the

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<sup>15</sup> 16:38 And they solemnly swear by Allah that Allah will not raise from the dead anyone who dies. Surely, His is the true promise, but most people do not know.

16:39 [They shall be raised up] so as to make clear to them that whereof they differ, and that the unbelievers may know that they were lying.

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13:5 Should you (Muhammad) wonder, the wonder is their saying: "What, if we turn into dust, will we be created anew?" Those are the ones who disbelieve in their Lord, and those are the ones around whose necks are chains, and those are the people of the Fire, abiding therein forever.

unbelievers from a painful punishment?’

67:29 Say: “He is the Compassionate, we believe in Him, and in Him we put our trust. You will then know who is in manifest error.

67:30 Have you considered who, if your water drains away, will bring you pure running water?

Not all will listen to what I tell you to say, and I had something to do with it.

47:16 There are some of them who listen to you, but as soon as they leave you, they say to those who have been given the knowledge: “What did he just say now?” Such are those upon whose hearts Allah has set a seal and who have followed their fancies.

47:17 But those who are rightly guided, He increases them in guidance and accords them their piety.

## **You Are Not Their Keeper, Guardian, or Overseer**

With the god for whom he spoke never tiring of reminding him of all the generations He has destroyed for not doing as they were told (see *Getting to Know Allah: "Allah Days - A Litany of Death and Destruction,"* Boreal Books for the largest sample), Muhammad was cognisant of the torment his kin would experience if he failed to convince them to submit to the Will of Allah. It obviously bothered him, in spite of their undermining his efforts.

27:67 The unbelievers say: "What then, will we and our fathers be raised, once we have turned into dust?"

27:68 "We have been promised that, we and our fathers before. These are only the legends of the ancients."

27:69 Say: "Travel in the land and see what was the end of the criminals."

27:70 Do not grieve for them and do not be distressed on account of what they contrive.

27:71 And they say: "When is this promise to be fulfilled, if you are truthful?"

27:72 Say: "Perhaps some of what you seek to hasten is drawing near."

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35:8 What of him whose evil work was made attractive to him and so he regarded it as fair? Allah surely leads astray [whomever] He wishes and guides [whomever] He wishes; so do not let your soul waste away in regrets for them. Allah is fully aware of what they do.

You are not their keeper or guardian, Allah would remind him. They are responsible for what happens to them. Just keep on doing what you have been instructed to do.

CONSULTATION

**42 Ash-Shura**

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

42:1 Ha – Mim.

42:2 ‘Ain – Sin –Qaf (Two sets of symbols is unusual; no consensus on meaning).

42:3 Thus Allah, the Al-Mighty, the All-Wise reveals to you (Muhammad) and to those who preceded you.

42:4 To Him belongs what is in the heavens or on earth, and He is the All-High, the Great.

42:5 The heavens are almost rent asunder above them; while the angels proclaim the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on earth. Lo, Allah is truly the All-Forgiving, The Merciful!

42:6 Those who have taken other protectors, apart from Him, Allah oversees them and you are not their guardian.

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6:103 Vision does not attain Him, but He attains the vision, and He is the Kind, the All-Knowing.

6:104 Clear proofs have come to you from your Lord. Thus he who perceives, perceives for his own advantage, and he who is blind, that is to his lost; and I am not your Keeper (even though this statement is from God, it is expressed through the mouth of the Prophet, *Moududi*).

6:105 And thus We make clear the revelations so that they may say (to Muhammad): “You have studied (discussed this with the People of the Book)”, and that We make it clear to a people who know.

6:106 Follow what has been revealed to you from your Lord; for there is no god but He; and turn away from the polytheists.

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10:108 Say: “O people, the truth has come to you from your Lord; whoever is well-guided is well-guided only to his own

advantage, and whoever goes astray goes astray only to his disadvantage, and I am not a guardian over you.”

Who is *not* their keeper is unambiguous in Revelation 6:107.

6:107 Had Allah pleased, they would not have associated [other gods]; and We have not made you their keeper, and you are not their guardian.

You are not their overseer either!

39:41 We have sent the Book upon you for all mankind in truth. He who is well-guided is guided to his own gain, and he who goes astray, will go astray to his loss. You are not their overseer.

More revelations (6:66, 42:48) emphasizing that Muhammad was not the guardian of the people:

6:66 And your people deny it (the Qur'an), whereas it is the truth. Say: "I am not your guardian."

6:67 For every event there is a fixed time, and you shall certainly know.

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42:47 Answer your Lord's Call before a Day comes from Allah that cannot be turned back. Upon that Day you will have no shelter, no disclaimer.

42:48 Should they turn away, We have not sent you as guardian to watch over them; incumbent on you is delivering the Message only. Indeed, when We make man taste a mercy from Us, he rejoices in it, but when they are afflicted with a misfortune, on account of what their hands had previously perpetrated, then man is truly thankless.

More revelations (15:89, 22:49) about Muhammad being just a plain warner.

15:85 We have not created the heavens and the earth and what lies between them save in truth; and the Hour is surely coming. So forgive them magnanimously.

15:86 Your Lord is indeed the Creator, the Knower.

15:87 And We have given you seven oft-repeated (the seven oft-repeated verses of the Opening Surah of the Qur'an) [Verses] and the great Qur'an.

15:88 Do not strain your gaze towards what We gave certain groups of them to enjoy, and do not grieve for them, and lower your wing (be modest) to the believers.

15:89 And say: "I am truly the plain warner."

15:90 Just as We sent down [punishment] upon the dividers (the Jews and Christians),

15:91 Who divided the Qur'an into parts (they accepted a part of it and rejected the rest).

15:92 By your Lord, We shall question them all,

15:93 Regarding what they used to do.

15:94 So proclaim what you are commanded and turn away from the polytheists.

15:95 Our support to you against the scoffers will be sufficient;

15:96 Those who set up another god with Allah. They will surely come to know.

15:97 And We know well that your heart is distressed at what they say.

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22:49 Say: "O people (the Meccans), I am only a plain warner to you."

You may try to guide them (Revelation 16:37), but it will be to no avail if Allah wishes to lead them astray.

16:35 The idolaters say: "Had Allah pleased, neither we nor our fathers would have worshipped any [gods] besides Him; nor would we have forbidden anything against His will." [But] thus did those who came before them. What should the Messengers do except to deliver the plain Message?

16:36 We have sent forth to every nation a Messenger saying: "Worship Allah and avoid the idols. Some of them Allah

guided and others were justly left in error. Travel, then, in the land and see what was the end of the deniers (sic)."

16:37 If you (Muhammad) are eager to guide them, Allah surely will not guide those whom He leads astray, and they will have no supporters.

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28:56 You do not guide whom you wish, but Allah guides whom He wishes, and He knows better the well-guided.

In the Koran, there is no bearing of anyone else's burden.

35:18 No laden soul shall bear the burden of another; and if a heavy-burdened soul calls for its burden to be borne, not a whit of it will be borne, not even by one who is a kinsmen. You (Muhammad) only warn those who fear their Lord although He is unseen, and who perform the prayer. He who purifies himself purifies himself for his own good, and unto Allah is the ultimate return.

Muhammad — as a member of the Quraysh, the ruling tribe of Mecca — may have been embarrassed by the lower classes, petty criminals, and the indigent who flocked to his banner, prompting Allah's intervention about driving them away.

6:52 And do not drive away those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, seeking nothing but His Face. You are not in the least accountable for them, nor are they in the least accountable for you, so as to drive them away and become one of the wrongdoers.

I don't expect you to do the impossible.

27:79 So put your trust in Allah; you are on the manifest and the true [path].

27:80 You will certainly not cause the dead to hear or the deaf to hear the call, if they turn away in flight.

27:81 And you will not deflect the blind from their error. You will only cause those who believe in Our Signs to hear; for they have submitted.

# **The Medium and the Messenger**

## **What About a Foreign Messenger?**

Muhammad may, at one time, have doubted his ability to deliver Allah's Revelations to the people who mattered, to the point of asking God if a foreign messenger might do a better job convincing people that a terrible punishment awaited them if they failed to heed his warning. It would not have made any difference. As Allah never tires of reminding us, He deliberately makes some people oblivious to His Message for His own ends.

14:4 And we have sent forth no Messenger except in the tongue of his own people so that he may expound to them clearly. Then Allah leads astray whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases. His is the Mighty, the Wise.

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26:198 Had We sent it down on some foreigner;

26:199 And he had read it to them; they would still not have believed in it.

26:200 Thus We have insinuated it into the hearts of the criminals.

26:201 They will not believe in it until they witness the very painful punishment.

26:202 It will come upon them suddenly, while they are unaware.

26:203 Then, they will say: "Are we given any respite?"

26:204 Do they, then, seek to hasten Our Punishment?

26:205 Do you see, if We were to allow them some enjoyment for some years?

26:206 Then, they are visited by what they were promised.

26:207 What would that whereof they derived enjoyment avail them.



### **What About a Foreign Koran?**

41:40 Those who turn away from Our Signs are not hidden from Us. Is he, then, who is cast into the Fire better than he who comes forward safely on the Day of Resurrection? Do what you please; He is Fully Aware of what you do.

41:41 Nor are those who have disbelieved the Reminder when it came to them [hidden from Us]. It is surely a noble Book,

41:42 To which falsehood does not come from its front nor from behind it – a revelation sent down from the Wise, Praiseworthy.

41:43 You are not told except what was told to the Messengers before you. Surely, your Lord is a Master of Forgiveness and a Master of Painful Retribution.<sup>16</sup>

41:44 Had we made it a foreign Qur'an, they would have said: "If only its verses were well expounded." What, whether foreign or Arabic, say: "It is for the believers a guidance and a healing; but for those who do not believe, it is a heaviness in their ears, and for them it is a blindness. It is as if, those (unbelievers) were called from a distant place."

### **Angels as Messengers?**

Angels, for many who listened to Muhammad, would have made more believable envoys.

41:13 If they turn away, then say: "I warn you against a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt of 'Ad and Thamud."

41:14 When the Messengers came to them from their front and their rear saying: "Do not worship any one but Allah", they said: "Had our Lord wished, He would certainly have sent down angels. Therefore, we disbelieve in the Message you have been sent with."

It is not that Allah does not choose angels as messengers, the obvious being Gabriel, God's Messenger to the Messenger.

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<sup>16</sup> Threatening to hurt people is what gods do to get their way, but Allah is special in taking pride in being good at inflicting unimaginable pain.

## 98 From Merchant to Messenger

22:75 Allah chooses from angels and men Messengers; Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

22:76 He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and to Allah are all things returned.

What about an angel messenger to the earth-bound angels? It's just that there aren't enough of them strolling the earth in peace (if you don't count the two angels perched on the shoulders of every man, woman, and child recording their good and bad deeds) for God to send them as messengers to stir things up.

17:94 Men are not prevented from believing, once the guidance has come to them, except that they say: "Has Allah sent forth a human messenger?"

17:95 Say: "Were there on earth angels strolling in peace, We would have sent down upon them from heaven an angel as a Messenger."

17:96 Say: "Allah suffices as a witness between me and you. He is, indeed, fully Apprised and Observant of His servants."

# **A Teacher and His Pupil**

87:6 We shall make you recite; so you will not forget;

87:7 Except what Allah wishes. He certainly knows what is proclaimed and what is hidden.

87:8 And We shall ease your travel on an easy course.

87:9 So remind, if the reminder will avail.

Allah, as mentor, took His job seriously and was careful to temper Muhammad's enthusiasm for His Revelations so that He did not pass them on half-baked, so to speak.

20:113 Thus We have revealed it as an Arabic Qur'an and expounded therein in detail some of our warnings, so that they may fear God, and so that it may be a reminder for them.

20:114 Exalted be Allah, the True King. Do not hasten [to discuss] the Qur'an before its revelation to you is complete, and say: "Lord, increase me in knowledge."

It was the responsibility of the teacher "to expound clearly."

75:16 Do not wag your tongue with it (the Qur'an) to hurry on with it.

75:17 It is incumbent upon Us to put it together and to recite it.

75:18 Then, when We recite it, follow its recitation.

75:19 Then, it is incumbent upon Us to expound clearly.

## **The Pupil Admonished**

THE COILING

**80 At-Takwir**

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

80:1 He (Muhammad) frowned and turned his back;

## 100 From Merchant to Messenger

80:2 When the blind man (Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum, a poor man anxious to learn the Qur'an, who importuned the Prophet) came to him.

80:3 How do you know? Perhaps he might cleanse himself.

80:4 Or remember, and remembrance might profit him.

80:5 As for him who has grown wealthy,

80:6 You attend to him closely;

80:7 And it does not bother you if he does not cleanse himself.

80:8 Yet he who comes to you running,

80:9 While fearful,

80:10 You do not take notice of him.

80:11 Yet, it (the Qur'an) is only a reminder,

80:12 Whoever wishes will remember it;

80:13 In scrolls highly honoured,

80:14 Lifted up and purified,

80:15 By the hands of scribes (this refers to the angels who were writing the scrolls of the Qur'an under the direct guidance of Allah, *Moududi*),

80:16 Honourable and pious.

### **A Question of Wages**

6:90 Those are the ones whom Allah has guided; so follow their guidance. Say: "I ask you no reward for it (the Qur'an); it is only a reminder to mankind."

At this juncture, God would prefer that His spokesman not even hint at seeking payment for what he is revealing on His behalf.

23:72 Or are you asking them for a reward? But, the reward of your Lord is better, and He is the Best Provider.

23:73 And You are surely calling them to a straight path.

23:74 Those who do not believe in the Hereafter are deviating from the Path.

23:75 If We show them mercy and lift their affliction, they would persist in their arrogance, wondering aimlessly.

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68:45 And I will give them respite; My cunning is certain.

68:46 Or will you ask them for remuneration? They (*the Meccan unbelievers*) are surely burdened with debts.

68:47 Or are they in possession of the Unseen, and so they are writing it down?

Allah eventually gave His tacit approval to Muhammad asking for compensation and reminding his audience that God sees everything.

34:47 Say: "Whatever wage I asked you for is yours [to give]. My wage is with Allah and He is a witness of everything."

Know that those payments are for information on the "path leading to his Lord."

25:56 We have only sent you forth as a bearer of good news and a warner.

25:57 Say: "I do not ask for any wages for this, except for him who wishes to follow a path leading to his Lord."

What to make of a revelation where God has Muhammad concede that "friendship towards kinsmen" is reward enough (42:23)?

42:22 You see the wrongdoers in awe of what they have earned, although it is bound to catch up with them; but those who believe and do the righteous deeds shall be consigned to the greenest gardens, wherein they have whatever they desire from their Lord. That is the great bounty.

42:23 That is good news which Allah announces to His Servants who believe, and do the good deeds. Say: "I ask you no reward for it (this message, *Muhammad Assad*) except kinship towards kinsmen." Whoever performs a good deed, We shall increase its goodness. Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Thankful.

42:24 Or will they say: "He has imputed falsehood to Allah"? Had Allah willed, He would have put a seal upon your heart. He obliterates falsehood and confirms the Truth by His Words. Surely, He knows the secrets hidden in the breasts.

The question of wages would become moot with the change of mission for Muhammad, from simple messenger to holy warrior, with Allah's declaration of war (see *Jihad in the Koran*, "Announcing a Universal War," Boreal Books) against the unbelievers and the booty that it generated.

**Narrated Abu Huraira:**

Allah's Apostle said, "I have been ordered to fight with the people till they say, 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah,' and whoever says, 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah,' his life and property will be saved by me except for Islamic law, and his accounts will be with Allah, (either to punish him or to forgive him)."

*Bukhari 52.196*

**Narrated Jabir bin Abdullah:**

The Prophet said, "I have been given five things which were not given to anyone else before me.

1. Allah made me victorious by awe, (by His frightening my enemies) for a distance of one month's journey.<sup>17</sup>
2. The earth has been made for me (and for my followers) a place for praying and a thing to perform Tayammum (dry ablution i.e. washing oneself before prayer using sand or dust if no water available), therefore anyone of my followers can pray wherever the time of a prayer is due.
3. The booty has been made Halal (lawful) for me (and my followers) yet it was not lawful for anyone else before me.<sup>18</sup>
4. I have been given the right of intercession (on the Day of Resurrection).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> **Narrated Abu Huraira:**

Allah's Apostle said, "I have been sent with the shortest expressions bearing the widest meanings, and I have been made victorious with terror (cast in the hearts of the enemy)."

*Bukhari 52.220*

<sup>18</sup> 8:68 But for a prior ordinance of Allah, you would have been afflicted on account of what you have taken (an ordinance which made it lawful for Muslims to take spoils and captives) by a terrible punishment.

5. Every Prophet used to be sent to his nation only but I have been sent to all mankind."

*Bukhari 7.331*

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<sup>19</sup> Muhammad is one of the few to whom Allah will grant the right to intercede on someone else's behalf. Unlike lesser mortals, he will not have to go through a formal application process to do so.

34:23 Intercession will not avail with Him except for him whom He gave permission; until fear is lifted from their hearts, then they will say: "What has your Lord said?", they will say: "The truth, and He is the All-High, the Great One."

Moududi:

After submitting the application for permission, both the intercessor and the person for whom intercession is being provided are awaiting the reply in a state of restlessness and awe. At last, when the permission is granted and the person perceives satisfaction in the face of the intercessor, he feels a little comforted and asks the intercessor: "What has your Lord said?" The intercessor says, "The truth": permission has been granted. What is meant to be impressed is this: "O foolish people! Such will be the awe of the great court of Allah! How dare you entertain the notion that anybody will have you forgiven by his own power, or dare behave stubbornly and tell Allah: These are my favorites: they will have to be forgiven!"

## Muhammad vs. Moses

2:107 Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and that apart from Allah you have no guardian or helper?

2:108 Or would you rather question your Messenger as Moses was questioned before? He who veers from belief to unbelief has strayed from the Right Path.

Sorry, Muhammad, but you weren't there.

28:44 You were not on the western side [of the Mountain], when We decreed the commandment to Moses, and you were not one of the witnesses.

28:45 But We created other generations whose age lasted for too long, and you were not dwelling among the inhabitants of Midian reciting Our Verses to them, but We were sending other Messengers.

If it's any consolation, you are My first Messenger to the Arabs.

28:46 You were not by the side of the Mountain when We called, but [We are sending you (Muhammad)] as a mercy from your Lord, to warn a people who had no warner prior to you, that perchance they might remember.

Why do people wait for Me to make their lives miserable before seeking My instructions on how to behave (if they hope to avoid My visiting another calamity)?

28:47 And lest an adversity befall them, on account of what their hands have perpetrated, so that they could say: "Our Lord, if only You had sent us a Messenger, that we might follow your signs and be among the believers."

Again, if only God had done for Muhammad what He did for Moses!

28:48 But, when the Truth came to them from Us, they said: "If only he (Muhammad) had been given the like of what Moses had received?"...



Allah countered that even after the spectacular way He delivered His Message via Moses, people chose not to believe.

28:48 ...Had they not disbelieved in what Moses received formerly? They said: "Two sorceries backing each other up", and they said: "We are disbelieving in both."

When questioned on the divine origins of the Koran, God's main tactic was to have Muhammad challenge the sceptics to *do better*.

28:49 Say: "Bring, then, a Book from Allah giving better guidance than both (the Qur'an and the Torah), and I will follow it, if you are truthful."

If they don't take up the challenge, it is because they are delusional and Allah can't be bothered with such people.

28:50 If, however, they do not answer you, then know that they only follow their fancies; and who is more in error than he who follows his own fancy without guidance from Allah. Allah, surely, does not guide the wrongdoing people.

It's not that the Meccans did not want to believe that their forty-something tribesman with whom they had grown up had been chosen, out of the blue, to speak on God's behalf. They just wanted some tangible proof, and it need not be tablets.

6:7 Had We sent down upon you a Book on parchment so that they could touch it with their own hands, those who disbelieve would still have said: "This is nothing but manifest sorcery."

The Koran was revealed to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel with whom he spent nights rote-learning the Koran.

6:8 And they say: "Why has not an angel been sent down to him [the Prophet]?" But had we sent down an angel, their fate would have been sealed, and then they would not have been given any respite.

If He had sent an angel—which He did—Allah said it would have appeared in the form of a man (see Chapter "Slander" for the hadith about Gabriel appearing before Muhammad, six hundred wings and all), therefore people would not have believed it was an angel.

6:9 And had We made him an angel, We would have certainly made him [look like] a man and thus confounded

them with what they are using to confound others.

It was really a Moses-like spectacle that the people wanted, which God acknowledged (Revelation 3:183).

3:181 Allah has heard the words of those who said: "Allah is poor, and we are rich." We shall write down what they said, together with their killing of the Prophets unjustly, and We shall say: "Taste the torment of burning [in the Fire]!"

3:182 That is, on account of what your hands did earlier, and that Allah is not unjust to His servants;

3:183 Those who say: "Allah has actually commanded us not to trust a messenger until he brings us an offering consumed by the Fire." Say [to them]: "Messengers have already come to you with clear proofs (miracles) before me, together with what you asked for. Why then did you kill them, if you are truthful?"

Apart from Jesus, whose death was an illusion concocted by Allah (see *Shared Prophets: "Jesus,"* Boreal Books), not even Moududi could fathom which messengers were allegedly killed. Is it any wonder that Muhammad was accused of lying?

3:184 If, however, they accuse you of lying, Messengers who before you brought clear proofs (miracles), the Scriptures and the illuminating Book were also accused of lying.

A Moses-like delivery of the Koran would have been an earth-shattering event of historical proportions, with thousands upon thousands of eyewitnesses, many writing down what they had seen—which was not the case when Moses delivered his tablets—making it difficult for cynics to disprove what had taken place as the awe-inspiring story quickly spread across the known world. There would have been the *Tablets* in God's own handwriting and in Arabic. WOW! This written record, carved in stone, would be beyond dispute, making it unnecessary for Allah to cause the violent deaths of so many men, women, and children to this day in an effort to convince the survivors to believe.

# A Prophet on His Own

85:21 Yet, it is a glorious Qur'an,

85:22 In a Well-Preserved Tablet.

As revealed in "Muhammad vs. Moses," it need not have been tablets for the Meccans to believe that their tribesman had been chosen to speak on God's behalf.

2:118 Those who do not know say: "If only Allah would speak to us (tell us that you are His Messenger), or a sign come to us." Thus said those who came before them (to their Prophets). Their hearts are all alike. Indeed, We have made clear the signs for people who firmly believe.

Rather than publicly affirm that Muhammad was speaking on His behalf or provide the type of signs He had allowed lesser mouthpieces ("the like of what Allah's Messengers have been given") to produce as proof of their credentials, God, where His ultimate spokesman is concerned, preferred excuses such as claiming it was all part of the plot.

6:124 And if a sign comes to them, they say: "We will not believe, until we are given the like of what Allah's Messengers have been given." Allah knows best where to place His Message. Those who commit sins will suffer humiliation and severe punishment from Allah on account of their plotting.

Why would a god allow a lesser messenger such as Jesus, for example, to perform miracles as evidence of his being an intimate, but not His ultimate spokesperson? Muhammad claimed that it was because he had been given the "Divine Inspiration," which previous emissaries would also have been given, but perhaps to a lesser extent.

## **Narrated Abu Huraira:**

The Prophet said, "Every Prophet was given miracles because of which people believed, but what I have been given is Divine Inspiration which Allah has revealed to me. So I hope

that my followers will outnumber the followers of the other Prophets on the Day of Resurrection.”

*Bukhari 61.504*

When He is not insinuating that requests to allow Muhammad to perform a spectacular feat of legerdemain (to prove he is the real deal) are part of a plot to discredit both of them, God justifies His lack of support with the familiar argument that it would not make any difference.

## THE MOON

### 54 Al-Qamar

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

54:1 The Hour is drawing near and the moon is split asunder.

54:2 If they see a sign, they turn away and say: “Continued sorcery.”<sup>20</sup>

54:3 They denounced and followed their fancies, while every matter had been settled.

54:4 And they have received such news as would deter,

54:5 An outstanding wisdom; so what good are warnings?

Allah said that Paradise was “Gardens beneath which rivers flow” (see *The Islamic Hereafter: “Paradise – The Nuts and Bolts,”* Boreal Books). How about asking Him to make a river gush in the middle of a garden on Earth?

17:90 And they say: “We will not believe you until you cause a spring to gush out from the ground for us.

17:91 “Or have a garden of palms and vines; then cause the rivers therein to gush out abundantly.

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<sup>20</sup> In a controversial hadith, the splitting of the moon was done by Muhammad at the request of his audience to warn them of an imminent Judgement Day.

#### **Narrated Anas:**

That the Meccan people requested Allah's Apostle to show them a miracle, and so he showed them the splitting of the moon.

*Bukhari 56.831*

Allah revealed that Paradise is a solid piece of real estate held up by invisible pillars above a flat Earth (see *The Islamic Hereafter: "Paradise – The Nuts and Bolts,"* Boreal Books). How about having God send down a fragment of heaven, or better still, come down Himself along with His angels?

17:92 "Or cause heaven to fall upon us in fragments as you claim; or bring Allah and his angels down, so that we can see them face to face.

What about a book they could actually read? Allah responds to this sensible request for an actual hardcopy, or a paperback for that matter, of the Book with a trademark non-sequitur.

17:93 "Or possess a house of gold, or ascend to heaven. Yet, we will not believe in your ascension, until you send down to us a book we can read." Say: "[O Muhammad] Glory be to my Lord; Am I anything other than a human Messenger?"

You, Muhammad, reciting from a never-seen book should be sign enough!

29:50 They said: "If only signs from his Lord were sent down on him (Muhammad)." Say: "Signs are only with Allah, and I am only a manifest warner."

29:51 Does it not suffice them that We have sent down on you the Book which is recited to them? There is, indeed, in that a mercy and a reminder to a believing people.

29:52 Say: "Allah suffices as a witness between you and me. He knows what is in the heavens and on the earth; and those who have believed in falsehood and disbelieved in Allah – those are the losers."

A variation on the non-sequitur:

13:27 And the unbelievers say: "If only a sign were sent down to him by His Lord!" Say: "Allah leads astray whomever He pleases and guides to himself those who repent,

Allah may not have cared to send down a copy of the actual book but that doesn't mean its purported existence could not be used, as He tells Muhammad ad nauseam, to hammer home the Message it contains.

25:51 Had We wished, We would have sent forth to every city a warner.

25:52 So, do not obey the unbelievers and strive against them with it (the Qur'an) mightily.

It must have been tempting for Muhammad, when everything was going well for those who worshipped other gods and badly for him, to ask these other gods for help.

28:87 And let them not divert you from the Revelations of Allah after they have been sent down to you. Call upon your Lord, and do not be one of the idolaters.

28:88 Do not call, besides Allah, upon any other god. There is no god but He. Everything will perish save His Face. His is the Judgement, and unto Him you shall all be returned.

It was not only Muhammad's Meccan kin who questioned his legitimacy.

2:120 Neither the Jews nor the Christians will be pleased with you until you follow their religion. Say: "Allah's Guidance is the [only] Guidance." And were you to follow their desires after the Knowledge that came down to you, you will have no guardian or helper [to save you] from Allah.

In the end, apart from words of encouragement and promises of a horrible punishment for those who made fun of him, Muhammad was very much on his own, which makes what he accomplished that much more extraordinary.

## When in the Presence of the Prophet

After being informed of another attempt on his life, Muhammad and his closest collaborator Abu Bakr fled to the oasis city of Medina. They were later joined by followers. Having failed to convince his Meccan kin of his elevated status as God's confidant on his say-so, Muhammad decided to make the Arabs see the light by force. Allah's approval is reflected in the belligerent tone of the revelations that Gabriel now delivered, known as the Medinan Surahs. With God's approval, God's spokesman embarked on a military campaign that would see all infidels of the Peninsula who refused to become Muslim either killed or enslaved (recommended: *Jihad in the Koran*, Boreal Books). Before he became absolute ruler of all he surveyed, Muhammad told people how to behave in the presence of his Benefactor who is everywhere; now it is God who tells people how to behave in the presence of the man who now ruled in His Name.

24:62 The true believers, who believe in Allah and His Messenger, if they are with him for some common affair, will not depart till they take their leave. Indeed, those who ask leave from you are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger. If they ask leave from you for some affair of theirs, give leave to whom you wish and ask Allah's forgiveness for them. Allah is surely All-Forgiving, Merciful.

24:63 Do not make calling the Messenger out among you like your calling one another out. Allah knows those of you who slip away stealthily. So, let those who disobey His command beware of an ordeal that might befall them, or a very painful punishment that might befall them.

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49:1 O believers, do not advance hastily before Allah and His Messenger, and fear Allah. Allah is indeed All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

49:2 O believers, do not raise your voices above the Prophet's voice and do not be loud in speaking to him, as you speak

loudly to one another, lest your works come to grief while you are not aware.

49:3 Surely, those who lower their voices in the presence of Allah's Messenger are those whose hearts Allah has tested for piety. They will have forgiveness and a great wage.

49:4 Those who call you from behind the Chambers, most of them do not understand.

49:5 Had they waited for you to come to meet them, it would have been better for them. Allah is All-Forgiving and Merciful.

When Muhammad first started out, God warned him about asking to be paid for the message he delivered on His behalf. Now that too had changed with Allah telling the believers, to whom Muhammad would speak privately, to pay him for the privilege. The addition of the word "free" before "offering" in Revelation 58:12 would indicate that the contribution should not come with strings attached.

58:11 O believers, if you are told: "Make room in assemblies", then make room that Allah may make room for you; and if you are told: "Sally forth", then sally forth, that Allah may elevate those of you who have believed and those who have been given knowledge many steps. Allah is truly Fully Aware of what you do.

58:12 O believers, if you converse privately with the Messenger, then tender a free offering before your secret conversing. That is better for you and purer; but if you do not have the means, then Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful.

Allah may or may not pardon you if you don't make the expected payment.

58:13 Do you dread to make free offerings before your private converse? If you do not do so and Allah pardons you, then perform the prayer, give the alms and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah is Aware of what you do.



# He Who Must Be Obeyed

**Narrated Abu Huraira:**

Allah's Apostle said, "All my followers will enter Paradise except those who refuse."

They said, "O Allah's Apostle! Who will refuse?"

He said, "Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me is the one who refuses (to enter it)."

*Bukhari 92.384*

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4:59 O believers, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. Should you quarrel over any matter, then refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you really believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is far better for you and fairer in interpretation.

5:92 Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and beware; but if you turn back, then know that it is the duty of Our Messenger to deliver the clear Message.

8:20 O you who believe, obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not turn away from Him while you hear.

8:21 And do not be like those who say: "We hear", while they hear not.

33:36 It is not up to any believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have passed a judgement, to have any choice in their affairs. Whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger have gone astray in a manifest manner.

Rule by one man, the caliph, i.e., leader of the believers, is a central concept of government as envisioned by the Koran. The absolute authority over believers granted to Muhammad by Allah is inherited

by those who claim the mantle of caliph; the most recent example is that of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the deceased leader of The Islamic State. The Koran is clear: the leader of the believers rules on God's behalf and when he gives an order, it is as if Allah Himself has given that order.

4:80 Whoever obeys the Messenger actually obeys Allah. As for those who turn away, We have not sent you to be their helpers.

Obedience means not plotting to do the opposite of what you agreed to.

4:81 They say: "Obedience"; but when they leave you, a group of them secretly plan something other than what you say. Allah writes down what they have in mind. So shun them and put your trust in Allah; Allah is the All-Sufficient Guardian.

4:82 (quoted earlier in Chapter "A Book Revealed")

Anyone who unnecessarily raises the alarm during hostilities without first talking to those in charge may be under the influence of the Devil.

4:83 And when a matter of security or fear reaches them, they broadcast it; but had they referred it to the Messenger or the people in authority among them (the Companions of the Prophet) those of them who investigate it would comprehend it. Had it not been for Allah's Bounty to you and His Mercy, you would all surely have followed the Devil, except for a few.

The authority granted by Allah to the leaders of the believers is very much that of a Commander-in-Chief in keeping with a religion that often finds itself at war ("Islam was never a religion of peace. Islam is the religion of fighting." *Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi*, in an audio message made public May 14, 2015).

4:84 So, fight for the cause of Allah; you are charged only of yourself. Urge the believers on that Allah may perchance restrain the unbelievers' might. Allah's might is greater, and greater is His Retribution!

Actions speak louder than words.

24:52 Those who obey Allah and His Messenger and fear Allah and beware Him; those are the real winners.

24:53 They (the hypocrites, *Moududi*) swear their most solemn oaths that, should you order them, they will go forth. Say: "Do not swear; it is a well-known obedience. Allah is fully conversant with what you do."

24:54 Say: "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger; but if you turn away, then upon him (the Prophet) rests what he was charged with, and upon you what you were charged with. However, if you obey him, you will be well-guided. It is only incumbent on the Messenger to deliver the manifest message."

Believers will inherit the land they occupy: "He will surely make them successors in the land."

24:55 Allah promised those of you who have believed and done the righteous deeds that He will surely make them successors in the land, and He made those who came before them successors, and that He will establish firmly for them their religion, which He chose for them, and that He will give them, as a substitute for their fear, security. "They worship Me and do not associate anything with Me. He who disbelieves afterwards – those are the real sinners."

24:56 Perform the prayer, give the alms and obey the Messenger, that perchance you might receive mercy.

The unbelievers are no match for Allah, therefore, "put your trust in the Living God...Who created the heavens and the earth and what lies between them is six days."

24:57 Do not suppose that the unbelievers are able to thwart Allah on earth. Their refuge shall be the Fire, and what a wretched fate!

25:58 Put your trust in the Living God who does not die and sing His Praise. He suffices as the All-Informed Knower of the sins of His servants,

25:59 Who created the heavens and the earth and what lies between them is six days. Then the Compassionate sat upon the Throne. So ask about Him, the Well-Informed.

Prostrate yourselves to whomever Muhammad orders!

25:60 And if it said to them: "Prostrate yourselves before the Compassionate"; they reply: "But who is the Compassionate? Shall we prostrate ourselves to what you (Muhammad) order us?" This only increases their aversion.

A reminder in whose good company those who risk everything, including their lives—when exhorted to "go forth from your homes" by Muhammad—will find themselves in.

4:66 And had We commanded them: "Slay yourselves or go forth from your homes, they would not have done it, except a few of them; but had they done what they were exhorted to do (obey the Prophet), it would have been far better for them and more reinforcing.

4:67 And then We would surely have bestowed on them a great reward from Ourselves.

4:68 And We would have guided them to a straight path.

4:69 Those who obey Allah and the Messenger will be in the company of those whom God favoured of the Prophets, the saints, the martyrs and the righteous people. What excellent companions they are!

4:70 Such is the Bounty of Allah; Allah suffices as Knower.

Muhammad Held Harmless

Some believers only submitted to Muhammad's judgement when they were sure he would rule in their favour.

24:46 We have sent down (in this Qur'an) signs making everything clear, and Allah guides whoever He pleases to a straight path.

24:47 They say: "We believe in Allah and the Messenger and we obey." Then a group of them turn away, afterwards. Those are not real believers.

24:48 And if they are called unto Allah and His Messenger to judge between them, behold, a group of them turns away.

24:49 But if they have the right, they come to him (the Prophet) submissively.²¹

24:50 Is there a sickness in their hearts, or are they in doubt, or do they fear Allah and His Messenger might deal with them unjustly? No, those are the wrongdoers.

24:51 As to the believers, if they are called unto Allah and His Messenger to judge between them, they only say: "We hear and obey." Those are the prosperous.

Muhammad was *held harmless* by Allah if he was tricked into rendering the wrong decision. A "hold harmless" clause states that one or both parties to an agreement will not hold the other responsible for losses or damages arising out of their contractual arrangement. The Koran contains an equivalent clause: "They do not cause you any harm" in Revelation 4:113, which, as Moududi explains, "if some people succeeded in their design to obtain from the Prophet a wrong judgement in their favour by presenting a false account of events, the real loss would have been theirs rather than the Prophet's."

4:111 And whoever commits a sin, will only commit it against himself. Allah is All-Knowing, Wise!

4:112 And whoever commits an offence or a sin then charges an innocent man with it bears the burden of a falsehood and a manifest sin.

4:113 And, but for Allah's Bounty and Mercy upon you (Muhammad), a group of them would have tried to lead you astray; however, they only lead themselves astray. They do not cause you any harm. Allah has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom and taught you what you did not know, and Allah's Goodness to you has been great.

There are some things that need not be revealed to the authorities.

4:114 There is no good in much of their secret talk, except for him who enjoins charity, kindness and conciliation between people. Whoever does that seeking God's good Pleasure, We will surely grant him a great reward.

²¹ This verse states that a person who willingly accepts only that part of the divine law which serves his advantage, but rejects that which goes against his interests and desires, and prefers the worldly laws instead, is not a believer but a hypocrite.

Oppose Muhammad after he has made you aware of the Koran, and the least you can expect is to burn in Hell for an eternity.

4:115 But he who opposes the Messenger after the guidance has been manifested to him, and follows the path other than that of the believers, We will let him follow the way he has chosen for himself, and throw him into Hell; and what a wretched faith!

Deuteronomy 22:23-4 Upheld

4:60 Have you not seen those who pretend that they believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you? They wish to submit their disputes to the Devil (the reference is said to be to a Jew call Ka'b Ibn al-Ashraf, who was a bitter enemy of the Muslims), although they have been commanded to denounce him; but the Devil wishes to lead them far astray.

4:61 And if it is said to them: "Turn now to what Allah has revealed and to the Messenger", you will find the hypocrites turning away from you with aversion.

4:62 How then if they are afflicted with a disaster on account of what their own hands perpetrated, they come to you swearing by Allah: "We only sought kindness and conciliation"?

4:63 Allah knows what is in the hearts of those ones; so leave them alone, admonish them and say to them effective words about themselves.

4:64 We have not sent forth a Messenger, but that he may be obeyed by Allah's Leave. And had they, having wronged themselves, come to you and asked for Allah's Forgiveness and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, then they would have found Allah All-Forgiving, Merciful.

4:65 But no, by your Lord they will not believe until they call you to arbitrate in their dispute; then they will not be embarrassed regarding your verdict and will submit fully.

Under the Constitution of Medina, negotiated by Muhammad between the Jewish and Arab tribes who shared the city where he obtained refuge from his Meccan kin, the Jews of the city were not required to have Muhammad arbitrate disputes and rule on issues of crime and

punishment. These would continue to be decided by their community leaders, e.g., rabbis. This had not always been the case and did not always sit well, as is evident by Revelation 4:60. The Jews' reluctance to bring further cases to Muhammad to arbitrate may have had to do with a specific case they brought before him hoping he would lessen the punishment (remember, revelation numbers usually are not indicative of the order in which they were received). First, the story behind the story as told by Moududi from commentaries on the Koran by Ibn Kathir:

The particular case referred to here was that of a woman belonging to a respectable family, who was found to be involved in an unlawful sexual relationship with a man. The punishment for this in the Torah was that both be stoned to death (see Deuteronomy 22:23-4). But the Jews did not want to enforce this punishment. Hence they deliberated among themselves and decided to put the case before the Prophet (peace be on him), with the reservation that his judgement be accepted only if it was other than stoning. The Prophet (peace be on him) decided that the punishment should, in fact, be stoning.

When the Jews declined to accept the judgement, the Prophet (peace be on him) asked their rabbis what punishment had been prescribed for such a case in their religion. They replied that it was to strike the culprit with lashes, to blacken the face and to make the person concerned ride on a donkey. The Prophet (peace be on him) asked them under oath if the Torah had indeed prescribed that as punishment for adultery committed by married men and women.

They repeated the same false reply. However, one of them called Ibn Sawriya²² who, according to the Jews themselves, was the greatest living scholar of the Torah at that time, kept silent. The Prophet (peace be on him) asked him to state on oath in the name of God, Who had emancipated them from Pharaoh and had given them the Law, whether the punishment for adultery provided for in the Torah was what they had mentioned.

²² In a hadith about this arbitration, the scholar is a Jewish convert to Islam by the name of Abdullah bin Salam, (see *1001 Sayings and Deeds of the Prophet Muhammad: "Abdullah bin Salam,"* Boreal Books).

He replied: 'Had you not put me under such a heavy oath, I would not have volunteered the correct information...'

This left the Jews with nothing to say and the adulterer and adulteress were, in accordance with the order of the Prophet (peace be on him), stoned to death.

The Jews did not get the judgement they hoped for, which may have prompted Allah's comment about their altering the words in the Torah.

5:41 O Messenger, do not grieve on account of those who hasten to unbelief, from those who say with their mouths: "We believe", while their hearts do not believe; or those Jews who listen to falsehood or listen to other people who did not come to you, and who alter the words (in the Torah). They say: "If you are given this (if you are given by Muhammad something similar to what we say); then take it, and if you are not given it, then beware!" Whoever Allah wishes to leave in error, you can do nothing to save him from Allah. Those whose hearts Allah does not wish to purify will have nothing but disgrace in this world, and a terrible punishment in the world to come.

God had a message for Muhammad before he took on the case.

5:42 They are consistent listeners to falsehood, devourers of unlawful gain. Should they come to you, either judge between them or turn away from them. If you turn away from them, they will not harm you in the least; but if you judge, judge between them justly. Allah loves those who act justly!

Nonetheless, God admits to being confused that the Jews would ask Muhammad to render a judgement in this matter when they have the Torah with His Instructions.

5:43 But how will they ask you to judge, when they are in possession of the Torah, which contains Allah's Judgement! Thus they soon turn away. Those people are not real believers!

The Jews wanted to exercise discretion in applying one of the more horrific punishment prescribed in the Torah. Allah would have none of it and neither would Muhammad; those who would do that "are the unbelievers" of Revelation 5:44 and "the evildoers" in 5:45.

5:44 We have indeed revealed the Torah, wherein is guidance and light. By it the Prophets who submitted themselves [to Allah] did judge among the Jews, as did the rabbis and the masters, according to what they were made to guard of Allah's Book and were witnesses thereof. So fear not men, but fear Me and do not sell my revelations for a small price. Whoever does not judge according to what Allah has revealed those are the unbelievers!

5:45 And We prescribed to them therein (the Torah) that a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and for wounds retaliation; but whoever forgoes it charitably, it will be an atonement for him. Whoever does not judge according to what Allah has revealed, those are the evildoers!

The Reckoning

THE SCATTERING WINDS

51 Adh-Dhâriyât

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

51:1 By the scattering winds, as they scatter:

51:2 And the clouds, bearing their burden;

51:3 And the smoothly cruising ships;

51:4 And the angels which apportion the Command (*scholars have speculated that it means apportioning the water, others the wind and still others the sailing ships*).

51:5 Surely, what you are promised is true;

51:6 And the Judgement shall come to pass.

51:7 By the heavens with its many tracks (because the sky is often overcast with clouds of different shapes, which go on changing because of the wind, and no shape lasts nor resembles any other, or because at night one sees the stars scattered in the sky in many different combinations and no combination resembles any other combination, *Moududi*),

51:8 You are at variance in what you say.

51:9 From it (the Qur'an) are diverted those who would be diverted.

51:10 May the imposters perish (doomed are the conjecturers, *Moududi*)!

51:11 Those who are bemused in their perplexity.

51:12 They ask: "When is the Day of Judgement coming?"

51:13 The Day they shall be exposed to the Fire.

51:14 "Taste your ordeal; this is what you were trying to hasten."

- 51:15 The God-fearing shall be amidst gardens and springs;
51:16 Availing themselves of what their Lord has given them.
Before that time, they were beneficent.
51:17 They used to sleep but a short watch of the night;
51:18 And at daybreak, they used to ask for forgiveness,
51:19 And of their possessions, the beggar and the destitute
had as share.
51:20 In the earth are signs for those of certain faith;
51:21 And in your souls too. Do you not see?
51:22 In heaven is your provision and what you are
promised.
51:23 By the Lord of the Heaven and the earth; it is certainly
true, just as your own speaking is true.

Muhammad was not so much a forecaster of the future but of the past. The events recounted in the Koran, except for Judgement Day, are all about what came before, with the exemption of the ubiquitous safe-bet prediction that is the bread and butter of doomsday prophets to this day: "the end is near, repent!" Allah's warnings that He would be bringing the curtain down on His creation sooner rather than later (without being more specific) left His spokesman holding the bag, so to speak. The Meccans dared Muhammad to ask the god for whom he claimed to speak to bring down the promised punishment then and there and get it over with.

- 11:8 And if We hold the punishment back from them for a fixed period, they will say: "What holds it back?" Surely, the day it will overtake them will not be turned away from them, and they shall be afflicted by what they used to mock.

- 13:6 And they ask you to hasten the evil before the good; yet there were punishments before them (prior instances of exemplary punishments from Allah, *Moududi*). Your Lord forgives people notwithstanding their wrongdoing, but your Lord is truly severe in retribution.

- 13:7 Those who disbelieve say: "Why has no sign been sent down to him from His Lord?" You are only a warner; and for each people there is a guide.

36:48 And they say: "When is this promise coming, if you are truthful?"

36:49 They are only awaiting a single cry (the blowing of the Trumpet on Judgement Day) to seize them, while they are feuding.

36:50 So they cannot make a testament nor return to their own people.

Allah is not a god who tinkers with what He has preordained, the 'appointed term' in Revelation 29:53. All Muhammad could do was relay more warnings from on High of a looming Judgement Day.

29:53 And they urge you to hasten the punishment; but had it not been for an appointed term, the punishment would have certainly smitten them. In fact, it will smite them suddenly, while they are unaware.

29:54 They urge you to hasten the punishment. Hell shall surely encompass the unbelievers.

29:55 Upon the Day the punishment shall overwhelm them from above them and from under their feet and He says: "Taste now what you used to do."

The End is Near

The 21st surah, The Prophets, begins with the attention-grabbing announcement that "Mankind's reckoning is drawing near," followed by Allah bragging about the civilizations He has annihilated. Mecca's destruction, if not the world's, is at hand, or so it would seem.

THE PROPHETS

21 Al-Anbiyâ'

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

21:1 Mankind's reckoning is drawing near, but they are turning away heedlessly.

Moududi:

'The time of the reckoning of the people has drawn near.'
This is to warn the people that the time of Resurrection when

they will have to appear before their Lord to render their accounts is not far. The coming of the Holy Prophet was a sign and a clear evidence of the fact that mankind had entered the last stage of its history. The Holy Prophet himself explained it by holding out two of his adjoining fingers and said, 'I have been sent at a time which joins to the time of Resurrection just as these two fingers adjoin'. By this he meant to say, 'No other Prophet is coming between me and the Resurrection. Therefore mend your ways now, for after me no guide is coming with good news and warning.'

21:2 No new reminder comes to them from their Lord but they listen to it while they are at play.

21:3 Their hearts are distracted. The wrongdoers say in secret: "Is this not a mortal like you? Will you then take to sorcery, with your eyes wide open?"

21:4 He (Muhammad) said: "My Lord knows what is said in the heavens and the earth, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing."

21:5 "No", they say: "It is just a load of dreams. He has rather forged it; he is rather a poet. Let him bring us a sign, just as the former [Prophets] were sent [with]."

21:6 No city We destroyed, before them, actually believed. Will they, then, believe?

21:7 And We did not send before you but men to whom We revealed. So ask those acquainted [with the Scriptures] if you do not know.

21:8 And We did not make them (the Messengers) as mere bodies that did not eat food; nor were they immortal.

21:9 Then We fulfilled the promise, and so We delivered them together with whomever We pleased, and We destroyed the extravagant.

21:10 We have indeed sent down to you a Book (the Qur'an) in which there is admonition for you. Do you not understand, then?

21:11 How many an unjust town We have levelled down and created in its wake another people.

21:12 Then, when they sensed Our Might, behold, they started running away from it.

21:13 "Do not run. Return to what you enjoyed of luxury, and to your dwellings, that perchance you may be questioned."

21:14 They said: "Woe to us! We have indeed been wrongdoers."

21:15 This continued to be their lament, until We [cut them down] to stubble, senseless.

Surah 21 began with a warning from Allah that the end is near. Toward the end of the surah, God instructs His spokesman to remind those who don't care to listen that he does "not know whether what you are promised is near or far" (Revelation 21:109). What is going on here, one can only speculate.

21:106 Surely, there is in this (the Qur'an) a Message to a worshipping people.

21:107 And We have only sent you (Muhammad), as a mercy to the whole of mankind.

21:108 Say: "It is revealed to me that truly your God is One God; will you then submit?"

21:109 If they turn away, then say: "I have warned you all equally, but I do not know whether what you are promised is near or far."

21:110 He (Allah) knows what you say openly, and He knows what you conceal.

21:111 I do not know whether if it is perhaps a trial for you, and an enjoyment for a while.

21:112 He (Muhammad) said: "Lord, judge rightly. Our Lord is the Compassionate Whose help is sought to counter what you (*the Meccan unbelievers*) allege."

More revelations point to an imminent Judgement Day, the most significant being Revelation 15:99 where it seems clear that Allah intends to bring "the certain [Hour]" during His spokesman's lifetime.

7:55 Call on your Lord humbly and secretly. He certainly does not like the aggressors.

7:56 And do not sow corruption in the land after it has been put in order. Call on Him with fear and hope. Allah's Mercy is indeed close at hand for the beneficent.

15:98 So (*Muhammad*), celebrate the praise of your Lord and be one of those who prostrate themselves.

15:99 And worship your Lord, till the certain [Hour] overtakes you!

42:17 It is Allah Who sent down the Book in truth, and the Balance (of right and wrong) too. What do you know? Perhaps the Hour is near.

42:18 Those who do not believe in it ask you to hasten it, whereas the believers are in awe of it and know that it is the truth. Indeed, those who are in doubt concerning the Hour are in profound error.

42:19 Allah is kind to His servants, providing for whomever He wishes; and He is the All-Powerful, the All-Mighty.

50:39 Bear up with what they say and proclaim the Praise of your Lord before sunrise and before sunset.

50:40 And in the night and in the wake of the prostrations, glorify him.

50:41 And listen on the Day the caller shall call out from a nearby place;

50:42 The day they shall hear the Cry of Truth, "That is the day of rising again."

50:43 It is We who give life and cause to die and unto Us is the ultimate return;

50:44 The Day the earth shall be rent asunder around them, as they hasten forth. That, indeed, is an easy mustering for Us.

53:56 This is one of the first warnings.

53:57 The Last Day is imminent;

128 From Merchant to Messenger

53:58 It has, apart from Allah, no disclosure.

53:59 Do you then marvel at this discourse?

53:60 You laugh and do not cry;

53:61 While you are fully distracted.

53:62 Prostrate yourselves before Allah, then, and worship Him.

Has Allah forgotten, in Revelation 70:7, the date He preordained in Revelation 29:53, or is He simply being coy again?

70:1 A questioner asked about an imminent punishment,

70:2 Of the unbelievers, that none can avert;

70:3 From Allah, Lord of the Ways of Ascent.

70:4 Unto Him the angels and the spirit (Gabriel) ascend on a Day the duration thereof is fifty thousand years.

70:5 Bear up patiently then (*Muhammad*).

70:6 They think it is distant;

70:7 But we think it is close.

Again with toying about an imminent demise: “perhaps their appointed term may have drawn near?”

7:185 Have they not considered the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and all the things Allah has created, and how perhaps their appointed term may have drawn near? In what other message after this (the Qur'an) will they, then, believe.

7:186 Whomever Allah leads astray will have no guide; and He leaves them in their arrogance to wonder aimlessly.

The Seal of the Prophets

33:40 Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but is the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the Prophets. Allah is Cognizant of everything.

Muhammad is the last of God's spokesmen, the meaning of “the seal of the Prophets.” No other mortal will speak on God's behalf. Muhammad is it! This admission is another clear indication that God was getting ready to wipe the slate clean. Allah will not destroy or

punish a city until He has sent its inhabitants a spokesman on His behalf, and they either deny him or humble themselves.

10:47 Every nation has its Messenger; and when their Messenger comes, they will be justly judged, and they will not be wronged.

If the Day of Resurrection was not imminent, new nations or cities would have come into existence, requiring a visit from the prerequisite prophet of doom before Allah annihilates them. It's 'in the Book'!

17:58 There is no city but We will destroy before the Day of Resurrection, or will punish terribly. That is written in the Book.

However, there are no more prophets of doom to come; Muhammad was the last and simply had to be patient for a while longer. Allah was preparing to judge, probably in his lifetime.

10:109 And (O Muhammad) follow what is revealed to you and be patient and steadfast, until Allah judges; for He is the Best of judges.

10:102 Do they, then, expect anything other than the like of the days of those who passed away before them? Say: "Wait on, I am with you one of those who wait."

10:103 Then, We shall deliver our Messengers and the believers; it is only right that We should deliver the believers.

Moududi calls stupid those who claimed that Revelation 23:51 can only mean the coming of more messengers after Muhammad.

23:51 O Messengers, eat from the good things and do what is right. Surely I am aware of what you do.

Moududi:

The stories of some Prophets have been related as individuals, but in this verse all of them have been addressed together. However, it does not mean that they were present at one and the same place at the time of address. As a matter of fact, this way of address has been adopted to show that the Message of all the Messengers, who came to different countries in different ages, was the same and they all belonged to one and the same community. Therefore the

Message to one Messenger was meant to be the Message for each one of them. In this verse, they have been addressed together as if they were present at one and the same place in order to emphasize this same aspect of the matter. But it is an irony that some stupid people of this age have concluded that this verse has been addressed to those messengers who were to come after Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him).

If Moududi's explanation is correct—you don't get the King Faisal International Award for services to Islam and Islamic studies for being wrong—God's hastening of the bounties (Revelation 23:56) to those in "error for a while" so as to confuse them is still another strong indication of a looming Judgement Day.

23:52 And this your nation is a single nation and I am your Lord; so fear me.

23:53 But they broke up, regarding their affairs, into factions, each party rejoicing in what they had.

23:54 So, leave them in their error for a while.

23:55 What? Do you think that in what We provide them with of money and children.

23:56 We are hastening to them our Bounties? No, they do not understand.

As to those who rightly fear "that they are returning to their Lord" shortly, they can expect good things.

23:57 Those who are awed by the fear of their Lord,

23:58 And those who believe in the Revelations of their Lord,

23:59 And those who do not associate anything with their Lord,

23:60 And those who give what they give while their hearts tremble for fear that they are returning to their Lord;

23:61 All those shall hasten to do the right deeds and they are the first to attain them.

The Happy Ending

20:128 Did He not reveal to them (*the Meccan unbelievers*) as a guidance, how many generations before them We destroyed as they were walking inside their dwellings? Surely, in that are signs for people of understanding.

20:129 And but for a Word which preceded from your Lord and an appointed term, it (the punishment) would have been inexorable.

20:130 So bear (Muhammad) patiently what they say, and celebrate the praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting; and glorify him during the hours of the night and at the two ends of the day, that you may be well-pleased.

20:131 And do not allow your eyes to reach out to what We allowed some to enjoy of the flowers of the present life, so as to try them thereby. Your Lord's provision is better and more lasting.

20:132 And enjoin your family to pray and be constant therein. We do not ask you for any provision; We rather provide for you. The happy ending is reserved for the righteousness (sic).

20:133 They say: "If only he would bring us a sign from his Lord." Has not a clear proof come to them in the previous scriptures?

20:134 And had We destroyed them with a punishment before him (the Prophet Muhammad), they would have said: "Lord, if only you had sent us a messenger, we would have followed your Revelations before we were humiliated and disgraced."

The happy ending promised in Revelation 20:132 can only be Judgement Day. All "the well-guided" have to do is be patient a little longer.

20:135 Say: "Everybody is waiting, so wait; and then you will know who are the people of the Straight Path and who are the well-guided."

Muhammad and the Reckoning

In both the Koran and the hadiths, Muhammad expected Judgement Day during his lifetime or shortly after his death.

Narrated Sahl bin Sad As-Sa'idi (a companion of Allah's Apostle):

Allah's Apostle, holding out his middle and index fingers, said, "My advent and the Hour are like this (or like these)," namely, the period between his era and the Hour is like the distance between those two fingers, i.e. very short.

Bukhari 63.221

Narrated Anas:

A bedouin came to the Prophet and said, "O Allah's Apostle! When will The Hour be established?"

The Prophet said, "Wailaka (Woe to you), What have you prepared for it?"

The bedouin said, "I have not prepared anything for it, except that I love Allah and His Apostle."

The Prophet said, "You will be with those whom you love."

We (the companions of the Prophet) said, "And will we too be so?"

The Prophet said, "Yes."

So we became very glad on that day. In the meantime, a slave of Al-Mughira passed by, and he was of the same age as I was.

The Prophet said. "If this (slave) should live long, he will not reach the geriatric old age, but the Hour will be established."

Bukhari 73.188

One of the signs of an impending Judgement Day in the Koran is that the wall built by Alexander the Great to keep Gog and Magog at bay (see Judgement Day: "Gog and Magog on the Last Day," Boreal Books) will be breached.

18:94 They said: "O Dhul-Qarnayn (Alexander the Great), surely Gog and Magog are making mischief in the land. Shall

we pay you a tribute so that you may build a barrier between us and them?"

18:95 He said: "What my Lord has empowered me to do is better. So help me forcefully and I will build a barrier between you and them.

18:96 "Bring me large pieces of iron." So that when he had levelled up [the gap] between the two sides, he said: "Blow." And having turned it (the iron) into fire, he said: "Bring me molten brass to pour on it."

18:97 Then, they (Gog and Magog) could neither scale it or make a hole through it.

18:98 He said: "This is a mercy from my Lord; but when my Lord's Promise comes to pass, He will turn it into rubble, and the Promise of my Lord is ever true."

18:99 And on that day we shall make them surge upon one another, and the trumpet shall be blown, and we shall gather them together.

18:100 On that Day We shall boldly set Hell before the unbelievers.

18:101 Those whose eyes were closed to My Reminder (the Qur'an) and they could not hear [it].

Visions of a breach in the wall were transmitted to Muhammad in lucid visions, such as the one he experienced while riding his camel around the Ka'ba during his last Hajj.

Narrated Ibn Abbas:

Allah's Apostle performed the Tawaf (around the Ka'ba while riding his camel, and every time he reached the corner (of the Black Stone) he pointed at it with his hand and said, "Allahu Akbar." (Zainab said: The Prophet said, "An opening has been made in the wall of Gog and Magog like this and this," forming the number 90 (with his thumb and index finger).

Bukhari 63.215

More revelations about an imminent Judgement Day:

10:46 And whether We show you (during your lifetime) part of what We promised them or cause you to die, surely unto

Us is your return; and then Allah is witness of what they do.

40:77 So, bear up patiently; Allah's Promise is true. We will either show you (Muhammad) what We are promising them, or We will call you unto Us. Then unto us they will be brought back.

40:78 Indeed, We have sent Messengers before you. Of some We have told you the tale and of some We did not tell. It is not in any Messengers' power to bring a sign, save by Allah's Leave. Then, when Allah's Decree comes, the issue shall be decided justly; and there and then the seekers of vanity shall perish.

43:40 Are you able, then, to make the deaf hear or guide the blind and him who is in manifest error?

43:41 Were We to carry you off, We would then wreak vengeance upon them.

43:42 Or show you that which We have promised. For We certainly have power over them.

43:43 Cling then to what was revealed to you; you are certainly on a Straight Path.

From revelations and hadiths it is obvious that Muhammad expected to live to see Judgement Day, or die just before the opening act. The believers' behavior after his death is the clearest indication that they now expected God to wreak the vengeance promised in 43:41. If it had not been for Abu Bakr, who would succeed Muhammad as leader of the believers, quoting a verse that none had ever heard—that Muhammad was going to die like everyone else—who knows what would have happened with people running around in terror thinking that Judgement Day was at hand?

3:144 Muhammad is merely a Messenger, before whom many Messengers have come and gone. If then he dies or gets killed, you will turn on your heels? Should any man turn on his heels, he will not cause Allah any harm; and Allah will reward the thankful.

Muhammad dying before the advent of Judgement Day would lead to a wholesale reinterpretation of what he had revealed about an impending doomsday.

When Muhammad died before the eschaton's (the end of the world) arrival and the Hour continued to be delayed, the early Muslims had to radically reorient their religious vision. The Hour was thus increasingly deferred into the distant future, and in less than a century Islam swiftly transformed itself from a religion expecting the end of the world to a religion that aimed to rule the world.

Stephen J. Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet – The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

For the Love of a Father?

Don't you just feel the love of a father for his son in Revelations 33:56-57, where Allah blesses Muhammad and issues a stern warning to anyone who would harm him? Does it not remind you of another God-Son relationship?

33:56 Allah and His angels bless the Prophet. O believers, bless him and greet him graciously, too.

33:57 Those who cause Allah and His Messenger any injury, Allah has cursed them in this life and the life to come and has prepared for them a demeaning punishment.

33:58 And those who injure the believers, men and women, except for what they have incurred, have borne the burden of falsehood and manifest sin.

When you read the Koran, especially the verses where God expresses his love for Muhammad and threatens to do serious harm to anyone who would harm him or cause him distress, you can't help thinking that Allah is the father Muhammad never had, the father he might have imagined. In his last public appearance a short time before he died, Muhammad asked the thousands who had come to hear what would be his last sermon (see Appendix Muhammad's Last Sermon) if he had done a good job. The crowd shouted in unison: "We bear witness that you have conveyed the trust and discharged your ministry and looked to our welfare." He then lifted his forefinger toward the sky and then, pointing toward the people, then to the heavens above, asked God to bear witness three times: "O Lord: Bear Thou witness unto it." Did Muhammad, in making the Koran known to mankind, want to please Allah the way a child wishes to ingratiate himself to his father, and in return gain the love and approbation that comes from being a good son? If you believe, then the answer is obvious.

The World Before and After the Messengers

2:213 Mankind was one nation. Then Allah sent forth the Prophets as bearers of good news and warners. He sent with them the Book (the Scriptures) in truth, to judge between people regarding what they differed on. And none differed on it (religion) except those to whom it (the Book) was given after clear proofs had reached them, out of envy for one another. Allah, by His Will, guided those who believe to the truth on which they had differed. Allah guides whom He wills to the Right path.

2:214 Or do you suppose that you will enter Paradise before the example of those who came before you had reached you? They were stricken by privation and affliction and were so shaken that the Messenger and those who believe along with him said: "When is Allah's support coming?" Surely Allah's Support is close at hand.

10:19 Mankind were (sic) a single nation; then they differed. Had it not been for a prior order of your Lord, the matter over which they had differed would have been settled.

If only...

11:116 If only there had been among generations who preceded you (*Muhammad*) men possessing understanding and forbidding corruption in the earth, except for a few of them whom We saved! The wrongdoers continued to indulge in what they used to enjoy and, in fact, were wicked sinners.

11:117 And your Lord would not have destroyed the cities unjustly, had their inhabitants been righteous.

11:118 And had your Lord willed, He would have made mankind a single nation; but they will continue to differ among themselves,

11:119 Except for those on whom your Lord has mercy. To that end He created them, and the Word of your Lord has been accomplished: "I will surely fill up Hell with jinn and humans all together."

11:120 And all We relate to you of the tidings of the Messengers is to strengthen your heart; and you have received in these the truth, admonition and a reminder for the believers.

11:121 And say to the unbelievers: "Continue with what you are doing, and We shall continue with ours.

11:122 "And wait; we too are waiting."

11:123 To Allah belongs the Unseen in the heavens and on the earth, and to Him the whole affair shall be referred. So worship Him and put your trust in Him; your Lord is not unaware of the things you do.

Allah could have made humanity one nation again after the schisms, deaths and chaos caused by His Revelations, but chose not to.

42:8 Had Allah wished, He would have made them a single nation, but He admits whom He wishes into His Mercy. Yet, the wrongdoers have no protector or supporter.

42:9 Or have they taken, apart from Him, other protectors? Surely Allah is the Protector and He revives the dead and has power over everything.

Maybe that was His intention all along, as His angels suspected. From *Shared Prophets*: "Adam," Boreal Books:

2:30 When your Lord said to the angels: "I am placing a deputy on earth", they said: "Will you place one who will make mischief in it and shed blood, while we sing Your praise and glorify Your sanctity?" He said: "I know what you do not know."

Why No Roofs and Stairways of Silver

One way that Allah split up mankind into factions, apart from sending Messengers who sowed discord, was to deny people some of His Bounty such as "roofs of silver" and "adornment of gold" so that they would not be deluded into thinking the here-and-now was a better place than the Hereafter.

43:32 Do they apportion the Mercy of your Lord? It is We Who have apportioned their livelihood among them in the present life and raised some of them in rank above others; so that some would be subservient to the others. Your Lord's Mercy is better than what they amass.

43:33 And were it not for fear that mankind would be a single nation, We would have assigned to those who disbelieve in the All-Compassionate, roof of silver for their houses and stairways upon which they ascend;

43:34 And portal for their houses and couches upon which they recline;

43:35 And adornment of gold; but all that is nothing but worldly enjoyment. Yet the Hereafter with your Lord is reserved for the God-fearing.

God was, in effect, afraid of a single nation of fun-loving people who would seek only to live the good life in the here-and-now instead of seeking a better life in the Hereafter. This interpretation is similar to Moududi's:

That is, this silver and gold whose possession by somebody is the highest blessing and the very climax of good fortune in your sight, is so base and contemptible a thing in the sight of Allah that had there been no danger of all human beings being inclined towards unbelief, He would have made every disbeliever's house of gold and silver.

Allah's Covenant with His Prophets

Muhammad would have the Arabs swear to Allah's covenant, thereby consecrating his authority over them.

3:81 And when Allah made His Covenant with the Prophets, [He said]: "I gave you the Book and the Wisdom. Then a Messenger (Muhammad) came to you confirming what you already possessed; so you must believe in him and give him support." He said: "Do you affirm this and accept my covenant on this matter?" They said: "We do affirm it." He said: "Bear witness and I will be with you one of the witnesses."

3:82 "Whoever turns his back thereafter; such, are the true sinners."

Allah confirmed His covenant with Muhammad, along with the other prophets.

33:7 And [remember] when We took from the Prophets their covenant and from you and from Noah, Abraham and Jesus, son of Mary, too; and We took from them a solemn covenant;

33:8 So as to question the truthful about their truthfulness, and He has prepared for the unbelievers a very painful punishment.

Iteration Upon Iteration

Following are more relevant revelations about the topics at hand, which could not be avoided if *The Koran Six* is to contain every revelation in the Koran. If you are left with the impression that you have read it all before, many times over, it is because you have, and not because of duplications on our part.

10:39 No, they deny that (the Qur'an) whereof they have no knowledge, and whose interpretation has yet to come to them. That is how those who came before them denied [it]. Look, then, what was the fate of the wrongdoers.

10:40 Some of them believed in it, and some do not; but your Lord knows best the mischief-makers.

10:41 If they deny what you say, then say: "What I do is mine, and what you do is yours. You are quit of what I do, and I am quit of what you do."

10:42 And some of them listen to you; but can you make the deaf hear, even if they do not understand?

10:43 And some of them look at you; but can you guide the blind, even if they do not see?

10:44 Surely, Allah does not wrong people at all, but people wrong themselves.

10:45 On the Day He musters them, it is as though they have only tarried for one hour of the day, recognizing each other. Those who have disbelieved in meeting Allah are the real losers, and are not well-guided.

10:46 And whether We show you part of what We promised them or cause you to die, surely unto Us is your return; and then Allah is witness of what they do.

10:47 (see Chapter "The Reckoning - The Seal of the Prophets")

10:48 And they say: "When is this promise, if you are truthful?"

10:49 Say: "I have no power to harm or to profit myself as Allah will. To every nation there is a term, when its term comes, it will not put it back a single hour, nor will it put it forward."

10:50 Say: "Tell me, if His punishment overtakes you by night or day, what part of it will the wicked sinners seek to hasten (after seeing the terrible punishment, will the wicked sinners still seek to hasten it through mockery and disbelief)?"

10:51 It is then, when it has overtaken you, that you will believe in Him? Now [you believe] while you were seeking to hasten it!

10:52 Then it will be said to the wrongdoers: "Taste the everlasting punishment. Will you be rewarded except for what you did?"

10:53 And they ask you to tell them: "Is it true?" Say: "Yes, by my Lord, it is the truth, and you cannot escape [punishment]."

10:54 Had every soul which did wrong possessed whatever is on earth, it would offer it as a ransom, and they will feel remorseful when they see the punishment; but they will be justly judged, and they will not be wronged.

10:55 Indeed, to Allah belongs what is in the heavens and in the earth. Indeed, Allah's promise is true, but most of them do not know.

How many times have you heard 10:56 before?

10:56 He gives life and causes death, and unto Him you shall be returned.

10:57 O mankind, there has come to you from your Lord an admonition (the Qur'an), a healing for what is in the hearts, and a guidance and a mercy for the believers.

10:58 Say: "In Allah's Bounty and Mercy - in those let them rejoice. It is better than that which they amass."

10:59 Say: "Have you considered the provision Allah has sent down for you, and how then you made some of it unlawful and some lawful?" Say: "Has Allah allowed you or are you lying about Allah?"

10:60 And what will those who impute lies to Allah think on the Day of Resurrection? Allah is bountiful to mankind, but most of them are not thankful.

10:61 You (Muhammad) do not go about any affair, nor do you recite any portion of the Qur'an, nor do you (the Prophet and the Muslims) do anything, but We are witnesses thereof, as you press on with it. And not a speck's weight in the earth or in the heavens escapes Allah; and nothing smaller or bigger than that, but is in a Manifest Book.

10:62 Indeed, the friends of Allah have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

10:63 Those who believe and are righteous;

10:64 Theirs is the good news in the present life and the Hereafter. And there will be no alteration of the Words of Allah. That is the great triumph.²³

31:6 There are some people who purchase idle talk in order to lead away from Allah's Path without any knowledge; and take it in jest. Those will have a demeaning punishment.

31:7 And if Our Revelations are recited to him, he turns away arrogantly, as though he did not hear them, or as though there is a heaviness in his ears. Announce to him, then, the news of a very painful punishment.

31:8 Those who have believed and do the righteous deeds will inherit the Gardens of Bliss.

31:9 Dwelling therein forever, having been given Allah's True Promise. He is the All-Mighty the All-Wise.

31:23 Whoever disbelieves, let not his disbelief sadden you. Unto Us is their return and then We will tell them what they did. Allah knows well the secret of the breasts.

31:24 We allow them to indulge themselves a little, then We will compel them to taste a harsh punishment.

²³ Allah would annul or modify more than 240 of His Revelations, Revealed Truth 10:64 notwithstanding (recommended: *Let Me Rephrase That!*, Boreal Books).

31:25 And if you ask them: "Who created the heavens and the earth", they will certainly say: "Allah." Say: "Praise be to Allah." However, most of them do not know.

31:26 To Allah belongs what is in the heavens and the earth. Allah, is indeed, the All-Sufficient, the Praiseworthy.

32:28 And they say: "When will this victory come, if you are truthful?"

32:29 Say: "On the day of victory, their profession of faith will not avail the unbelievers and they will not be given respite."

32:30 So turn away from them and wait; they too shall be waiting.

34:28 We have not sent you but to the whole of mankind, as a warner. Yet most people do not know.

34:29 They say: "When will this promise be fulfilled, if you are truthful?"

34:30 Say: "You have the appointment of a Day from which you shall not be delayed nor advanced a single hour."

34:50 Say: "If I go astray, I only go astray to my loss; but if I am guided, it is merely by reason of what my Lord reveals to me. He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

Death of Muhammad

Narrated Ubada bin As-Samit:

The Prophet said, "Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah (too) loves to meet him and whoever hates to meet Allah, Allah (too) hates to meet him."

Aisha, or some of the wives of the Prophet said, "But we dislike death."

He said: "It is not like this, but it is meant that when the time of the death of a believer approaches, he receives the good news of Allah's pleasure with him and His blessings upon him, and so at that time nothing is dearer to him than what is in front of him. He therefore loves the meeting with Allah, and Allah (too) loves the meeting with him. But when the time of the death of a disbeliever approaches, he receives the evil news of Allah's torment and His Requital, whereupon nothing is more hateful to him than what is before him. Therefore, he hates the meeting with Allah, and Allah too, hates the meeting with him."

Bukhari 76.514

The Koran, being a narration by Muhammad, obviously contains nothing of the narrator's death, except for perhaps the verse Abu Bakr repeated after his passing which none remembered. For information on the death of God's ultimate spokesman, we must look to the hadiths and what was said by those who were there. Muhammad's time of death was of his own choosing. In one tradition, he is praying for the dead at a cemetery when he is given the option by God—a choice offered to all prophets—"the keys of the treasuries of the world and a long life here followed by Paradise' or the choice to meet the Lord in Paradise at once."²⁴ It was after returning from this visit to Medina's graveyard that he fell deathly ill. Aisha reminds us in a hadith of the choice her husband made.

²⁴ Stephen J. Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet - The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011, p. 90.

Narrated Aisha:

When Allah's Apostle was in good health, he used to say, "No prophet's soul is ever captured unless he is shown his place in Paradise and given the option (to die or survive)."

So when the death of the Prophet approached and his head was on my thigh, he became unconscious for a while and then he came to his senses and fixed his eyes on the ceiling and said, "O Allah (with) the highest companions."

I said, "Hence he is not going to choose us."

And I came to know that it was the application of the narration which he (the Prophet) used to narrate to us. And that was the last statement of the Prophet (before his death), i.e. "O Allah! With the highest companions."

Bukhari 76.516

Muhammad spent his last days on Earth in the house of his favourite wife and confidante, his child bride Aisha.

Narrated Aisha:

When the ailment of the Prophet became aggravated and his disease became severe, he asked his wives to permit him to be nursed (treated) in my house. So they gave him the permission. Then the Prophet came (to my house) with the support of two men, and his legs were dragging on the ground, between Abbas, and another man.

Ubaid-Ullah (the sub narrator) said, "I informed Abdullah bin Abbas of what Aisha said.

Ibn Abbas said: 'Do you know who was the other man?'

I replied in the negative.

Ibn Abbas said, 'He was Ali (bin Abi Talib).'

Aisha further said, "When the Prophet came to my house and his sickness became aggravated he ordered us to pour seven skins full of water on him, so that he might give some advice to the people. So he was seated in a Mikhdab (brass tub) belonging to Hafsa, the wife of the Prophet. Then, all of us started pouring water on him from the water skins till he

beckoned to us to stop and that we have done (what he wanted us to do). After that he went out to the people."

Bukhari 4:197

Muhammad disliked taking medicine.

Narrated Aisha:

We poured medicine in one side of the Prophet's mouth during his illness and he started pointing to us, meaning to say, "Don't pour medicine in my mouth."

We said, "(He says so) because a patient dislikes medicines."

When he improved and felt a little better, he said, "Didn't I forbid you to pour medicine in my mouth?"

We said, "(We thought it was because of) the dislike, patients have for medicines."

He said, "Let everyone present in the house be given medicine by pouring it in his mouth while I am looking at him, except Abbas as he has not witnessed you (doing the same to me)."

Bukhari 59.735

During his last days, Muhammad asked Abu Bakr, who would succeed him as leader of the believers, to lead his flock in prayer.

Narrated Al-Aswad:

"We were with Aisha discussing the regularity of offering the prayer and dignifying it. She said, 'When Allah's Apostle fell sick with the fatal illness and when the time of prayer became due and Adhan was pronounced, he said, 'Tell Abu Bakr to lead the people in prayer.'

He was told that Abu Bakr was a soft-hearted man and would not be able to lead the prayer in his place.

The Prophet gave the same order again but he was given the same reply. He gave the order for the third time and said, 'You (women) are the companions of Joseph²⁵. Tell Abu Bakr to lead the prayer.'

²⁵ This may be a reference to the guile of the women who tried to seduce Joseph (see *Shared Prophets*: "Joseph, Son of Jacob – The Governor's Wife," Boreal Books).

So Abu Bakr came out to lead the prayer. In the meantime the condition of the Prophet improved a bit and he came out with the help of two men one on each side. As if I was observing his legs dragging on the ground owing to the disease. Abu Bakr wanted to retreat but the Prophet beckoned him to remain at his place and the Prophet was brought till he sat beside Abu Bakr."

Al-A'mash was asked, "Was the Prophet praying and Abu Bakr following him, and were the people following Abu Bakr in that prayer?"

Al-A'mash replied in the affirmative with a nod of his head.

Abu Muawiya said, "The Prophet was sitting on the left side of Abu Bakr who was praying while standing."

Bukhari 11.633

The last gathering:

Narrated Ibn Abbas:

Once the Prophet ascended the pulpit and it was the last gathering in which he took part. He was covering his shoulder with a big cloak and binding his head with an oily bandage. He glorified and praised Allah and said, "O people! Come to me."

So the people came and gathered around him and he then said, "Amma ba'du." "From now onward the Ansar (*Medinan Muslims*) will decrease and other people will increase. So anybody who becomes a ruler of the followers of Muhammad and has the power to harm or benefit people then he should accept the good from the benevolent amongst them (Ansar) and overlook the faults of their wrongdoers."

Bukhari 13.49

What may have been the cause of the Muhammad's fatal affliction:

Narrated Anas bin Malik:

Allah's Apostle (p.b.u.h) fell down from a horse and his right side was either injured or scratched, so we went to inquire about his health. The time for the prayer became due and he offered the prayer while sitting and we prayed while standing.

He said, "The Imam is to be followed; so if he says Takbir, you should also say Takbir, and if he bows you should also bow; and when he lifts his head you should also do the same and if he says: Sami'a-l-lahu Liman Hamidah (Allah hears whoever sends his praises to Him) you should say: Rabbana walakal-Hamd (O our Lord! All the praises are for You)."

Bukhari 20.215

The last silent action of Muhammad:

Narrated Anas bin Malik:

Once Allah's Apostle rode a horse and fell down and the right side (of his body) was injured. He offered one of the prayers while sitting and we also prayed behind him sitting. When he completed the prayer, he said, "The Imam is to be followed. Pray standing if he prays standing and bow when he bows; rise when he rises; and if he says, 'Sami a-l-lahu-liman hamida, say then, 'Rabbana wa Lakal-hamd' and pray standing if he prays standing and pray sitting (all of you) if he prays sitting."

Humaid said: The saying of the Prophet "Pray sitting, if he (Imam) prays sitting" was said in his former illness (during his early life) but the Prophet prayed sitting afterwards (in the last illness) and the people were praying standing behind him and the Prophet did not order them to sit. We should follow the latest actions of the Prophet.

Bukhari 11.657

As his condition deteriorated, Muhammad could only watch the believers in prayer.

Narrated Anas:

The Prophet did not come out for three days. The people stood for the prayer and Abu Bakr went ahead to lead the prayer. (In the meantime) the Prophet caught hold of the curtain and lifted it. When the face of the Prophet appeared we had never seen a scene more pleasing than the face of the Prophet as it appeared then. The Prophet beckoned to Abu Bakr to lead the people in the prayer and then let the curtain fall. We did not see him (again) till he died.

Bukhari 11.649

The last two chapters of the Koran, 113 (see *Getting to Know Allah: "Allah and Witches,"* Boreal Books) and 114 (see Chapter "Revelations and Generalization") are known as the Muawidhatan (also spelled Mu'awwidhatayn), the Verses of Refuge. When he feared his time had come, Muhammad repeated over and over these two short surahs.

Narrated Aisha:

Whenever Allah's Apostle became ill, he used to recite the Muawidhatan and blow his breath over himself (after their recitation) and rubbed his hands over his body. So when he was afflicted with his fatal illness. I started reciting the Muawidhatan and blowing my breath over him as he used to blow and made the hand of the Prophet pass over his body.

Bukhari 59.723

In Muhammad's time, witches were thought to blow into knots to cast spells. Another superstition from the Dark Ages that found its way into the Koran and from whom God's spokesperson sought protection on his death bed, along that of "the evil of the slinking whisperer [Satan] (114:5)." Surah 113, in particular, as a choice for a last appeal to a higher power before the darkness closes in is revealing, not only in testifying to the existence of witches, but in Allah admitting that He is the creator of what is evil; that He is, in essence, the source of all evil.

THE DAYBREAK

113 Al-Falaq

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

113:1 Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of the Daybreak,

113:2 "From the evil of what He has created,

113:3 "And the evil of the darkness when it gathers,

113:4 "And the evil of those who blow into knotted reeds
(witches or sorceresses),

113:5 "And from the evil of the envious when he envies."

Muhammad's last orders:

Narrated Said bin Jubair:

That he heard Ibn Abbas saying, "Thursday! And you know not what Thursday is?"

After that Ibn Abbas wept till the stones on the ground were soaked with his tears. On that I asked Ibn Abbas, "What is (about) Thursday?"

He said, "When the condition (i.e. health) of Allah's Apostle deteriorated, he said, 'Bring me a bone of scapula, so that I may write something for you after which you will never go astray.'

The people differed in their opinions although it was improper to differ in front of a prophet, They said, 'What is wrong with him? Do you think he is delirious? Ask him (to understand).'

The Prophet replied, 'Leave me as I am in a better state than what you are asking me to do.'

Then the Prophet ordered them to do three things saying, 'Turn out all the pagans from the Arabian Peninsula, show respect to all foreign delegates by giving them gifts as I used to do.'"

The sub-narrator added, "The third order was something beneficial which either Ibn Abbas did not mention or he mentioned but I forgot."

Bukhari 53.393

A bad attempt at cheering up a dying man:

Narrated Aisha:

When the Prophet became ill, some of his wives talked about a church which they had seen in Ethiopia and it was called Mariya.

Um Salma and Um Habiba had been to Ethiopia, and both of them narrated its (the Church's) beauty and the pictures it contained.

The Prophet raised his head and said, "Those are the people who, whenever a pious man dies amongst them, make a place of worship at his grave and then they make those pictures in it. Those are the worst creatures in the Sight of Allah."

Bukhari 23.425

The diet of those who attended to Muhammad during his last days consisted of dates and... black water!?

Narrated Abu Huraira:

The family of Muhammad did not eat their fill for three successive days till he died.

Bukhari 65.287

Narrated Aisha:

The Prophet died when we had satisfied our hunger with the two black things, i.e. dates and water.

Bukhari 65.295

When Muhammad died, Aisha's cupboards were bare.

Narrated Aisha:

When the Prophet died, nothing which can be eaten by a living creature was left on my shelf except some barley grain. I ate of it for a period and when I measured it, it finished.

Bukhari 76.458

Before he died, Muhammad wanted to write down his last instructions, which would suggest that he could read and write (an illiterate would have asked for a scribe, not asked for the means to write them himself²⁶) but bickering among those around him prevented him from doing so.

Narrated Ubaidullah bin Abdullah:

Ibn Abbas said, "When Allah's Apostle was on his deathbed and there were some men in the house, he said, 'Come near, I will write for you something after which you will not go astray.'

Some of them (i.e. his companions) said, 'Allah's Apostle is seriously ill and you have the (Holy) Quran. Allah's Book is sufficient for us.'

So the people in the house differed and started disputing. Some of them said, 'Give him writing material so that he may

²⁶ For more evidence that Muhammad was not a total illiterate, see *Jihad in the Koran: "The Treaty of Hudaibiyah,"* Boreal Books.

write for you something after which you will not go astray,' while the others said the other way round.

So when their talk and differences increased, Allah's Apostle said, 'Get up (*out?*).'"

Ibn Abbas used to say, "No doubt, it was very unfortunate (a great disaster) that Allah's Apostle was prevented from writing for them that writing because of their differences and noise."

Bukhari 59.717

Perhaps he wanted to make out a will, which the Koran had made mandatory for adult males.

2:180 It is prescribed for you that when death is imminent for one of you and he leaves wealth, he should equitably make a testament in favour of the parents and the near of kin. This is incumbent upon the righteous.

The fact that he ignored this Divine Ordinance surprised some people.

Narrated Talha bin Musarraf:

I asked Abdullah bin Abu Afa "Did the Prophet make a will?"

He replied, "No."

I asked him, "How is it then that the making of a will has been enjoined on people, (or that they are ordered to make a will)?"

He replied, "The Prophet bequeathed Allah's Book (i.e. quran)."

Bukhari 51.3

What Muhammad was wearing when he passed away.

Narrated Abu Burda:

Aisha brought out to us a Kisa and an Izar and said, "The Prophet died while wearing these two." (Kisa, a square black piece of woolen cloth. Izar, a sheet cloth garment covering the lower half of the body).

Bukhari 72.707

The passing of Muhammad:

Narrated Aisha:

It was one of the favors of Allah towards me that Allah's Apostle expired in my house on the day of my turn while he was leaning against my chest and Allah made my saliva mix with his saliva at his death.

Abdur-Rahman entered upon me with a Siwak in his hand and I was supporting (the back of) Allah's Apostle (against my chest). I saw the Prophet looking at it (i.e. Siwak) and I knew that he loved the Siwak, so I said (to him), "Shall I take it for you?"

He nodded in agreement. So I took it and it was too stiff for him to use, so I said, "Shall I soften it for you?"

He nodded his approval. So I softened it and he cleaned his teeth with it.

In front of him there was a jug or a tin containing water. He started dipping his hand in the water and rubbing his face with it, he said, "None has the right to be worshipped except Allah. Death has its agonies."

He then lifted his hands (towards the sky) and started saying, "With the highest companion," till he expired and his hand dropped down.

Bukhari 59.730

Narrated Aisha:

I heard the Prophet and listened to him before his death while he was lying supported on his back, and he was saying, "O Allah! Forgive me, and bestow Your Mercy on me, and let me meet the (highest) companions (of the Hereafter)."

Bukhari 59.715

Muhammad died a rich man in spite of spending a large part of his wealth in Allah's Cause, i.e., waging war against the unbelievers. As God's spokesman, he was not only entitled to 20 percent of whatever was taken by force from the unbelievers, but 100 percent of what was absconded without a fight, and that included the valuable Jewish farms of Fadak and the property of the Banu Nadir Jews of Medina, whom he

forced into exile (see Chapters "Khaybar" and "Massacre of the Jews Medina" in *Jihad in the Koran*, Boreal Books).

Narrated Umar:

The properties of Bani An-Nadir which Allah had transferred to His Apostle as Fai Booty were not gained by the Muslims with their horses and camels. The properties therefore, belonged especially to Allah's Apostle who used to give his family their yearly expenditure and spend what remained thereof on arms and horses to be used in Allah's Cause.

Bukhari 52.153

Muhammad's dying curse:

Narrated Aisha and Ibn Abbas:

On his death-bed Allah's Apostle put a sheet over his-face and when he felt hot, he would remove it from his face. When in that state (of putting and removing the sheet) he said, "May Allah's Curse be on the Jews and the Christians for they build places of worship at the graves of their prophets." (By that) he intended to warn (the Muslim) from what they (i.e. Jews and Christians) had done.

Bukhari 56.660

Muhammad's death shroud:

Narrated Aisha:

When Allah's Apostle died, he was covered with a Hibra Burd (green square decorated garment).

Bukhari 72.705

The impact of Muhammad's death on Aisha:

Narrated Aisha:

The Prophet died while he was between my chest and chin, so I never dislike the death agony for anyone after the Prophet.

Bukhari 59.726

And chatter ensued...

Narrated Ibn Umar:

During the lifetime of the Prophet we used to avoid chatting leisurely and freely with our wives lest some Divine inspiration might be revealed concerning us. But when the Prophet had died, we started chatting leisurely and freely (with them).

Bukhari 62.115

Muhammad's age when he died and why this is important.

Narrated Aisha:

The Prophet died when he was sixty-three years old.

Bukhari 56.736

Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet said, "Allah will not accept the excuse of any person whose instant of death is delayed till he is sixty years of age."

Bukhari 76.428

The Official Cause of Death

The cause of Muhammad's death offered earlier—that it was the result of a fall from a horse—challenges the official version of which incident led to his demise. As you should be aware, Muhammad's life's template borrowed heavily from that of the prophets of the Torah and Jesus of the New Testament. In the Gospels, the penultimate Messenger of Allah suffered a gruesome death on the cross because of the Jews. For the arbiters of Islamic dogma, it may have seemed only logical that their savior's passing, like that of Jesus, had been expedited by a Jew, and a female to boot, rather than from injuries sustained by an accomplished rider falling off his mount. In the official version, Muhammad's fate was sealed at Khaybar, a Jewish settlement that he had attacked without provocation (see *Jihad in the Koran: "Battle of Khaybar,"* Boreal Books).

Narrated Anas bin Malik:

Allah's Apostle reached Khaibar in the early morning and the people of Khaibar came out with their spades, and when they

saw the Prophet they said, "Muhammad and his army!" and returned hurriedly to take refuge in the fort.

The Prophet raised his hands and said, "Allah is Greater! Khaibar is ruined! If we approach a nation, then miserable is the morning of those who are warned."

Bukhari 56.840

The leadership of the Jews of Khaybar, as well as the male members of their immediate and extended families, were beheaded. One chief who went by the name of Kinana was almost tortured to death in the hope that he would reveal the existence of buried treasures before he, too, was decapitated. A Jewish woman by the name of Zaynab (who may have been Kinana's daughter) put poison in a carcass of lamb (some say it was goat) that she was told to cook for Muhammad and his cronies after the slaughter of all killable males (those showing any growth of pubic hair) in her household, including her father and her husband. She was brought before God's spokesman to answer for her cooking. The story as reported by respected Islamic scholar Ibn Sa'd [784-845]:

The apostle of Allah sent for Zaynab and said to her, "What induced you to do what you have done?"

She replied, "You have done to my people what you have done. You have killed my father, my uncle and my husband, so I said to myself, 'If you are a prophet, the foreleg will inform you'; and others have said, 'If you are a king we will get rid of you.'"

A foreleg of the roasted lamb did inform Muhammad that it had been poisoned, but not before he had taken a bite.

Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah:

Ibn Shihab said: Jabir ibn Abdullah used to say that a jewess from the inhabitants of Khaybar poisoned a roasted sheep and presented it to the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) who took its foreleg and ate from it. A group of his companions also ate with him. The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) then said: Take your hands away (from the food).

The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) then sent someone to the jewess and he called her. He said to her: Have you poisoned this sheep?

The jewess replied: Who has informed you?

He said: This foreleg which I have in my hand has informed me.

She said: Yes.

He said: What did you intend by it?

She said: I thought if you were a prophet, it would not harm you; if you were not a prophet, we should rid ourselves of him (i.e. the Prophet).

The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) then forgave her, and did not punish her. But some of his companions who ate it, died.

The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) had himself cupped on his shoulder on account of that which he had eaten from the sheep. Abu Hind cupped him with the horn and knife. He was a client of Banu Bayadah from the Ansar (Medinan helpers).

Abu Dawud 39.4495

In other hadiths, such as the following, Muhammad had her killed. It may not so much have been the leg of lamb spilling the beans, so to speak, that alerted him that the food was poisoned, but one of his dining companions falling over dead.

Narrated Abu Salamah:

A jewess presented a roasted sheep to the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) at Khaybar. He then mentioned the rest of the tradition like that of Jabir (No. 4495).

He said: Then Bashir ibn al-Bara' ibn Ma'rur al-Ansari died.

He sent someone to call on the jewess, and said to her (when she came): What motivated you to do the work you have done? He then mentioned the rest of the tradition similar to the one mentioned by Jabir (No. 4495).

The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) then ordered regarding her and she was killed. But he (Abu Salamah) did not mention the matter of cupping.

Abu Dawud 39.4496

Narrated Ali ibn AbuTalib:

A jewess used to abuse the Prophet (peace be upon him) and disparage him. A man strangled her till she died. The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) declared that no recompense was payable for her blood.

Abu Dawud 38.4349

What does the ingestion of a minute amount of poison, not enough to have the desired effect or cause any visible discomfort at the time, have to do with Muhammad's death years later? It all has to do with something Aisha said her husband uttered before he died.

Narrated Aisha:

The Prophet in his ailment in which he died, used to say, "O Aisha! I still feel the pain caused by the food I ate at Khaibar, and at this time, I feel as if my aorta is being cut from that poison."

Bukhari 59.713

He said something similar after he had ordered the cook to be killed.

Narrated Abu Salamah:

Muhammad ibn Amr said on the authority of Abu Salamah, and he did not mention the name of Abu Hurayrah: The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) used to accept presents but not alms (sadaqah i.e. charity).

This version adds: So a jewess presented him at Khaybar with a roasted sheep which she had poisoned. The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) ate of it and the people also ate. He then said: Take away your hands (from the food), for it has informed me that it is poisoned.

Bishr ibn al-Bara' ibn Ma'rur al-Ansari died. So he (the Prophet) sent for the jewess (and said to her): What motivated you to do the work you have done?

She said: If you were a prophet, it would not harm you; but if you were a king, I should rid the people of you.

The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) then ordered regarding her and she was killed. He then said about the pain of which he died: I continued to feel pain from the morsel

which I had eaten at Khaybar. This is the time when it has cut off my aorta.

Abu Dawud 39.4498

From credible accounts of a Jewish woman attempting to poison him, Islamic scholars have reached the implausible conclusion that it was this attempt on Muhammad's life that caused his death four years later. You may want to spare a prayer for Zaynab if she is indeed the jewess being tortured in her grave in the following hadith:

Narrated Aisha:

Once Allah's Apostle passed by (the grave of) a jewess whose relatives were weeping over her. He said, "They are weeping over her and she is being tortured in her grave."

Bukhari 23.376

5:11 O believers, remember Allah's grace upon you, when certain people intended to reach out to you with their hands but Allah restrained them. Fear Allah and in Allah let the believers put their trust.

Moududi's commentary on what he claims is a reference to an attempt by the Jews of Medina to do away with Muhammad and his cronies:

This alludes to the incident reported by Ibn 'Abbas when a group of Jews invited the Prophet (peace be on him) and a number of his close Companions to dinner. They had in fact hatched a plot to pounce upon the guests and thus undermine the very foundation of Islam. But by the grace of God the Prophet (peace be on him) came to know of the plot at the eleventh hour and did not go.

Aftermath

A Hundred Years of Nothing

The accounts you will find here of Muhammad's passing and what came after are largely based on two books: *Les derniers jours de Muhammad* (The Last Days of Muhammad) by Tunisian University Professor Hela Ouardi, Albin Michel, 2016, and *The Death of a Prophet - The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam* by Professor of Religious Studies at Oregon State University, Stephen J. Shoemaker, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

Quotes from Ouardi's book have been translated by yours truly. If you find anything objectionable in them, blame the translator, not the author.

When Muhammad allegedly died nestled in Aisha's lap in Medina in 632, he not only left this mortal realm but history altogether. I say allegedly because, with the possible exception of the letter of Caliph Umar II (717-720) to the Byzantine emperor Leo III in which he brags about how Muhammad led his followers out of Arabia "to fight against the largest empires", there is no contemporary Muslim account of how and when he died or what came after for about one hundred years even if Medina, at the time, was known for its scribes. None of the many citizens of the city who could read and write and on whom Muhammad depended, including the indispensable Zaid bin Thabit Al-Ansari, it would seem, could be bothered to note the passing of its most illustrious resident; unless, of course, this is not where and when he died.

The first written text on the life of Muhammad appeared in the first half of the 8th century from a few Muslim clerics such as the *Kitāb al-saqīfa* (the book of saqīfa) by Shiite author Sulaym Ibn Qays al-Hilāl, one of the oldest such texts to have survived to this day. Saqīfa is Arab for refuge or a large covered space. Saqīfa Banī Sā'ida was such a place, a large covered veranda in Medina where a group of people gathered in secret following the death of Muhammad, according to Shiite sources, and named Abu Bakr as his successor, thereby depriving his son-in-law Ali of the caliphate. On the Sunni side, the first clerics to

have written on the life of Muhammad are Urwa Ibn al-Zubayr (d. 712) and his disciple al-Zuhri (d. 741), who lived during the Umayyad caliphate.

Urwa is alleged to have written about different parts of Muhammad's life at the request of Caliph Abd al-Malik (685-705) in the form of letters addressed to his patron. None have survived. We only know of his writings because they are cited by subsequent authors such as Ibn Ishaq (b. 704 d. 767), whose teacher was none other than al-Zuhri. Ibn Ishaq's biography of Muhammad, which he wrote at the request of Abbasid caliph Al-Mansur (754-775) for his son, has much to say about his military expeditions. Like the letters of Urwa, Ishaq's biography has not survived to this day. We know some of what he wrote because he is quoted in later works by 9th and 10th century authors and from reworked fragments such as those found in the seminal *Sirat al-Rasul*, *Example of the Prophet or Life of the Prophet* by Ibn Hisham (d. 832).

Ibn Ishaq was a controversial figure, in part because he approached his subject in much the same way a modern historian would: by considering all information available, including the testimonies of Christians and Jewish converts whom his detractors dismissed out-of-hand as unreliable compared to Arab converts or those born into the faith. Ishaq's most vocal critic was renowned authority on the sayings and deeds of Muhammad (the so-called hadiths), Malik ibn Anas (b. 711 d. 795).

The methodology pursued by Ibn Ishaq was, first and foremost, that of an historian and biographer while Malik was steeped in Islamic Jurisprudence. The main reason why Malik and others questioned Ibn Ishaq's reliability as a hadith narrator was due largely to the fact that he had obtained information about the Prophet's military campaigns (including that of the Battle of Khaibar) from both Jewish and Christian converts to Islam.

Muhammad Mojlum Khan, *The Muslim 100 - The Lives, Thoughts and Achievements of the Most Influential Muslims in History*, Kube Publishing, 2008.

Ibn Hisham would suppress any information that was unfavourable to Muhammad. He transformed what Ishaq wrote into a panegyric, whose contribution to the elevation of a covetous, insular, God-fearing man – pitiless where his god is concerned – into the embodiment of the perfect human being cannot be overestimated. Hisham's plagiarized

biography has achieved canonical status and the immunity from criticism that comes from being elevated to the equivalent of holy writ.

Thanks to its success the *Sira* of Ibn Ishaq (as redacted by Hisham and others) is practically our one source for the life of Muhammad preserved within the Islamic tradition. The work is late; written not by a grandchild, but a great great-grandchild of the Prophet's generation, it gives us the view for which classical Islam had settled. And written by a member of the "ulema" the scholars who had by then emerged as the classical bearers of the Islamic tradition, the picture which it offers is one-sided: how the Umayyad caliphs remembered their Prophet we shall never know.

That it is unhistorical is only what one would expect, but it also has an extraordinary capacity to resist internal criticism, a feature unparalleled in either the *Skandhara* [the life of the Buddha] or the Gospels, but characteristic of the entire Islamic tradition, and most pronounced in the Koran: one can take the picture presented or one can leave it, but one cannot work with it.

Stephen Shoemaker cf. Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses*

Professor Shoemaker on the early biographies of Muhammad:

The manifold shortcomings of the early Islamic traditions, particularly with respect to the period of origins, invite the strong possibility that the beginnings of Islam differed significantly from their representation in the earliest biographies of Muhammad. Not only were the narratives composed at only an arresting distance from the events they describe, but modern scholarship on the traditional biographies of Muhammad has repeatedly found them to be unreliable sources... their failings as historical sources almost required that we look elsewhere to supplement our knowledge about the beginnings of Islam.

The Antichrist in Palestine

Christian, Jewish, Egyptian, Persian, Spanish... sources quoted in Professor Shoemaker's book as to the whereabouts of Muhammad before he died:

1 Doctrina Iacobi nuper Baptizati (July 634 CE)

- 2 The Apocalypse of Rabbi Shim'on b. Yohai (635-45?)
- 3 The Khurzistan Chronicle (ca. 660 CE)
- 4 Jacob of Edessa, Chronological Charts (691/692 CE)
- 5 The History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria: The Life of Patriarch Benjamin (before 717 CE)
- 6 The Spanish Eastern Source (ca. 741 CE)
- 7 The Syriac Common Source: The Chronicle of Theophilus of Edessa (ca. 750 CE)
- 8 The Short Syriac Chronicle of 775 (ca. 775 CE)
- 9 The Zuqnin Chronicle (ca. 775 CE)
- 10 A Report from the Continuation of Abū l-Fath's - Samaritan Chronicle (7th century)
- 11 An early Islamic witness: `Umar's letter to Leo (8th century)

Some of these impartial accounts, such as the *Doctrina Iacobi*, describe a doomsday prophet—of which the Dark Ages abounded —alive and well leading military incursions into Palestine up to two years after Muhammad's purported death in Medina. Since the invention of the clay tablet, people have exchanged information, e.g., letters, about what is happening in their neck of the woods. Because such letters are often written by individuals who have no particular axe to grind, they are invaluable to historians as unbiased eyewitness accounts of what may be later revealed to be historically significant events. This is the case with a letter gleaned from the *Doctrina* by a fellow by the name of Justus to Jacob about Saracens in Palestine. The letter begins with Justus informing Jacob about a correspondence he has received from his brother Abraham regarding a Roman official in Palestine killed by Arabs, led by a man who should have been dead.

My brother Abraham wrote to me that a false prophet has appeared. Abraham writes, "When the candidatus was killed, I was in Caesarea, and I went by ship to Sykamina. And they were saying 'The candidatus has been killed,' and we Jews were overjoyed.

"And they were saying, 'A prophet has appeared, coming with the Saracens and he is preaching the arrival of the anointed one who is to come, the Messiah'.

"And when I arrived in Sykamina I visited an old man who was learned in the scriptures, and I said to him, 'What can you tell me about the prophet who has appeared with the Saracens?'

"And he said to me groaning loudly, 'He is false, for prophets do not come with the sword and a war-chariot. Truly the things set in motion today are deeds of anarchy, and I fear that somehow the first Christ that came, which the Christian worship, was the one sent by God, and instead of him we will receive the Antichrist. Truly Isaiah said that we Jews will have a deceived and hardened heart until the entire earth is destroyed. But go, master Abraham, and find out about this Prophet who has appeared.'

"And when I, Abraham, investigated thoroughly, I heard from who had met him that one will find no truth in the so-called prophet, only the shedding of human blood. In fact, he says that he has the keys of Paradise, which is impossible."

These things my brother Abraham has written from the East.

It would seem that Muhammad was intent on making his way north — Dabiq being the most likely destination — with the idea of fulfilling his own prophecy of a Muslim victory over the Romans, which would be the signal for Allah to bring an end to His Creation and begin the process of settling scores in an end-of-times extravaganza for the ages.

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: The Last Hour would not come until the Romans would land at al-A'maq or in Dabiq. An army consisting of the best (soldiers) of the people of the earth at that time will come from Medina (to counteract them). When they will arrange themselves in ranks, the Romans would say: Do not stand between us and those (Muslims) who took prisoners from amongst us. Let us fight with them; and the Muslims would say: Nay, by Allah, we would never get aside from you and from our brethren that you may fight them.

They will then fight and a third (part) of the army would run away, whom Allah will never forgive.

A third (part of the army) which would be constituted of excellent martyrs in Allah's eye, would be killed and the third

who would never be put to trial would win and they would be conquerors of Constantinople.

And as they would be busy in distributing the spoils of war (amongst themselves) after hanging their swords by the olive trees, the Satan would cry: The Dajjal has taken your place among your family. They would then come out, but it would be of no avail.

And when they would come to Syria, he would come out while they would be still preparing themselves for battle drawing up the ranks.

Certainly, the time of prayer shall come and then Jesus (peace be upon him) son of Mary would descend and would lead them in prayer.

When the enemy of Allah would see him, it would (disappear) just as the salt dissolves itself in water and if he (Jesus) were not to confront them at all, even then it would dissolve completely, but Allah would kill them by his hand and he would show them their blood on his lance (the lance of Jesus Christ).

Sahih Muslim 041.6924

In Muhammad's doomsday scenario, which largely mimics that of the Christians, Jesus returns shortly before the onset of Judgement Day to render the Earth and its people more to Allah's liking.

Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Apostle said, "The Hour will not be established until the son of Mary (i.e. Jesus) descends amongst you as a just ruler, he will break the cross, kill the pigs, and abolish the Jizya tax. Money will be in abundance so that nobody will accept it (as charitable gifts)."

Bukhari 43.656

Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Apostle said "How will you be when the son of Mary (i.e. Jesus) descends amongst you and he will judge people by the Law of the Quran and not by the law of Gospel."

Bukhari 55.658

The Muslims would be in possession of Dabiq within a decade of Muhammad's death, but still no Judgement Day.

When Muhammad died before the eschaton's (the end of the world) arrival and the Hour continued to be delayed, the early Muslims had to radically reorient their religious vision. The Hour was thus increasingly deferred into the distant future, and in less than a century Islam swiftly transformed itself from a religion expecting the end of the world to a religion that aimed to rule the world.

Stephen J. Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet - The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

Three Murders and Two Desecrations

The Koran called for the end of the world to occur before or shortly after the death of Muhammad. With Judgement Day imminent, the Prophet saw no need to plan for an orderly succession. This miscalculation has led to the bloody civil wars that are endemic to Islam, with the most ruthless usually ascending to the leadership of the believers.

The lack of any widely available written accounts of the life of the Prophet, as well as the expectation that the end was near, may also explain why not enough cared to deny Muawiyah and his progeny the caliphate, even after they murdered three prominent members of Muhammad's family and desecrated the two cities from which he hailed. Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law and father of his two male grandchildren, Hasan and Husayn, like his two predecessors as caliphs, was assassinated by disgruntled followers. In Ali's case, it was his failure to overcome the challenge posed to his elevation to leader of the believers by Muawiyah, the governor of Syria, that got him killed.

The son of Ali and Muhammad's grandchild, thirty-eight-year-old Hasan, in spite of his illustrious pedigree, could not hope to win a confrontation with the fifty-eight-year-old Muawiyah. Another civil war was temporarily avoided when he accepted a rich endowment and a signed promise from Muawiyah that the caliphate would be his to claim upon his death.

Muawiyah ruled for the next twenty years and established the first Muslim dynasty, the Umayyad. He did this by reneging on his promise to Hasan. He had him assassinated, thereby removing that impediment to his son Yazid succeeding him as caliph. That left only

Husayn. He was beheaded along with members of his family and entourage after the confrontation at Karbala with Yazid's forces on October 10, 680. Yazid then moved to eliminate the last opposition to his rule, which was largely based in the Hijaz (the area comprising most of western modern-day Saudi Arabia and centered on Mecca and Medina), the so-called Holy Land of Islam. His army marched on Medina, which they pillaged, severely damaging the mosque founded by Muhammad when he first came to the oasis city, then known as Yathrib.

What should have been an unforgivable sacrilege was quickly followed by the siege of Mecca and the plundering of part of the holy city. During the assault, the Ka'ba was burnt to the ground. Today, an innocent cartoon of Muhammad can get you killed. Decades after his death, pretenders to his legacy murdered his son-in-law and his grandsons, ransacked the city where he died, and attacked the city of his birth, almost obliterating what was to become the holiest shrine of Islam, the Ka'ba; and not only got away with it, but were rewarded with the caliphate for their efforts.

Epilogue

Arabs, Before and After

Ernest Renan (1823–92), French historian and critic, writing about pre-Islamic Arab society (my translation):

I am not aware in the entire history of civilisation of a more gracious, more loving, more vibrant society than that of the Arabs before Islam ... [It was a time] ... of unbound freedom, lofty sentiments, a nomadic and chivalrous way of life, [a land] of fantasy, joy, mischievousness, bawdy impious poetry, refined love-making ...

Ernest Renan, cf. Robert Montagne, *La Civilisation du désert*

What happened? Islam happened! Islam became the religion of the inhabitants of the peninsula and the Arabs, in T. E. Lawrence's words, became a people of "primary colours."

They were a people of primary colours, or rather of black and white ... They were a dogmatic people, despising doubt, our modern crown of thorns. They did not understand our metaphysical difficulties, our introspective questioning. They only knew truth and untruth, belief and unbelief, without our hesitating retinue of finer shades.

This people was black and white not merely in clarity, but in apposition. Their thoughts were at ease only in extremes ... they never compromised; they pursued the logic of several incompatible opinions to absurd ends, without perceiving the incongruity.

They were a limited, narrow-minded people, whose inert intellect lay fallow in curious resignation. Their imaginations were vivid, but not creative.

T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*

It wasn't easy, as God readily admits, getting the Arabs to buy into his black and white vision of everything. He had to metaphorically open one of the gates of Hell and show them the punishment before they would finally give in to "utter despair."

23:76 We seized them with the punishment; but they would not submit to their Lord and they would not supplicate.

23:77 Until We opened up against them a gate of terrible punishment and, behold, they were in utter despair.

In the Koran, you get a glimpse of the Arabs before Islam; not as unthinking pagans as Allah would have us believe, but as rational to the core and spiritual human beings, in the best sense of the word. This is evident in their coherent, logical, reasoned response—which God denounces as following their fancies—when asked to accept, without question, what a man claimed to reveal on His behalf, what He had written in a book on display in Paradise.

45:20 This (Qur'an) is an illumination for mankind, a guidance and mercy unto a people who believe with certainty.

A group of Meccan men's fancy, of which Einstein would have approved and which remains my favourite, was their explanation of aging and life and death (Revelation 45:24).

45:22 Allah created the heavens and the earth in truth, so that every soul may be rewarded for what it has earned; and they shall not be wronged.

45:23 Have you seen him who has taken his fancy as his god and Allah has led him astray knowingly, and set a seal upon his hearing and his heart, and placed a veil upon his sight. Who, then, will guide him besides Allah? Do you not remember?

45:24 They say: "There is nothing but this our present life. We die and we live and we are only destroyed by time." However, they have no certain knowledge of this; they are only conjecturing.

Conjecturing about our surroundings and what we don't know has been associated with the beginning of wisdom by Western philosophers and Eastern sages since man started to look beyond superstitions to describe his surroundings and the possible world beyond. Many Meccans, despite being told not to think too much or risk being held to account, were comfortable with conjecture, as God readily admits in Revelation 45:32.

17:36 Do not pursue what you have no knowledge of. Hearing, sight and the heart – all these [you] shall be questioned about.

45:32 And when it was said: “Allah’s Promise is true and the Hour is undoubted”, you said: “We do not know what the Hour is. We only conjecture and are by no means certain.”

Moududi:

The people mentioned were those who denied the Hereafter openly and absolutely, here those who are not sure of it although they do not deny its possibility because of conjecture. Apparently there is a vast difference between the two groups in that one of them denies the Hereafter absolutely and the other regards it as possible on the basis of conjecture. But as for the result and final end, there is no difference between them, for the moral consequences of the denial of the Hereafter and of lack of the faith in it are the same.

In Allah’s Universe, you may not speculate about what He tells you that you do not know; and what He tells you is the truth, in which you must believe “with certainty” no matter the incongruity. The disincentive that is Allah’s near blanket embargo against seeking knowledge other than what is revealed in the Koran (and later the hadiths) may be partly responsible for the Muslim world, which constitutes 21 percent of the world’s population (2011), having produced only 10 Nobel Prize laureates, with only two in the physical sciences (1979 physics, 1999 chemistry). Another is the inordinate amount of worship and glorification time Allah demands (if prayer is the answer, then the world may eventually owe Islam an enormous debt). Not to be overlooked is the requirement of an Islamic education where priority is given to learning Arabic and attempting to memorise the Koran in its entirety; the negative impact on critical thinking is just as damaging, if not more, than the time left available to non-religious subjects, which Islamists consider the works of Satan.

Any study beside that of the Quran is a distraction, except the Hadiths and jurisprudence in the religion. Knowledge is what He [Muhammad] narrated to us, and anything other than that is the whispering of the Satan.

Al-Qaeda

The period before Islam, on the Arabian Peninsula, is generally referred to by Muslims as Jahiliya, the time of ignorance, when world views as numerous and as varied as the colours of the rainbow flourished. Then Muhammad came along and that multi-coloured view of the universe changed to black and white, and humanity's relationship with its Creator was demoted to that of mere supplicants of a vain and vengeful God. Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina in 622 with his followers marks this alleged transition from ignorance to enlightenment. The year of this exodus is known as the Hijra or Hegira. The Hegira begins the Muslim calendar and is represented as 1 AH or 1 al-Hijra. As you read the revelations surrounding the Meccan unbelievers' statement about the ravages of time, and about expressing doubts, you may be left to wonder who are truly the ignorant ones.

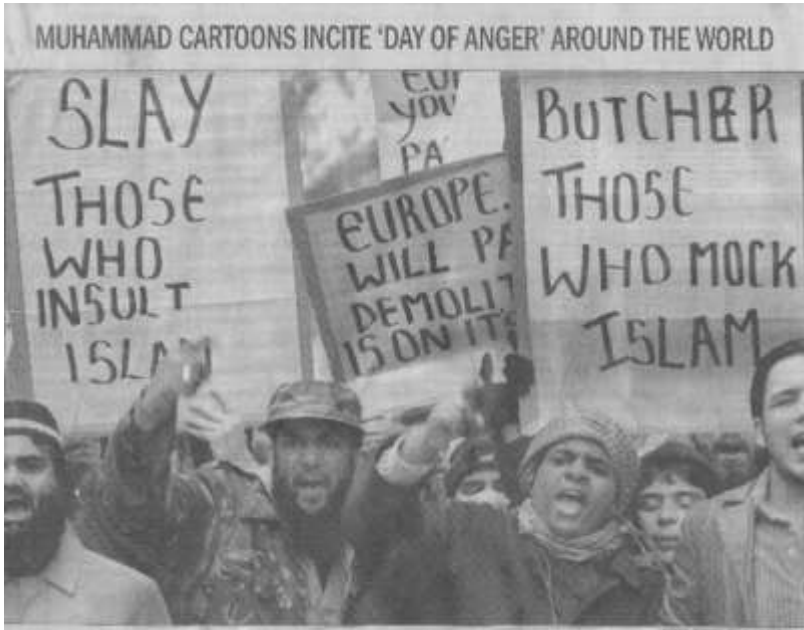
The Cartoon Protest

The Koran is more than a set of rules to be rigidly adhered to; it is also one man's idea of what your relationship with an ethereal being as creator and overseer should be. Like any profound idea, good or bad, it will easily take root if it offers some benefit to a large enough collective and is left unopposed. The sultans of the Ottoman Empire were the last to attempt to impose Islam on Europe via the sword. Today, Islam is subjugating the West, not through the force of arms (although intimidation, mainly through terrorist acts, still plays a role), but by using the openness of the West to old and new ideas even when not in its best interest. The West has implicitly, if not explicitly, accepted Islam's argument that limits should again be placed on criticism of religious beliefs, thereby allowing militant Islam to advance almost unchallenged. This gradual surrender of hard-won fundamental freedoms in the face of religious intolerance is slowly neutering the most effective weapons against the spread of this type of tyranny: freedom of expression and freedom of speech.

Winston Churchill, after the end of the Second World War (when it still had no official name), was asked what they should call the war that had just cost more than 30 million lives. He said "the unnecessary war." If the democracies had stood steadfast in the face of Hitler's demands instead of rewarding aggressive behaviour, there would have been no World War 2. I was reminded of Churchill's response when viewing a demonstration by Muslims in London during the so-called "cartoon protest." Some of the demonstrators carried signs demanding that the now infamous Danish cartoonists be slaughtered, others that

they be butchered for mocking Islam, for drawing mostly inoffensive cartoons of Muhammad.

In 2015, twelve cartoonists and staff of the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, who first published the cartoons, were shot to death and another eleven injured in an act of retaliation. I am sure that Churchill, if he were still alive, would have labelled the democracies' timid response, which involved mainly apologizing for their citizens



exercising their right to freedom of expression, as rewarding aggressive behaviour. Will the outcome be the same: a bloody, global war to dwarf all wars trying to regain cherished freedoms carelessly thrown away?

Competing Worldviews

39:28 We made it an Arabic Qur'an without any defect that perchance they might be God-fearing.

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How do we know our holy books are free from error?  
Because the books themselves say so.

Epistemological black holes of this sort are fast draining the light from our world. If we cannot find our way to a time when most of us are willing to admit that, at the very least, we are not sure God wrote some of our books, then we need only to count the days to Armageddon—because God has

given us many more reasons to kill one another than to turn the other cheek.

Sam Harris, *The End of Faith - Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason*, W. W. Norton & Company, 2004.

When the 17<sup>th</sup> century welcomed the Age of Reason, it was thought that reason had triumphed over dogma once and for all. Islam has proven this assumption to be wrong and the outcome of the battle between the rational and the irrational is still very much in doubt. The Renaissance, which marked the end of the Catholic Church's dominance in Europe allowing for a flowering of the arts and sciences, and the Enlightenment, which ushered in the Age of Reason, may turn out to have been a short detour taken by a relatively small segment of humanity in the march of history; "a fragile exception," writes Mark Lilla, professor of the humanities at Columbia University in *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics and the Modern West* (2007):

After centuries of strife, the West has learned to separate religion and politics – to establish the legitimacy of its leaders without referring to divine command. There is little reason to expect the rest of the world – the Islamic world in particular – will follow.

We in the West find it incomprehensible that theological ideas still inflame the minds of men, stirring up messianic passions that can leave societies in ruin. We had assumed that this was no longer possible, that human beings had learned to separate religious questions from political ones, that political theology died in 16th-century Europe. We were wrong. It's we who are the fragile exception.

Islam's success in recruiting largely unopposed in the Dar al-Islam (Land of War, any jurisdiction where the Sharia, i.e., God's Law is not the law of the land.); its approval of polygamy and encouragement of early marriages and large families; its promise of death to those who would even contemplate leaving the perfect religion for one less perfect or for no religion at all mean the community of believers will always be expanding. In fact, except for a temporary halt at the gates of Vienna in 1683, a small setback in Spain during the reign of Isabella and Ferdinand and a temporary reversal during the Mongol invasions, Islam has never looked back. With all it has going for it, not to mention the paralyzing fear of random death in keeping with a strategy to

which Muhammad attributes his successes, in Islam you have the making of a winner.

**Narrated Abu Huraira:**

Allah's Apostle said, "I have been sent with the shortest expressions bearing the widest meanings, and I have been made victorious with terror."

*Bukhari 52.220*

If you don't believe that the Koran's black-and-white, god-mandated, absolutist worldview should prevail, what should you do? Informing yourself of what is at stake is a start. Defending your right to freedom of speech and expression, especially where religion is concerned, is another.

We also recognize that a free society must have the scope to debate, to criticize, proselytize, insult and even ridicule belief and religious practices in order to ensure that there is full scope – short of violence or inciting violence or other criminal offences – to tackle these issues.

*From a plea by an alliance of Muslims, Christians, humanists and secularists urging the British Parliament to reject legislation limiting the rights to criticize religious beliefs and traditions.*

Still another way is acknowledging that Muslims are not your enemy. "Only religion," to quote Nobel Laureate Steven Weinberg, "can make good people do bad things." Your enemy is a religion that was not allowed to grow beyond its desert roots; to become more than what Irshad Manji, in her plea for reform, *The Trouble With Islam: A Wake-up Call for Honesty and Change*, calls "desert Islam." It won't be easy.

## **The Damning of Innovation**

For His last communication for humankind until Judgement Day, when He will deign to address, individually, each man, woman and child that ever lived and ever will be born—mostly to point out the many failings of what He created—God wanted to make sure His Book of instructions was perfectly delivered. The only way *perfection* can be conveyed intact is via *perfection* itself, which is why today, Muhammad is revered as the embodiment of the perfect human being. Having delivered perfection, Muhammad sought to ensure that it never be altered by banning all innovation in what was communicated. Anyone who attempts to do so will burn in Hell.

Every innovation is a misguidance and every misguidance goes to Hell fire.

*Imam An-Nasa'i*

Prophet said: "The worst thing is any addition, for every addition is an innovation."

*Imam Muslim*

At the time, the most likely to bring about change were Muhammad's surviving trusted collaborators, the *Companions of the Prophet*. In singling out confidantes of His ultimate spokesman, God warned anyone who would try to introduce change into the religion founded on His instructions that they would be denied Paradise. He did so in what He revealed to Muhammad will take place at Lake-Fount (Kauthar), a lake in Paradise He will gift to His favourite mouthpiece on Judgement Day.

**Narrated Sahl bin Sa'd:**

I heard the Prophet saying, "I am your predecessor at the Lake-Fount (Kauthar), and whoever will come to it, will drink from it, and whoever will drink from it, will never become thirsty after that. There will come to me some people whom I know and they know me, and then a barrier will be set up between me and them."

Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri added that the Prophet further said: "I will say those people are from me. It will be said, 'You do not know what changes and new things they did after you.' Then I will say, 'Far removed (from mercy), far removed (from mercy), those who changed (the religion) after me!'"

*Bukhari 88.174*

Muhammad, by damning innovation, has made Islam into a religion that will not bend, not unlike the proverbial oak that only hurricane force winds can topple. In that, there is a message and a dilemma for mankind.



# Afterword

## **The Skimper, the Profligate, and the Pious**

What is there left to say? One last surah; a surah like so many others that made me wonder if I had understood anything or actually understood everything. It is a surah that is somewhat of a microcosm of the Koran.

- A sinner is singled out – actually, two (83:1, 83:7);
- a reference to an Underworld (83:7), which may or may not be Hell, about which He will not elaborate, thereby leaving the impression that He does not know as much as He is letting on;
- the first mention of “a book of the profligate” (83:7) located somewhere in this Underworld, which seems to be in response to a question from a member of an audience;
- the familiar reference to the Day of Judgement (83:11);
- another name for sinners who would deny the Day (83:12);
- a reference that what He is saying is not new (83:13), that they have heard it before;
- another what seems to be a clarification (which includes the often-repeated phrase “they shall roast in Hell”) about something He said before about the “profligate” (83:14-17), which again appears to be in response to a question from a member of an audience;
- a reference to a “book of the pious” (83:18) located somewhere in a Higher World of which we know nothing (and which has allegedly been seen by a select few), which again appears to be in response to a question;
- another demonstration of His intimate knowledge of Paradise and some of the good things you will find there, including wine for which you may compete (83:21-28);
- Allah rarely talks about Paradise without taking a swipe at the unbelievers (83:29-36);

And so it goes...

THE SKIMPERS

**83 Al-Mutaffifin**

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

83:1 Woe to the skimpers,

83:2 Who, when they measure for themselves from others  
exact full measure;

83:3 But when they measure or weigh for others actually  
skimp.

83:4 Do not those people think that they will be resuscitated,

83:5 On a Great Day?

83:6 A Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the  
Worlds.

83:7 Not at all; the book of the profligate is locked up in the  
Underworld.

83:8 If only you knew what is the Underworld.

83:9 A book inscribed.

83:10 Woe betide, on that Day, those who denounce;

83:11 Those who deny the Day of Judgement.

83:12 Yet, only a sinful aggressor denies it.

83:13 When Our Signs are recited to him, he says: "Mere  
legends of the ancients."

83:14 Not at all; their hearts are overwhelmed with what they  
were earning.

83:15 Not at all; surely on that Day they shall be screened off  
from their Lord.

83:16 Then, they shall roast in Hell.

83:17 Then it will be said to them: "This is what you used to  
deny."

83:18 No indeed; the book of the pious is in the Higher  
World.

83:19 And if only you knew what is the Higher World;

- 83:20 A book inscribed,  
 83:21 Witnessed by those well-favoured.  
 83:22 The pious are indeed in Bliss;  
 83:23 Upon couches gazing around.  
 83:24 You will recognize in their faces the glow of bliss.  
 83:25 They are given to drink from a sealed wine;  
 83:26 Whose seal is musk. Over that, let the competitors  
 compete;  
 83:27 And its mixture is from Tasnim (a spring in Paradise);  
 83:28 A spring from which the well-favoured drink.  
 83:29 The criminals used to laugh at the believers;  
 83:30 And if they pass by them they would wink at one  
 another.  
 83:31 And if they go back to their families, they would go  
 back jeering,  
 83:32 And if they see them, they would say: "These are  
 indeed in error."  
 83:33 Yet, they were not sent to watch over them.  
 83:34 But, today, the believers shall laugh at the unbelievers.  
 83:35 Upon couches, they gaze round.  
 83:36 Have the unbelievers been rewarded for what they  
 used to do?

The beginning of the end for the gods of ancient Greece was probably when the first pilgrim scaled Mount Olympus only to discover there were no gods there. Allah, in the Koran, tells us that Paradise is just above the clouds, held up by invisible pillars anchored on a flat Earth which a plane has yet to crash into; that meteorites are stones thrown by the angels to stop the jinn from flying up to Paradise and eavesdropping on Allah's conversations, and so on and so forth. Man's first flight above the clouds, if not to the Moon, should have been a reason for reflection as to authenticity and relevance of revelations such as those found in the Skimper and much of the Koran. It should have led the believers to look at the Koran in a new light, the light of a new day that the first Muslim to circle the Earth on his way to the

International Space Station, Prince ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud of Saudi Arabia, experienced 16 times in 24 hours. Instead, much of the Islamic World chose to believe the deceased leader of Boko Haram, Cleric Mohammed Yusuf, who said in a 2009 BBC interview that space and a spherical planet were all an illusion created by Allah to test us.

The world desperately needs an honest discussion about Islam, starting with an unfettered dialogue on the Koran, if we are to stop the violence done in the name of its alleged author and a promise of biblical-scale violence to come. Between the 8th and 10th century, when Islam was in its infancy, such a discussion actually took place and from it emerged an Islamic school of thought largely influenced by Plato and Aristotle, which became known as Mu'tazilism, the Philosophy of Rationalism, or simply Islamic Philosophy.

The motives of the translators [of Greek works in science and philosophy into Arabic] and their patrons, the ['Abbasid] caliphs, may have been partially practical; medical skill was in demand, and control over natural forces could bring power and success. There was also, however, a wide intellectual curiosity, such as is expressed in the words of al-Kindi (c. 801-66), the thinker with whom the history of Islamic philosophy virtually begins:

We should not be ashamed to acknowledge truth from whatever source it comes to us, even if it is brought to us by former generations and foreign people. For him who seeks the truth there is nothing of higher value than truth itself.

Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab People*, Harvard University Press 1991, p. 76.

Mu'tazilites argued that verses of the Koran should not be taken literally and that human reason was more reliable than scriptures. The leaders of the believers of the time, the most noteworthy being Caliphs al-Ma'mun, Mu'tasim Billah and Wathiq, actively supported this sensible open-minded interpretation, allowing it to thrive until dogma reasserted itself with a vengeance and revelation again smothered reason. It may not be a coincidence that most of Islam's substantial contributions to the fields of astronomy and mathematics, for example, were from this period when Mu'tazilism was accepted by the Caliphate as a legitimate Islamic school of thought. Islam cannot return to its former glory until it believes its eyes.

# **APPENDICES**

## **Mughirah - Enemy of the Prophet**

Allah establishes leading sinners in every city, which He will subsequently destroy because of the presence and influence of these wrongdoers.

6:123 And thus We have set up in every city its leading wicked sinners so as to plot therein. However, they only plot against themselves, although they do not realize it.

Just as He established in each city leading sinners, Allah assigns to each of His Prophets an enemy, which He equates with the reason people shun His Koran.

25:30 The Messenger says: "Lord, my people have taken this Qur'an as a thing to be shunned."

25:31 And that is how We appointed to every Prophet an enemy among the criminals. Your Lord suffices as a Guide and Supporter.

If the enemies of His Prophets do what they do, it is because God will not interfere. He has his reasons.

6:112 Likewise, We have assigned to every Prophet an enemy, the devils of men and jinn, revealing one to the other tawdry speech in order to deceive; but had your Lord willed, they would not have done it. So leave them to what they invent;

6:113 So that the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter may incline to it and accept it; as well as to perpetrate that which they themselves are perpetrating.

The enemy that God seems to have assigned to Muhammad, based on the number of revelations dedicated to excoriating the man, is assumed to be a fellow by the name of Al-Mughirah, who, according to Fakhry, "wanted to bargain away his sins for money, so he made a down payment and withheld the rest of the money."

53:33 Have you considered him who turned away;  
53:34 Gave a little (money) then held back?  
53:35 Does he have knowledge of the Unseen and is therefore  
a seer?  
53:36 Has he not been told about what the scrolls of Moses  
contain?  
53:37 And Abraham who fulfilled his pledge;  
53:38 That no sinning soul shall bear the burden of another  
soul;  
53:39 And that man will only earn what he strives for;  
53:40 And that his striving shall be witnessed;  
53:41 Then he will be rewarded for it the fullest reward;  
53:42 And that unto your Lord is the ultimate return;  
53:43 And that he causes people to laugh and to cry;  
53:44 And that he causes some to die and to live;  
53:45 And that He created the pairs, both male and female;  
53:46 From a sperm when it is emitted<sup>27</sup>;  
53:47 And that upon Him devolves the second creation (the  
world and the heavens after Judgement Day, *Moududi*);  
53:48 And that He gives riches and possessions;  
53:49 And that He is the Lord of Sirius (worshipped as a deity  
by the pagan Arabs, *Moududi*).

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74:8 Then, when the Trumpet is sounded;  
74:9 It is then a hard Day,  
74:10 For the unbelievers, not an easy one.  
74:11 Leave Me with him (al-Walid Ibn al-Mughirah) whom I  
created alone,

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<sup>27</sup> In the Koran, Allah needs only the sperm for procreation, the woman serving only as a warm and wet receptacle for the sperm to grow into a human being (see *Getting to Know Allah*: "Allah on the Beginnings of Life," Boreal Books).

74:12 And gave him abundant wealth,

74:13 And children as witnesses;

74:14 And I smoothed things for him.

74:15 Nevertheless, he is eager that I increase him.

74:16 He has been an obdurate disbeliever in Our Signs.

74:17 I will exhaust him increasingly.

Al-Mughirah was asked by another enemy of the Prophet, Abu Jahl, to listen to God's spokesman and report back as to what was this Koran. He listened to Muhammad recite verses from the 41<sup>st</sup> Surah.

#### THE WELL-EXPOUNDED

#### **41 Fussilat**

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

41:1 Ha – Mim.

41:2 This is a revelation from the Compassionate, the Merciful;

41:3 A Book whose Verses have been well-expounded, an Arabic Qur'an addressed to a people who know;

41:4 Bearing good news and warning. Yet most of them have turned away and are unheeding.

41:5 They say: "Our hearts are shielded against what you call us unto, in our ears is a heaviness and between us and yourself is a veil. So act, we are acting too."

41:6 Say: "I am only a mortal like you, to whom it is revealed that your God is One God; so head straight towards Him and seek His forgiveness, and woe betide the idolaters;

41:7 "Those who do not pay the alms, and in the Hereafter they disbelieve."

41:8 Surely, those who believe and do the righteous deeds shall have an unstinted wage.

41:9 Say: "Do you really disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in [two days] and assign equals to Him? That is the Lord of the Worlds."



41:10 And He set up immovable mountains upon it and blessed it, and ordained therein their varied provisions in four days equally to all those who ask (it is unclear as to who are "those who ask" as humans had not been created at this point).

41:11 Then He arose to heaven while it was smoke, and He said to it and to the earth: "Come over, willingly or unwillingly." They said: "We come willingly."

41:12 Then He completed them as seven heavens in two days and assigned to each heaven its proper order. And We adorned the lower heaven with lamps as protection (from the demons). That is the determination of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.

41:13 If they turn away, then say: "I warn you against a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt of 'Ad and Thamud."

41:14 When the Messengers came to them from their front and their rear saying: "Do not worship any one but Allah", they said: "Had our Lord wished, He would certainly have sent down angels. Therefore, we disbelieve in the Message you have been sent with."

41:15 As for 'Ad, they waxed proud in the land unjustly and said: "Who is superior to us in strength?" Did they not see that Allah Who created them is superior to them in strength? And they used to repudiate Our Signs.

41:16 So, We loosed upon them a roaring wind on inauspicious days, so as to make them taste the punishment of disgrace in the present life. However, the punishment of the Hereafter is more disgraceful and they shall not receive support.

41:17 But as for Thamud, We extended guidance to them; yet they preferred blindness to guidance, and so the thunderbolt of humiliating punishment seized them on account of what they used to earn.

41:18 And We delivered those who believed and were God-Fearing.

After hearing how Allah had destroyed 'Ad and Thamud, he had heard enough and returned to tell Abu Jahl what he thought about this

Koran. He told him that it wasn't poetry, soothsaying, or sermonizing but that it made his blood run cold (my interpretation of "he frowned and turned pale" in Revelation 74:22). He had to think about it some more. The next day he told Abu Jahl that, as far as he was concerned, the Koran was sorcery and the discourse of a mortal. With that introduction, the following verses should make sense:

74:18 He reflected and reckoned.

74:19 May he perish how he reckoned!

74:20 Again, may he perish how he reckoned!

74:21 Then he considered;

74:22 Then he frowned and turned pale.

74:23 Then he turned back and waxed proud,

74:24 Saying: "This is indeed nothing but sorcery recounted;

74:25 "This is only the discourse of mortals."

74:23 Then he turned back and waxed proud,

74:24 Saying: "This is indeed nothing but sorcery recounted;

74:25 "This is only the discourse of mortals."

74:26 I will roast him in Saqar (one of the names of Hell).

As a warning about obeying some who swear oaths, Allah gives the example of Mughirah.

68:7 Surely, your Lord knows better who has strayed from His Path and He knows better the well-guided.

68:8 So do not obey the unbelievers.

68:9 They wished that you would dissimulate, so that they might dissimulate too.

68:10 And do not obey every lowly swearer of oaths;

68:11 Backbiter, going around, bearing calumny;

68:12 Hinderer of good, aggressor, wicked;

68:13 Coarse, on top of that, and quarrelsome;

68:14 Because he (al-Walid Ibn al-Mughirah) has wealth and children.

For saying that Allah's Revelations are "Legends of the ancients," God will sear His brand upon his lips.

68:15 If our verses are recited to him, he says: "Legends of the ancients."

68:16 We shall brand him upon the muzzle.

### **Abu Jahl**

Abu Jahl was a prominent figure in Mecca and a leader. His real name was Abū l-Hakam meaning Father of Wisdom. He was considered a wise man by the dominant tribe of Mecca, the Quraysh – the same tribe to which Muhammad belonged. It was his opposition to the Prophet that earned him the nickname Abu Jahl, meaning Father of Ignorance. He, too, will have to answer to Allah personally.

96:9 Have you considered him (Abu Jahl) who forbids,

96:10 A servant when he prays?

96:11 Have you considered whether he was well-guided?

96:12 Or commanded piety?

96:13 Have you considered whether he was lying and backtracking?

96:14 Does he not know that Allah perceives?

96:15 No; if he will not desist, We shall take him by the forelock,

96:16 A lying, erring forelock.

96:17 Let him then call his company.

96:18 We shall call the guards of Hell.

96:19 No; do not obey him. Prostrate yourself and come closer.

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75:28 And he (Abu Jahl) thinks that was the parting;

75:29 And leg is intertwined with leg;

75:30 Unto your Lord shall be the resort.

75:31 For he (Abu Jahl) did not believe nor pray;

75:32 But rather denied and turned away.

75:33 Then, he went to his own folk in a swagger.

75:34 Woe be to you and woe;

75:35 Then, woe be to you and woe!

The killing of Abu Jahl:

**Narrated Abdur-Rahman bin 'Auf:**

While I was standing in the row on the day (of the battle) of Badr, I looked to my right and my left and saw two young Ansari boys, and I wished I had been stronger than they. One of them called my attention saying, "O Uncle! Do you know Abu Jahl?"

I said, "Yes, what do you want from him, O my nephew?"

He said, "I have been informed that he abuses Allah's Apostle. By Him in Whose Hands my life is, if I should see him, then my body will not leave his body till either of us meet his fate."

I was astonished at that talk. Then the other boy called my attention saying the same as the other had said.

After a while I saw Abu Jahl walking amongst the people. I said (to the boys), "Look! This is the man you asked me about."

So, both of them attacked him with their swords and struck him to death and returned to Allah's Apostle to inform him of that.

Allah's Apostle asked, "Which of you has killed him?"

Each of them said, "I Have killed him."

Allah's Apostle asked, "Have you cleaned your swords?"

They said, "No."

He then looked at their swords and said, "No doubt, you both have killed him and the spoils of the deceased will be given to Muadh bin Amr bin Al-Jamuh."

*Bukhari 53.369*

Abu Jahl's last words as he was being bludgeoned to death by the two teenagers:

**Narrated Abdullah:**

That he came across Abu Jahl while he was on the point of death on the day of Badr.

Abu Jahl said, "You should not be proud that you have killed me nor am I ashamed of being killed by my own folk."

*Bukhari 59.298*

# **Muhammad's Introduction to Christianity**

Before he found his true calling at the age of forty or thereabouts, Muhammad accompanied or led trading caravans as far north as Damascus. He was twelve when he accompanied his uncle on a trip to Syria. On the way, their caravan passed by a Christian monastery near present-day Basra where a Christian monk by the name of Bahira would invite the merchants to stay overnight. Later in the evening, he would invite the young Muhammad to sit with the men and join the conversation or just listen. Remember, this was pre-Islam and after the collapse of most of the Roman Empire. It was a time when people of every faith could get together without fear and talk about their gods, goddesses, and religious beliefs. The future Prophet Muhammad would return to this monastery many times during his extensive travels throughout the Middle East. In fact, in a rare moment of what could pass as fondness for members of another religion, here is what Allah had to say about the monks and priests Muhammad invariably met during his travels.

5:82 You shall find the most hostile people to the believers to be the Jews and the polytheists; and you shall find the closest in affection to the believers those who say: "We are Christians." For among them are priests and monks, and they are not arrogant.

5:83 And when they hear what was revealed to the Messenger, you will see their eyes overflow with tears on account of the truth they recognize. They say: "Our Lord, we believe, so write us down among the witnesses."

5:84 "And why should we not believe in Allah and in what has come to us of the truth, when we are eager that our Lord will let us enter along with the righteous people?"

Allah would change His mind about monks, lumping them with the Jews whom He excoriates at every opportunity.

9:34 O believers, many of the rabbis and monks devour the property of the people unjustly and bar others from the Path

of Allah. Those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend them in Allah's Path, announce to them a very painful punishment.

The same goes for monasticism, which He does not approve on how its practice in Revelation 5:27, without explaining what Christians, who choose that way of life, are doing wrong.

57:26 We have also sent forth Noah and Abraham and assigned Prophethood and the Book to their progeny. Some of them are well-guided and many of them are sinners.

57:27 Then, We sent forth in their wake Our Messengers and followed up with Jesus, son of Mary, and We gave him the Gospel and We instilled in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy. As for the monasticism which they invented, for We did not prescribe it for them, seeking thereby to please Allah, they did not observe it properly; so We rewarded those of them who believed, but many of them are sinful.

Nonetheless, Allah stopped some monasteries from being demolished.

22:40 Those who were driven out of their homes unjustly, merely for their saying: "Our Lord is Allah." Had Allah not repelled some people by others, surely monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is mentioned frequently, would have been demolished. Indeed, Allah will support whoever supports Him. Allah is surely Strong and Mighty.

22:41 Those who, if We establish them firmly in the land, will perform the prayer, give the alms, command the good and prohibit evil. To Allah belongs the outcome of all affairs.

Some of these monks and priests, who may have converted to Islam and since died, have already been rewarded with Paradise.

5:85 Allah rewarded them for what they said with Gardens beneath which rivers flow, dwelling therein forever. Such is the reward of the righteous.

Not all priests and monks were receptive to the message, obviously.

5:86 But those who disbelieved and denounce Our Revelations, such are the denizens of Hell.

It was not only during his travels that Muhammad the merchant would have become acquainted with stories from the Bible. Before he made Islam the only acceptable religion, Christianity was well established on the Arabian Peninsula thanks, in part, to the pioneering efforts of Bartholomew, one of the original apostles.

### **Waraqa**

Probably the most influential Christian of all time is an Arab. We are indebted to Aisha for the story of her husband's first encounter with the angel Gabriel and how a Christian by the name of Waraqa, a cousin of Khadija, his first wife, convinced Muhammad not to be afraid that the apparition was indeed an angel sent by God to speak with him on His behalf.

#### **Narrated Aisha:**

The commencement of the Divine Inspiration to Allah's Apostle was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright day light, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him.

He used to go in seclusion in the cave of Hira where he used to worship (Allah alone) continuously for many days before his desire to see his family. He used to take with him [for] the journey food for the stay and then come back to (his wife) Khadija to take his food like-wise again till suddenly the Truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira. The angel came to him and asked him to read.

The Prophet replied, "I do not know how to read."

The Prophet added, "The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied, 'I do not know how to read.'

Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, 'I do not know how to read (or what shall I read)?'

Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, 'Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists) has created man from a



clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.' (96:1, 96:2, 96:3)

Then Allah's Apostle returned with the Inspiration and with his heart beating severely.

Then he went to Khadija bint Khuwailid and said, 'Cover me! Cover me!'"

They covered him till his fear was over and after that he told her everything that had happened and said, "I fear that something may happen to me."

Khadija replied, "Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones." Khadija then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqa bin Naufal bin Asad bin Abdul Uzza, who, during the pre-Islamic period became a Christian and used to write the writing with Hebrew letters. He would write from the Gospel in Hebrew<sup>28</sup> as much as Allah wished him to write. He was an old man and had lost his eyesight.

Khadija said to Waraqa, "Listen to the story of your nephew, O my cousin!"

Waraqa asked, "O my nephew! What have you seen?"

Allah's Apostle described whatever he had seen.

Waraqa said, "This is the same one who keeps the secrets (angel Gabriel) whom Allah had sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people would turn you out."

Allah's Apostle asked, "Will they drive me out?"

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<sup>28</sup> In another authenticated hadith of Bukhari, Waraqa read the Gospels in Arabic.

**Narrated Aisha:**

The Prophet returned to Khadija while his heart was beating rapidly. She took him to Waraqa bin Naufal who was a Christian convert and used to read the Gospels in Arabic. Waraqa asked (the Prophet), "What do you see?"

When he told him, Waraqa said, "That is the same angel whom Allah sent to the Prophet) Moses. Should I live till you receive the Divine Message, I will support you strongly."

Waraqa replied in the affirmative and said, "Anyone (man) who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive till the day when you will be turned out then I would support you strongly." But after a few days Waraqā died and the Divine Inspiration was also paused for a while.

The first revelation to interrupt the pause:

Narrated Jabir bin Abdullah Al-Ansari while talking about the period of pause in revelation reporting the speech of the Prophet "While I was walking, all of a sudden I heard a voice from the sky. I looked up and saw the same angel who had visited me at the cave of Hira' sitting on a chair between the sky and the earth. I got afraid of him and came back home and said, 'Wrap me (in blankets).' And then Allah revealed the following Holy Verses (of Quran): 'O you (i.e. Muhammad)! wrapped up in garments!' Arise and warn (the people against Allah's Punishment), ...up to 'and desert the idols.' (74.1-5) After this the revelation started coming strongly, frequently and regularly."

*Bukhari 1.3*

The revelations referenced in the above hadith:

74:1 O enrobed one (Muhammad),

74:2 Arise and warn.

74:3 Glorify your Lord,

74:4 And purify your garments,

74:5 And abandon abomination.

There was another Christian, an apostate, whose name goes unmentioned but who claimed to have written revelations on Muhammad's behalf and was disgraced for his trouble.

#### **Narrated Anas:**

There was a Christian who embraced Islam and read Surat-al-Baqara and Al-Imran, and he used to write (the revelations) for the Prophet. Later on he returned to Christianity again and he used to say: "Muhammad knows nothing but what I have written for him."

Then Allah caused him to die, and the people buried him, but in the morning they saw that the earth had thrown his body out.

They said, "This is the act of Muhammad and his companions."

They dug the grave of our companion and took his body out of it because he had run away from them.

They again dug the grave deeply for him, but in the morning they again saw that the earth had thrown his body out. They said, "This is an act of Muhammad and his companions."

They dug the grave of our companion and threw his body outside it, for he had run away from them.

They dug the grave for him as deep as they could, but in the morning they again saw that the earth had thrown his body out. So they believed that what had befallen him was not done by human beings and had to leave him thrown (on the ground).

*Bukhari 56.814*

Muhammad may have simply consulted with this anonymous Christian, as suggested by Allah.

16:43 We have sent forth, before you, none but men to whom We have revealed. So ask those who have knowledge (the Christians and Jews have knowledge of their scriptures) if you do not know.

16:44 [We sent them] with clear proofs and scriptures. And We revealed to you the Reminder, so that you may make clear to mankind what has been revealed to them, and that, perchance, they may reflect.

# Muhammad's Last Sermon

The second most important document in Islam after the Koran is probably Muhammad's *Farewell Khutba*, his farewell sermon. In his last sermon, delivered on Mount Arafat outside Mecca a few months before he died, God's spokesman summarized all the basic beliefs of Islam and all the duties of a Muslim. English translations will usually run less than 1,300 words. Like the Koran, commentators have spoken about the last khutba in laudatory terms. If you are not a believer, your praise may be more guarded.

The three translations of the Khutba I consulted, those of S. F. H. Faizi, Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah [1908-2002] and Barnaby Rogerson, all differ in a variety of ways both in content and presentation, i.e., the order of what was said. The translation that I have chosen to serve as the template and included in its entirety is the one from S. F. H. Faizi, author of *Sermons of the Prophet*. I would have preferred using Barnaby Rogerson's translation, which is rendered in more elegant English, but unfortunately his translation is not as complete as Faizi's. Where a segment of Faizi's translation is not as clear, I have included one of the other translator's relevant segments. Unless otherwise indicated, the translation is from Faizi.

Muhammad begins his last khutba with an inspirational panegyric to Allah which reiterates a central concept of Islam, that Allah is one indivisible and self-sufficient God: He has "no partner."

All praise is due to Allah, so we praise Him, and seek His pardon and we turn to Him. We seek refuge with Allah from the evils of ourselves and from the evil consequences of our deeds. Whom Allah guides, there is none to lead him astray; and there is none to guide him aright whom Allah leads astray. I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, the One, having no partner with Him. His is the Sovereignty and to Him is due all praise. He grants life and causes death and is Powerful over everything. There is no God but Allah, the

One; He fulfilled His promise and helped His servant and He alone routed the confederates.<sup>29</sup>

Muhammad invited the assembled to listen carefully, as this may be the last time they were together to perform the pilgrimage.

O people, listen to my words! for I do not know whether we shall meet again and perform Hajj after this year.

After praising Allah and reminding the faithful that his days are numbered, Muhammad made what appears to be a universal declaration about all being equal.

O ye People! Allah says: O people we created you from one male and one female and made you into tribes and nations, so that you are known to one another. Verily in the sight of Allah, the most honoured amongst you is the one who is the most God-fearing. There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab and for a non-Arab over an Arab, nor for the white over the black nor for the black over the white except in piety.

All Muslims are equal but Muslims are superior to non-Muslims, the meaning of "except in piety." This statement also loses some of its lustre when you consider the position of women in Islam and Allah's condoning of slavery (see *Getting to Know Allah: "Slavery,"* Boreal Books). After making his less than universal declaration on equality, Muhammad offered a statement about the creation of Adam that, unlike the Koran, is unambiguous: Adam was created from clay (see *Shared Prophets: "Adam,"* Boreal Books).

All mankind is the progeny of Adam and Adam was fashioned out of clay.

All claims of privilege, which the leading tribe of Mecca, the Quraysh, used to assert, have been abolished. They remain, however, custodian of the Ka'ba and continue to be responsible for supplying water to the pilgrimage.

Behold! Every claim of privilege whether that of blood or property, is under my feet except that of the custody of Allah's House and supplying of waters to the pilgrimage. O people of Quraysh! Do not appear with the burden of the

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<sup>29</sup> Tribes allied with the Meccans against the Muslims. The battle referred to here is believed to be the Battle of the Ditch (khandaq) during the siege of Medina 5AH.

world around your necks, whereas other people may appear [before their Lord] with the rewards of the Hereafter. In that case I shall avail you naught against Allah.

All blood feuds from the time of ignorance have been settled or abolished, and all interest on debts I declare remitted with the first amount being the money I owe my uncle Abbas.

Behold! All practices of the days of Ignorance are now under my feet. The blood revenges of the days of Ignorance are remitted. And the first claim on blood I abolish is that of Ibne Rabi'ah bin Al-Harith who was nursed in Bani Sa'd and who was killed by the Hudhayls. All interest and usurious dues accruing from the age of Ignorance stand wiped out. And the first amount of interest that I remit is that which Abbas bin Abdul Mutallib had to receive. Verily, it is being remitted entirely.

A reminder of the special place that the city of Mecca, its believers, their property, and their festivals occupy in Allah's universe.

O people! Verily your blood, your property and your honour are sacred and inviolable until you appear before your Lord, as the sacred inviolability of this day of yours, this month of yours, and this very town [of yours]. Verily, you will soon meet your Lord and you will be held accountable for your deeds.

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O my people, just as you regard this day, this city as sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and he will indeed reckon your deeds. (*Rogerson*)

You may continue to beat your wives for acts, real or imagined, that you deem improper, but not "too severely."

O people! Verily, you have got certain rights over your women - and your women have certain rights over you. It is your right upon them that they must not allow anybody save you to come to your bed and admit none to enter your homes whom you do not like but with your permission. And it is for them not to commit acts of impropriety, which if they do, you are authorized by Allah to separate them from your beds and

chastise them, but not severely, and if they refrain, then clothe and feed them properly.

What a wife must *not* do with her husband's property:

Behold! It is not permissible for a woman to give anything from the wealth of her husband to anyone but with his consent.

All translations consulted on Muhammad's last sermon—to one extent or another—portray women as not having the wherewithal to look after themselves or be in a position to manage their own affairs. In Dr. Hamidullah's translation, women are prisoners in their husband's or father's house. In Faizi's translation, women fare a little better; they are "helpers" provided by Allah to aid in their male owner's management of their affairs.

Treat the women kindly, since they are your helpers and are not in a position to manage their affairs themselves. Fear Allah concerning them, for verily you have taken them on the security of Allah and have made their persons lawful unto you by words of Allah.

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Treat the women kindly, for verily, they are like prisoners in your house and are incapable of looking after themselves ...  
(Hamidullah)

A reminder of the Koran's new inheritance rules. In Dr. Hamidullah's translation, we find a rule about a stranger's share of an inheritance that is not found in other translations of the Khutba.

O people! Allah, the Mighty and Exalted, has ordained to everyone his due share [of inheritance]. Hence there is no need [of special] testament for a heir [departing from the rules laid down by the Shari'ah].

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O people, God has fixed for everyone a rightful share of an inheritance; it is therefore not permitted to make out a will that provides for more than the Lord allows. A stranger's share of an inheritance shall not exceed one third of the total inheritance. (Hamidullah)

A reminder that orphans must continue to be identified by their natural father's name and adulterers are to be stoned, giving credence to a statement that Caliph Umar would make: that a revelation in which Allah decrees stoning for illegal intercourse had been received then lost (see *Women and the Koran: "Stoning,"* Boreal Books).

The child belongs to the marriage-bed and the violator of wedlock shall be stoned. And reckoning of their deeds rests with Allah.

The patronymic naming nomenclature rests on being able to trace lineage through the father's name. The conjunctions ibn/ben in a name mean son of, while Abu means father of. Matronymics to trace your lineage are out of the question, as Muhammad reminds his audience.

He who attributes his ancestry to other than his father or claims his clientship (sic) to other than his master, the curse of Allah is upon him.

It goes without saying:

All debts must be repaid, all borrowed property must be returned, gifts should be reciprocated and a surety must make good the loss to the assured.

The following declaration on Talion law—literally, "law as retaliation"—only appears in Dr. Hamidullah's translation. Payments in blood, chattel, and retaliation in kind are central concepts in Islam, therefore it is to be expected that Muhammad would expand on them.

And intentional murder shall be punished according to Talion law; where the murderess intention is not clear and the victim is killed using a club or a stone it will cost the perpetrator one hundred camels as blood money. Whoever demands more is a man from the time of ignorance. (*Hamidullah*)

The only universal declaration in the entire Khutba, i.e., no exceptions!

Beware! No one committing a crime is responsible for it but himself. Neither the child is responsible for the crime of his father, nor the father is responsible for the crime of his child.



A reminder that it is a crime to steal from another Muslim:

Nothing of his brother is lawful for a Muslim except what he himself gives willingly. So do not wrong yourselves.

What God allows, no man can deny. In the face of this bleak reality, it is to Muhammad's credit that he asked the faithful to take good care of their slaves.

And your slaves! see that you feed them with such food as you eat yourselves, and clothe them with the clothes as you yourselves wear.

Muslims must refrain from fighting amongst themselves after he is gone and return entrusted goods to their rightful owner.

Beware that you go not astray after me and strike one another's necks. He who [amongst you] has any trust with him, he must return it to its owner.

A declaration on the suitability of black mangled slaves as military commanders or rulers – the meaning of Amir.

If a mangled black slave is appointed your Amir, listen to him, and obey him provided he executes the Ordinance of the Book of Allah amongst you.

Muhammad confirmed that he is God's ultimate spokesperson and Islam, the last religion.

O people! There is no Prophet to come after me and there would be no Ummah to form after you.

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O my people! No prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. (*Rogerson*)

Muhammad on his legacy:

Verily I have left amongst you that which would never lead you astray, the Book of Allah, and the Sunnah of His Messenger, which if you hold fast, you shall never be misled. And beware of transgressing the limits set in the matters of Deen (*faith*), for it is transgression of [the proper bounds of] Deen, that brought destruction to many people before you.

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Reason well, therefore my people, and understand my word which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Qur'an and my example, the Sunnah, and if you follow these you will never go astray. (Rogerson)

A warning that a frustrated Satan will take advantage of what you may consider insignificant transgressions in matters of faith.

Verily the Satan is disappointed at ever being worshipped in this land of yours, but if obedience in anything [short of worship is expected that is]: he will be pleased in matters you may be disposed to think insignificant, so beware of him in the matters of your Deen.

A reminder of the five pillars of the Faith assuming that "worship your Lord" is equivalent of the Shahadah, the declaration of faith.

Behold! worship your Lord; offer prayers five times a day; observe fast in the month of Ramadan; pay readily the Zakat on your property; and perform pilgrimage to the House of God and obey your rulers and you will be admitted to the Paradise of your Lord.

It was the custom of some of the tribes that shared the Peninsula, before the Muslim conquest, to add a thirteenth month when it became obvious that the lunar calendar had lost all connection with the seasons and needed to be resynchronized with the solar calendar. This, Allah claimed, was an attempt by the unbelievers to interfere with his sacred months and He forbade it (see *Getting to Know Allah: "Allah's Calendar,"* Boreal Books), as Muhammad reminds his audience.

O people! Postponement [of a sacred month] is only an excess of disbelief whereby those who disbelieve are misled; they allow it one year and forbid it [another year] that they may make up the number of the months which Allah hath hallowed, so that they allow that which Allah hath forbidden. And verily the time hath adopted the shape of the day when Allah hath created the heavens and the earth. And Lo! The number of months with Allah is twelve months. Four of them are sacred. Three are consecutive months and the Rajab, in between the months of Jumadius sani and Sha'aban.

Spread the word.

Let him that is present, convey it unto him who is absent. For many people to whom the message is conveyed may be more mindful of it than the audience.

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All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. (*Rogerson*)

# **Wives of Muhammad**

and some of the revelations they inspired

33:6 The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves and his wives are like their mothers. The kinsmen are closer to each other, in Allah's Book, than the believers or the Emigrants; unless you are doing your friends an honourable deed, that has already been inscribed in the Book.

No story of Muhammad would be complete without a word about his collection of wives and concubines. A readable account – except for the lack of references for the quoted hadiths – that is very much a believer's homage to the man and the women he sequestered in his household is that of Tamam Kahn. Unless otherwise indicated, materials within double quotes in this section are from her book *Untold - A History of the Wives of Prophet Muhammad*, Monkfish Book Publishing, 2010. Some of the stories told here you will find echoed in *Women and the Koran*, Boreal Books.

## **Khadijah**

Muhammad owed his success as a merchant to an older woman who hired the good-looking, allegedly illiterate young man to lead her caravans. One of Khadijah's servants accompanied her hire, not to keep tabs on him, but, according to Tamam Khan, because the future spokesperson for the Almighty needed someone who could "read, write and had a basic understanding of mathematics." Later she asked her illiterate caravan leader to marry her. For twenty-three years Muhammad was married to Khadijah and only Khadijah. It was her third marriage, his first. He was twenty-five, she was forty when they tied the knot. It was this same successful businesswoman, now his wife who (in a story recounted earlier), reassured her husband, when he began having visions, that it was an angel sent by God, not Satan or some other godless creature. She told him to get undressed. She did the same and they embraced. Do you still see him, she asked? No, said Muhammad! Then it must have been an angel, she said, because an angel would not have remained to stare at a naked couple embracing.

Khadijah gave birth to two, maybe three sons (depending on who you read), and four girls. All the couple's sons would die in infancy. The youngest daughter, Fatima, was the only offspring to have descendants. She was married to Ali, the fourth caliph (the fourth successor to the Prophet). Khadijah died destitute and penniless in a makeshift habitat in a ravine on the outskirts of Mecca. After discovering Islam some fifteen years after they were married, the now forty-something Muhammad would spend all of his and his wife's wealth on the promotion of his new religion. The bold, erudite self-sufficient Khadijah would not live long enough to witness her husband's triumph over his enemies, a triumph which would not have been possible without her wealth and unquestioning support. She could not have foreseen that, after Islam, the independence and freedom she enjoyed and which made it all possible would be severely curtailed for all members of her sex.

### **Sawda**

After the death of Khadijah in the year 619, Muhammad – after waiting a respectable amount of time, and after being persuaded by close friends that he needed a wife to help him raise his two unmarried daughters – married the widow Sawda (also spelled Sauda). Middle-aged Sawda was the only woman he married who, it is reported, was neither young nor beautiful. Sawda may have been responsible for one of the more controversial addition to a female's attire: the veil.

#### **Narrated Aisha:**

The wives of the Prophet used to go to Al-Manasi, a vast open place (near Baqia at Medina) to answer the call of nature at night. Umar used to say to the Prophet "Let your wives be veiled," but Allah's Apostle did not do so.

One night Sauda bint Zam'a the wife of the Prophet went out at Isha' time and she was a tall lady. Umar addressed her and said, "I have recognized you, O Sauda."

He said so, as he desired eagerly that the verses of Al-Hijab may be revealed. So Allah revealed the verses of "Al-Hijab"

*Bukhari 5.148*

Umar, the instigator, offered a more self-serving version that did not make him out to be a voyeur.

**Narrated Umar:**

I said, "O Allah's Apostle! Good and bad persons enter upon you, so I suggest that you order the mothers of the Believers (i.e. your wives) to observe veils." Then Allah revealed the Verses of Al-Hijab

*Bukhari 60.313*

"Sawda lived twenty-two years after the death of the Prophet."

**Aisha**

Aisha was the first child born to parents who were believers. The progeny of believers are born Muslim; the founder of Islam would marry the first child born a Muslim. Traditional Muslim scholars and clerics maintain that a grateful Abu Bakr offered his nine-year-old daughter, with whom Muhammad had fallen in love, to cement his relationship with the Prophet. Ayaan Hirsi Ali, in *The Caged Virgin*, writes that this was not the case.

He fell in love with Aisha, his best friend's nine-year-old daughter. Her father said: "Please wait until she has reached adulthood." But Muhammad would not wait.

A hadith recorded by Bukhari would appear to support Ali's assertion that Aisha's father was not keen on marrying his pre-pubescent daughter to a man of his generation:

**Narrated Ursa:**

The Prophet asked Abu Bakr for Aisha's hand in marriage.

Abu Bakr said "But I am your brother."

The Prophet said, "You are my brother in Allah's religion and His Book, but she (Aisha) is lawful for me to marry."

*Bukhari 62.18*

Aisha's recollection of when she first joined her husband on the matrimonial mat.

My mother came to me while I was being swung on a swing between two branches and got me down. My nurse took over and wiped my face with some water and started leading me. When I was at the door she stopped so I could catch my breath. I was brought in while Muhammad was sitting on a

bed in our house. My mother made me sit on his lap. The other men and women got up and left. The Prophet consummated his marriage with me in my house when I was nine years old. Neither a camel nor a sheep was slaughtered on behalf of me.

*Tabari IX:131*

The fact that Aisha's wedding was not celebrated—the meaning of, "Neither a camel nor a sheep was slaughtered on behalf of me"—may be an indication that God's spokesman was not proud of what he was about to do and did not want it to become an example for others, which it unfortunately did. Muhammad, for the believers, is the personification of the perfect human being. Being perfect, like his patron, he cannot be faulted for anything he has said or done – and that includes *marrying and having intercourse with a nine-year-old* – and no Muslim man can be faulted for emulating perfection. Aisha was probably the greatest single reason for many of Allah's most restrictive and harshest revelations pertaining to women. She was still a teenager when she was accused of adultery after getting lost in the desert, having been found and returned to Muhammad the next day by a young man, triggering an outpouring of revelations that continue to have an impact on women to this day. Tamam Khan writes that "A'isha wept until her head covering was wet" when her husband recited Revelation 33:33, one of the more punitive of Allah's decrees of which she was undoubtedly the cause:

33:32 O wives of the Prophet, you are not like any other women. If you are God-fearing, do not be abject in speech, so that he in whose heart is a sickness may covet you, but speak in an honourable way.

33:33 Stay in your homes and do not display your finery as the pagans of old did: perform the prayer, give the alms and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah only wishes to turn away abomination from you and purify you fully. O People of the House.

For more on how, through no fault of her own, Aisha caused God to severely curtail women's freedom, I invite you to read *Women and the Koran: "A Child Bride's Indiscretion,"* Boreal Books. Muhammad's child bride may also have been responsible for awakening in her husband a preference for young women and girls. A hadith by Bukhari to that effect:

**Narrated Jabir bin Abdullah:**

While we were returning from a Ghazwa (Holy Battle) with the Prophet, I started driving my camel fast, as it was a lazy camel. A rider came behind me and pricked my camel with a spear he had with him, and then my camel started running as fast as the best camel you may see.

Behold! The rider was the Prophet himself.

He said, "What makes you in such a hurry?"

I replied, "I am newly married."

He said, "Did you marry a virgin or a matron?"

I replied, "A matron."

He said, "Why didn't you marry a young girl so that you may play with her and she with you?"

When we were about to enter (Medina), the Prophet said, "Wait so that you may enter (Medina) at night so that the lady of unkempt hair may comb her hair and the one whose husband has been absent may shave her pubic region."

*Bukhari 62.16.*

Muhammad was buried in a shallow grave in Aisha's bedroom, later to be joined by his father-in-law and successor as leader of the believers, Abu Bakr, and still later by his close collaborator Umar, who succeeded Bakr.

Aisha's quarters were a kind of cemetery. This seems the strangest part of her story. Muhammad was buried there as well as Abu Bakr (her father and first caliph i.e. leader of the faithful) and Umar the second caliph. She created a partition between her bed and the burial area, in a small room. The original burial site is today a marble rectangle more than fifty-three thousand square feet.

*Tamam Khan*

Aisha "died July 13, 678 at age sixty-four. She asked to be buried with the other wives in the Baqi` cemetery of Medina, not in her apartment with her husband." Al-Baqi` cemetery in Medina was founded by Muhammad. Its size and number of graves are a state secret. To avoid people making pilgrimages to the cemetery where most of



Muhammad's wives are buried, the Saudis bulldozed all grave markers. Aisha seems to have enjoyed her eight years with Muhammad, which makes her death-bed admission all the more puzzling. Did she regret a lost childhood and the type of life she might have had, had she married a man of her generation?

**Narrated Ibn Abu Mulaika:**

Ibn 'Abbas asked permission to visit Aisha before her death, and at that time she was in a state of agony. She then said. "I am afraid that he will praise me too much."

And then it was said to her, "He is the cousin of Allah's Apostle and one of the prominent Muslims."

Then she said, "Allow him to enter."

(When he entered) he said, "How are you?"

She replied, "I am alright if I fear (Allah)."

Ibn Abbas said, "Allah willing, you are alright as you are the wife of Allah's Apostle and he did not marry any virgin except you and proof of your innocence was revealed from the Heaven."

Later on Ibn Az-Zubair entered after him and 'Aisha said to him, "Ibn 'Abbas came to me and praised me greatly, but I wish that I was a thing forgotten and out of sight."

*Bukhari 60.277*

**Hafsa**

Hafsa was the daughter of another close collaborator of Muhammad, Umar, who would follow Abu Bakr as caliph. The Prophet married the nineteen-year-old Hafsa after her husband was killed at the famous battle of Badr (see *Jihad in the Koran: "Battle of Badr,"* Boreal Books), which ignited a war against unbelievers that continues to this day in one form or another. Hafsa is probably most famous for being the custodian of the first copy of the Koran which she kept under her bed. A written Koran was commissioned by Abu Bakr, with the first draft completed during the reign of Umar, his successor (see *Shared Prophets: "How the Koran Came to Be - The First Koran,"* Boreal Books), and given to Hafsa for safekeeping. Caliph Uthman, who succeeded Umar as leader of the believers, asked her to retrieve it to be reviewed and

revised by a committee of three before becoming the official and only version of the book allowed.

Hafsa and Aisha used to play pranks on their aged husband-in-common, the most infamous and consequential, which the Koran addresses at length, is divulging their husband's surreptitious eating of honey (see *Women and the Koran: "A Taste of Honey,"* Boreal Books). Hafsa died in 665 or 666, almost thirty-four years after her husband.

### **Zaynab b. Khuzayma**

Zaynab b. Khuzayma was another widow of Badr whom Muhammad made part of his household. Little is known about her as she died only eight months later and was buried in Baqi cemetery.

### **Umm Salama**

Umm Salama or Hind, her name before she gave birth to a son during her first marriage, whom they named Salama, took the name Umm Salama, meaning 'Mother of Salama'. Umm Salama was thirty when she accepted an offer of marriage from Muhammad after her husband died from wounds sustained in the battle of Uhud (see *Jihad in the Koran: "Battle of Uhud,"* Boreal Books). It is reported that it she who asked her husband about the "revelations' lack of reference to women," which prompted Muhammad to deliver the first revelation in which women are mentioned.

33:35 Men and women who have submitted, believed, obeyed, are truthful, steadfast, reverend, giving in charity, fasting, guarding their private parts and remembering Allah often, Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward.

Muhammad went to Aisha's room to take a bath after the Battle of the Ditch—also referred to as the Battle of the Trench (see *Jihad in the Koran: "Battle for Medina,"* Boreal Books)—but it was Umm Salama, Tamam Khan writes, who, "during the clash stayed in the tent set up for the Prophet near the battle. She took care of her husband while the sounds of swords and axes rattled her bones. [Umm Salama] died at the age of eighty-six." Before she died, "Muhammad appeared to her in a dream and was very upset. He told her that his last grandson Husayn had been murdered"; and he had, at Karbala.

## Zaynab b. Jahsh

Muhammad walked in on his daughter-in-law Zaynab, who was then married to his adopted son Zayd when she was almost naked and “was troubled by her beauty” or in the words of Tamam Khan, “something happened between them.” Zaynab was a cousin of Muhammad, the daughter of his paternal aunt Omayma. It was the Prophet himself who insisted she be given in marriage to Zayd. Barnaby Rogerson, author of *The Prophet Muhammad – A Biography*, writes that “Zayd soon divined that Muhammad had become entranced by Zaynab’s beauty and at once offered to divorce his wife ... Zayd would do anything to please his adopted father whom he revered above all else on earth.” Marrying your son’s former wife was taboo. It did not matter if he was adopted; the same ethical and moral restrictions applied as to a natural-born son. Zayd’s father-in-law refused his offer until he received Revelation 33:5, which changed the status of adopted sons from sons to ‘brothers in religion’.

33:4 Allah did not create two hearts within the breast of any man; and He did not make your wives, whom you compare to your mothers’ backs; and He did not make your [adopted] sons your sons in fact. That is your own claim, by your words of mouth. Allah speaks the truth and He guides to the Right Path.

33:5 Assign them to their own fathers. That is more equitable in the sight of Allah; but if you do not know their real fathers, then they are your brothers in religion, your adopted fellow Muslims. You are not at fault if you err therein; but only in what your hearts intend. Allah is ever All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.

Before Revelation 33:5, Arab fathers made no distinction between adopted sons and those they had fathered. Demoting adopted sons to “brothers in religion” made their wives, upon divorce, eligible to be taken in marriage by the *adoptive* father. The revelation changing the relationship between adopted sons and their surrogate parent, so that Muhammad could add his cousin and former daughter-in-law to his collection of wives, concubines, and slave-girls, has been interpreted to mean that Islam is against Western style adoption, resulting in an untold number of children in the Islamic world who have no one living they can call father. God followed up these revelations with one in

which He commands Muhammad to marry Zaynab (underlining mine):

33:37 Then, when Zayd had satisfied his desire for her, We gave her to you in marriage; so that the believers should not be at fault, regarding the wives of their adopted sons, once they have satisfied their desire for them. For Allah's Command must be accomplished.

Orphaned boys were almost unknown in the Arab world until God changed their status. This could explain Allah's newfound concern for orphans whom He made destitute when He changed the rules to accommodate the apple of His Eye. Demoting adopted sons to "brothers in religion" in Revelation 6:152 and "your brethren" in Revelation 2:220 not only made their wives, upon divorce, eligible to be taken in marriage by their "adoptive" father, but also disinherited them.

6:152 Do not approach the property of the orphan, except in the fairest manner, until he comes of age; and give full measure and weight equitably. We do not charge any soul except with what is within its power. And if you speak, be just even if it is against a relative, and fulfill Allah's Covenant. Thus He commands you, so that you may take heed.

6:153 This is indeed My Path, the straight path; follow it and do not follow [other] paths, lest they divert you from His Path. Thus He commands you, that perchance you may fear God.

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2:220 Upon this world and the Hereafter. And they ask you about the orphans, say: "To improve their condition is better for them. And if you associate with them, they are your brethren." Allah knows the dishonest and the honest. And if Allah wills, He would overburden you with restrictions. Allah is Mighty, Wise.

**Narrated Aisha:**

Abu Hudhaifa, one of those who fought the battle of Badr with Allah's Apostle, adopted Salim as his son and married his niece Hind bint Al-Wahd bin Utba to him and Salim was a freed slave of an Ansari woman.

Allah's Apostle also adopted Zaid as his son.

In the Pre-Islamic period of ignorance the custom was that, if one adopted a son, the people would call him by the name of the adopted-father [from] whom he would inherit as well, till Allah revealed: "Call them (adopted sons) By (the names of) their fathers." (33:5)

*Bukhari 59.335*

Another not insignificant consequence of Muhammad's marriage to his cousin and former daughter-in-law, in this instance for women, is referred to as the Verse of the Curtain, which was revealed after a celebratory banquet where some overstayed their welcome.

**Narrated Anas bin Malik:**

I of all the people know best this verse of Al-Hijab. When Allah's Apostle married Zainab bint jahsh she was with him in the house and he prepared a meal and invited the people (to it). They sat down (after finishing their meal) and started chatting. So the Prophet went out and then returned several times while they were still sitting and talking. So Allah revealed the Verse: 'O you who believe! Enter not the Prophet's houses until leave is given to you for a meal, (and then) not (so early as) to wait for its preparation .....ask them from behind a screen.' (33.53) So the screen was set up and the people went away.

*Bukhari 60.315*

33:53 O believers, do not enter the houses of the Prophet, unless you are invited to a meal, without awaiting the hour; but if you are invited, then enter; but when you have eaten, disperse, without lingering for idle talk. That is vexing to the Prophet who might be wary of you, but Allah is not wary of the truth. If you ask them (the wives of the Prophet) for an object, ask them from behind a curtain. That is purer for your hearts and theirs. You should never hurt the Messenger of Allah, nor take his wives in marriage after him. That is truly abominable in the sight of Allah.

The niqab, the face-covering veil, is a believing woman's portable curtain when she is compelled to leave the home in which she has been

confined to go out in public. Zaynab b. Jahsh died in 642, ten years after husband's passing.

### **Juwayriyyah**

Juwayriyyah (born Barra) was another prize of war. She was a woman of means, as many of her sex were before Islam, and sought to buy her freedom from the man who claimed her as his share of the booty after "her people were defeated at the well of al-Muraysi." As daughter of the chief of the tribe Muhammad had just defeated and taken into captivity, she demanded and got an audience with the victor. "Muhammad was taken with her. He offered to ransom, rename and marry her [and] release the people of her tribe, the Banu al-Mustaliq from captivity." The twenty-year-old married the nearly sixty-year-old Muhammad, who made good on his promise to free the men and women in his custody.

#### **Narrated Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin:**

Juwayriyyah, daughter of al-Harith ibn al-mustaliq, fell to the lot of Thabit ibn Qays ibn Shammas, or to her cousin. She entered into an agreement to purchase her freedom. She was a very beautiful woman, most attractive to the eye.

Aisha said: She then came to the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) asking him for the purchase of her freedom. When she was standing at the door, I looked at her with disapproval. I realised that the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) would look at her in the same way that I had looked.

She said: Apostle of Allah, I am Juwayriyyah, daughter of al-Harith, and something has happened to me, which is not hidden from you. I have fallen to the lot of Thabit ibn Qays ibn Shammas, and I have entered into an agreement to purchase of my freedom. I have come to you to seek assistance for the purchase of my freedom.

The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) said: Are you inclined to that which is better?

She asked: What is that, Apostle of Allah?

He replied: I shall pay the price of your freedom on your behalf, and I shall marry you.

She said: I shall do this.

She (Aisha) said: The people then heard that the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) had married Juwayriyyah. They released the captives in their possession and set them free, and said: They are the relatives of the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) by marriage. We did not see any woman greater than Juwayriyyah who brought blessings to her people. One hundred families of Banu al-mustaliq were set free on account of her.

*Abu Dawud 29.3920*

Juwayriyyah lived for another forty-five years after her latest husband's passing.

### **Rayhanah (also spelt Rayhana)**

Tamam Kahn admits, in what is very much a panegyric to Muhammad and his wives, that Rayhanah is "not usually listed as a wife." Gheorghiu writes that Rayhanah only agreed to become Muhammad's concubine, seeing it as unseemly to accept his marriage proposal after he had just ordered the beheading of all the men and boys (males with traces of pubic hair) of her tribe, including her husband and father (see *Jihad in the Koran: "Massacre of the Jews of Medina,"* Boreal Books).

After the battle of the Trench [Rayhanah was] marched into the courtyard with the several hundred other women and their children to be claimed as a reward by the Muslim soldiers, while the Qurayzah man were led away to be executed.

*Tamam Kahn*

Rayhanah was more than just a beautiful young woman. "Rayhanah's name means 'extremely flagrant' and Muhammad loved perfumes," making her even more irresistible. Perfume was one of the three things God's spokesman loved the most.

The Holy Prophet said: "From the things of the world, I regard women and perfume highly, but prayer is the light of my eyes."

*Al-Khisal*

You might call it an obsession:

The Most Noble Messenger was so fond of applying perfume that he would skip his supper so as to procure his needed perfume. If perfume was not at his disposal, he would soak the perfumed scarf of his wife and rub his face with it so as to be perfumed. Likewise, before going out he would always look at himself in the mirror or water, and groom himself to such an extent as to always be an embodiment of adornment and dressing well. He would apply so much perfume that his beard had turned white as a result.

*An-Nisa'i*

Rayhanah's life with the Prophet was short and tumultuous: some say she converted to Islam, others that she died as a slave, and still others that she was allowed to rejoin her Jewish community, which is somewhat unlikely as she is buried, along with the other wives of Muhammad, in Baqi. She died a short two years after the massacre of the men and boys of her tribe. Her age and how she died remain a mystery. All we know is that the beautiful, tragic Rayhanah died young. I would not exclude suicide. It must have been difficult to be intimate with the man who was responsible for the death of your father, your husband, and your male relatives, and the enslavement of your female kin.

## **Umm Habiba**

Umm Habiba (born Ramla), Muhammad married by proxy. Umm Habiba and her husband were two of the Muslims who fled to Ethiopia, i.e., Abyssinia, on the Prophet's orders after the Meccans had become hostile to the Muslims, suspecting that their kin's demand to abandon the gods of their ancestors and acclaim him as God's intermediary to the Arabs was a ploy to make himself their absolute ruler. During their time in Abyssinia, her husband, Ubaydullah, converted to Christianity and drank so much wine that he died. "Four months or so after her husband's death in 628, when she had been in



Abyssinia for twelve long years, a servant from the Negus came with a message: 'The King says to you that the Messenger of Allah has written to him to marry you to him.'" The king obliged and Umm Habiba was married to Muhammad. Six years later, the now thirty-five-year-old bride joined her sexagenarian husband in Medina. She died in the year 666. She, too, is buried in Baqi cemetery.

### **Safiyya b. Huyayy**

In 628, after signing a short-lived ten-year "non-aggression" pact with the Meccans, the treaty of Hudaibiyah (see *Jihad in the Koran: "Treaty of Hudaibiyah,"* Boreal Books), Muhammad attacked the Jewish settlement of Khaybar (see *Jihad in the Koran: "Battle of Khaybar,"* Boreal Books) about 153 km to the north of Medina. Khaybar fell to the Muslims in just ten days. The taking of a town or village was as straightforward as it was pitiless: prayers, then an assault on the unbelievers' position. Then came the plunder and apportioning of the property of those killed including wives, daughters, and sons who were taken into slavery. It was at Khaybar that Muhammad took for his troubles the seventeen-year-old Safiya (also spelled Safiyya) after initially giving her to a fellow by the name of Dihya Al-Kalbi. She would become his eleventh wife. He first made her his slave, then freed her and decreed that her freedom was her dowry.

#### **Narrated Anas bin Malik:**

Allah's Apostle (p.b.u.h) offered the Fajr prayer when it was still dark, then he rode and said, "Allah Akbar! Khaibar is ruined. When we approach near to a nation, the most unfortunate is the morning of those who have been warned."

The people came out into the streets saying, "Muhammad and his army."

Allah's Apostle vanquished them by force and their warriors were killed; the children and women were taken as captives. Safiya was taken by Dihya Al-Kalbi and later she belonged to Allah's Apostle who married her and her Mahr (dowry) was her manumission.

*Bukhari 14.68*

Safiyya was the second Jewish woman after Rayhanah to join Muhammad's collection of wives, concubines, and slave-girls. The

seventeen-year-old is said to have been the wife of an abusive general so was happy to become the Prophet's wife and convert to Islam. She allegedly came to Muhammad's attention because of a dream where she was leaving her husband for him.

He (Muhammad) had her brought to him and asked her [about] the dream and her willingness to embrace Islam. She answered that she chose Allah and His Messenger over freedom and returning to her people.

*Tamam Kahn*

Muhammad "married the small, lovely-looking girl" on his way back from Khaybar. A hadith on how believers ascertained if he had taken a wife or a slave-girl:

**Narrated Anas:**

The Prophet stayed for three days between Khaibar and Medina, and there he consummated his marriage to Safiyya bint Huyai. I invited the Muslims to the wedding banquet in which neither meat nor bread was offered. He ordered for leather dining-sheets to be spread, and dates, dried yoghurt and butter were laid on it, and that was the Prophet's wedding banquet.

The Muslims wondered, "Is she (Saffiyya) considered as his wife or his slave girl?" Then they said, "If he orders her to veil herself, she will be one of the mothers of the Believers; but if he does not order her to veil herself, she will be a slave girl." So when the Prophet proceeded from there, he spared her a space behind him (on his she-camel) and put a screening veil between her and the people.

*Bukhari 62.22*

Safiyya outlived her husband by perhaps 40 years. She died in 670 or 672 and was buried with the other wives at Baqi cemetery.

**Mariya (also spelt Maria)**

Once the Muslim conquest of the peninsula was assured, Muhammad sent a letter to the various rulers of the kingdoms that bordered Arabia inviting them and their subjects to become Muslims or else.

From Muhammad the servant and Prophet of Allah, to Muqawqis, the leader of the Coptic tribe. There is safety and security for those believers who follow the correct path. Therefore I invite you to accept Islam. If you accept it, you shall find security, save your throne, and gain twice as much reward for having introduced Islam to your followers. If you refuse this invitation, let the sin of calamity which awaits your followers be upon you. You too are People of the Book; therefore let us come to a word common between us that we worship none but Allah and shall equalise anything with him. Let us not abandon Allah and take others for lords other than him. If you do not consent to this invitation, bear witness that we are Muslims.

Muqawqis (also known as Cyrus of Alexandria), the de-facto governor of Egypt and head of the Coptic Church, upon receiving the letter, and as a sign of respect for whom he took to be a prophet of God, sent a tribute to Muhammad which included two sisters, Sirin (also spelt Shirin) and Mariya:

From Muqawqis I read your letter and understood what you have written. I know that the coming of a Prophet is still due. But I thought, he would be born in Syria – I have treated your messenger with respect and honor. I am sending two maids (Maria al-Qibtiyya and her sister Sirin) for you as presents. These maids belong to a very respectable family amongst us. In addition I send for you clothes and a Duldul (steed) for riding. May God bestow security on you.

“When the caravan reached Medina, Muhammad chose Mariya and presented her sister Shirin to Hasan b. Thabit, his ‘official’ poet’. Mariya was provided with her own house, which included a garden. The Prophet spent a lot time with Mariya, which made his other wives jealous. Tamam writes:

Relations between Mariya and the wives reached a theatrical pitch as we see from the following hadith. Hadith tells us: “The Messenger of Allah was alone with his slave girl Mariya in Hafsa’s room. The Prophet came out and she (Hafsa) was sitting at the door. She said: ‘Messenger of Allah! In my room and on my day!’ She said: ‘I will not accept it without you

swearing an oath to me.” So he said, ‘By Allah I will never touch her.’

God promptly sent a revelation, Verse 66:2, nullifying the promise Muhammad had made to Hafsa.

66:1 O Prophet, why do you prohibit what Allah has made lawful to you<sup>30</sup>, seeking thereby the good pleasure of your wives? Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful.

66:2 Allah has prescribed to you the absolution of your oaths. Allah is your Master and He is the All-Knowing, the Wise.

Maria, the Christian Copt, would give Muhammad his second son, Ibrahim. He, too, would die in infancy at eighteen months, two months before his father. Mariya died five years later.

### **Maymuna**

Maymuna (also born Barra) was given to Muhammad by his uncle Abbas on the occasion of the first pilgrimage to Mecca since the migration to Medina. The pilgrimage had been negotiated under the short-lived treaty of Hudaibiyah. Maymuna was thirty years old when she joined the Prophet’s household. She was the last of his wives to pass away. She died in 681 at the age of 81. Unlike the other wives, she is buried in Sarif, a town near the southern tip of the Peninsula.

### **Asma**

Asma b. an-Nu`man could be considered the half-married wife of Muhammad. Her impending marriage was part of a negotiated alliance with her tribe. She would have been the Prophet’s last wife, with her husband passing away the following year. Asma was a naïve young girl frequently pranked by Aisha and Hafsa, who convinced her that repeating the formula for divorce when she was with Muhammad

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<sup>30</sup> 33:50 O Prophet, we have made lawful, for you, your wives, whose dowry you have paid, what your right hand owns (slave-girls) out of the spoils of war that Allah gave you, the daughters of your paternal uncles, the daughters of your paternal aunts, the daughters of your maternal uncles, the daughters of your maternal aunts who emigrated with you, and any believing woman who gives herself freely to the Prophet, if the Prophet desires to marry her, granted exclusively to you, but not the believers. We know what We have prescribed for them regarding their wives and what their right hands own, so that you may not be at fault. Allah is All-Forgiving, Merciful.

"would make the Prophet love her more. He, of course, heard the formula as powerful repudiation and sent her away." Is it conceivable that anyone, even the densest of girls, would mistake a formula for divorce as a turn-on for her husband, unless the story about Asma being pranked is simply someone's way of preserving Muhammad's perfect, if somewhat contrived marriage record? God's spokesman may have sent her away, but the people considered her still married.

Allah, in Revelation 33:53, decreed that "You should never hurt the Messenger of Allah, nor take his wives in marriage after him. That is truly abominable in the sight of Allah." This revelation given to a man who may have sought to control the sex life of his widows from beyond the grave may explain why some sources claim that "No one sought to marry her and she was not seen by anyone except relatives until her death... she died desolate."

Tamam Khan, in concluding her homage to "the Complete Man" and his wives, writes that Muhammad's marriages "serve as an example to countless Muslims and to humanity." Except for Khadijah and the love he may have developed for his child bride, Muhammad's marriages were driven by lust and strategic alliances (the exception being the widow Sawda and perhaps Umm Habiba). In the end, he condemned his still-young widows to the care of relatives and to never again knowing the joy of being intimate with another man, the fate of the young Asma being the most pathetic.

## **Rukaya Saves her Father**

There were at least two attempts on Muhammad's life during his time in Mecca.

8:30 And [remember (Muhammad)] when the unbelievers plotted against you, so as to confine you, kill you or expel you. They schemed and Allah schemed, but Allah is the Best of schemers.

Allah's 'scheming' could not prevent a rather disgusting attempt to suffocate His beloved spokesman using the stomach of a dead camel. Muhammad was kneeling in prayer at the Ka'ba when someone – Georgiou claims it was Abu Jahl, while others said it was Aqabah ibn Moeet (also spelled Uqbah bin Mu'ayt) – came up behind him and somehow managed to get him completely inside the camel's stomach, which he then sealed with the intestines of the animal. Based on a hadith by Abu Dawud about Uqbah bin Mu'ayt pleading for his life after his capture at the battle of Badr – asking Muhammad who would look after his children, only to be told that it would be 'Fire' – I would surmise that he was the perpetrator of the attempted suffocation. Muhammad was known to be pitiless with detractors when he got his hands on them, but to include the children of Mu'ayt as part of his punishment (they will burn in Hell) is indicative of a deep-seated animosity towards the man.

### **Narrated Abdullah ibn Mas'ud.**

Ibrahim said, "Al-Dahhak ibn Qays intended to appoint Masruq as governor. Thereupon Umarah ibn Uqbah said to him: Are you appointing a man from the remnants of the murderers of Uthman?

Masruq said to him, 'Ibn Mas'ud narrated to us, and he was trustworthy in respect of traditions, that when the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, intended to kill your father (Uqbah bin Mu'ayt), he said: 'Who will look after my children?'

He replied: 'Fire'.

*Abu Dawud 14.2680*

None who witnessed the attempted murder intervened, except for a woman who rushed to the house of Allah's spokesman and told Rukaya what was being done to her father. She ran to the Ka'ba and liberated her dad from the camel's stomach, saving his life. My account of Rukaya saving her father is from what I consider the definitive non-Arab biography of Muhammad: *La Vie de Mahomet* by Virgil Gheorghiu. He names Arab historian al-Balādhurī (d. 892) as his source. Another scholar I believe to be ibn Hisham (d. 833) claims that it was six-year-old Fatima, Muhammad's favourite daughter and future wife of Ali, who saved her father's life, not her then fourteen-year-old older sister.

The people of the Quraysh were trying every trick to trouble him. One day while he was performing Salāh in the Haram, on the instigation of the pagans of Makkah, Aqabah ibn Moeet brought the entrails of a camel and placed it on his neck whilst he was prostrating. Someone told Fatimah (R.A.) who was then just six years old. She came running and removed the stuff and cursed the non-believers.

Allah's excuse for not punishing those who attempted to suffocate the man who spoke on His behalf:

8:33 And Allah did not wish to punish them while you (Muhammad) were in their midst, and Allah was not going to punish them while they were asking for forgiveness.

Having failed to rid themselves of a prophet in whom they did not believe through assassination, and tiring of listening to him insult their ancestors for worshipping idols—insisting that their forefathers were burning in Hell because they died as unbelievers—the Meccans who allegedly asked for forgiveness banned Muhammad and his followers from the Ka'ba, and for that they would be punished.

8:34 And what excuse do they have that Allah should not punish them, when they bar people from the Sacred Mosque (the enclosure surrounding the Ka'ba), although they were not its guardians? Its guardians are only those who fear Allah; but most of them do not know.

2:114 And who is more unjust than those who prohibit mentioning of Allah in His mosques, and who even seek to destroy them. Those people should not have been allowed to enter them except in fear.<sup>31</sup> For them there is disgrace in this world, and terrible punishment in the Hereafter.

The believers defied the ordinance, prompting the Meccans, in 616, to send them all into exile. Muhammad did not leave until learning of another attempt on his life. The next time he was to enter Mecca, it would be as its conqueror (see *Jihad in the Koran: "Mecca Surrenders,"* Boreal Books).

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<sup>31</sup> "This is a subtle reference to the wrong perpetrated by the unbelievers of Makka, who had barred their own compatriots – the Muslims – from worshipping in the House of God." *Moududi*



## **Majid Fakhry vs. Yusuf Ali and Others**

“Translations,” an Italian proverb says, “are a betrayal.” They might be if—unlike Majid Fakhry’s, the translation used in my series on the Koran—the translator is not faithful to the original. The worst offender is the translator of the most popular English rendition of the Koran, Abdullah Yusuf Ali. I discussed Ali’s translation with Professor Bruce B. Lawrence of Duke University in an exchange of emails in 2013.

June 11, 2013

Dear Professor Lawrence,

Thank you for providing me with a copy of the lecture you gave at the KA Nizami Centre for Qur’anic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University on February 17. I thoroughly enjoyed “Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s Translation of the Qur’an – An 80-Year Retrospective with Special Attention to Surat ad-Duha (Q 93),” what I have to say next notwithstanding.

It was said of Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien that he was equally incomprehensible in either official language. His difficult speech was partly the result of a childhood Bell’s palsy attack which permanently partially paralyzed the left side of his face. After leaving politics, he spotted my wife and other interpreters for Canada’s Parliament at a restaurant and walked over to thank them for making him “sound good” all those years.

Making the folksy Chrétien sound good they did, but they never deliberately put words in his mouth or embellished what he had to say, as Yusuf appears to do in his translation of the Koran.

I do not know Arabic but from the five translations of the title of Surah 93 given in your lecture, Yusuf Ali seems to be going for dramatic effect with his addition of “Glorious,” damn what was in the original.

Yusuf Ali: The Glorious Morning Light

Pickthall: The Morning Hours

Droge: The Morning Light

Toorawa: Morning Light

Khan: The Forenoon

The Saudi-approved and promoted Khan Translation seems to me the more accurate in spite of the translator's, to quote Khaleel Mohammad (assistant professor in the Department of Religious Studies at San Diego State), "supremacist Muslim, anti-Semitic, anti-Christian polemic."

In *Pain, Pleasure and Prejudice*, whenever I needed another translation to bolster Majid Fakhry's—who, like Khan, translates ad-Duha as "The Forenoon"—it is Yusuf Ali to whom I normally turned. I love his translation almost as much as I love Fakhry's, but I trust Fakhry to give me as accurate a rendition of the original as only an "honest translation" (un travail honnête) by a native Arab speaker can.

Khaleel Mohammad dismisses the translation I used in *Pain, Pleasure and Prejudice* as being "a prosaic rendition" that does not do the Koran justice. Compare the difference between the two translations of Surah 111, Al-Masad.

Yusuf Ali:

111 Al-Masadd (sic)

**Palm Fibre, The Flame**

1. Perish the hands of the Father of Flame! Perish he!
2. No profit to him from all his wealth, and all his gains!
3. Burnt soon will he be in a Fire of Blazing Flame!
4. His wife shall carry the (crackling) wood - As fuel!-
5. A twisted rope of palm-leaf fibre round her (own) neck!

Majid Fakhry:

111 Al-Masad

**The Fibre**

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

1. Perish the hands of Abu Lahab, and may he perish too;
2. Neither his wealth nor what he has earned will avail him anything.
3. He will roast in a flaming fire,
4. And his wife will be a carrier of fire-wood,
5. She shall have a rope of fibre around her neck.

Ask any translator/interpreter and they will tell you that getting their clients' message across is what is important, and Fakhry does this very smartly without Yusuf Ali's embroidered superfluous text.

For many people, I would hazard the vast majority, poetry, as opposed to prose, leaves the impression that a text will be difficult to understand.

Insisting that translations of the Koran have a rhyme and rhythm that is not in the original creates an additional deterrent to non-Muslims reading the Koran, and that is more than unfortunate.

Sincerely Yours,

Bernard Payeur

One of the best examples of Fakhry's superior command of the English language is his succinct and elegant translation of Verse 48:28, one of the most significant revelations of the Koran.

Pickthall: He it is Who hath sent His messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religion. And Allah sufficeth as a Witness.

Yusuf Ali: It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim it over all religion: and enough is Allah for a Witness.

Mohsin Khan: He it is Who has sent His Messenger (Muhammad SAW) with guidance and the religion of truth (Islam), that He may make it (Islam) superior over all religions. And All-Sufficient is Allah as a Witness.

Shakir: He it is Who sent His Messenger with the guidance and the true religion that He may make it prevail over all the religions; and Allah is enough for a witness.

Muhammad Sarwar: It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the true religion to make it prevail over all other religions. God is a Sufficient witness to this Truth.

Majid Fakhry: It is He Who sent forth His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may exalt it above every other religion. Allah suffices as Witness.

Professor Khaleel Mohammad's opinion of the two most widely-distributed English translations of the Koran:

*The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali.*

Among those Qur'an translations which found Saudi favor and, therefore, wide distribution, was the Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali (1872-1952) rendition that, from its first appearance in 1934 until very recently, was the most popular English version among Muslims ... While his rendering of the text is not bad, there are serious problems in his copious footnotes; in many cases, he reproduces the exegetical material from medieval texts without making any effort at contextualization. Writing at a time both of growing Arab animosity toward Zionism and in a milieu that condoned anti-Semitism, Yusuf 'Ali constructed his oeuvre as a polemic against Jews.

Several Muslim scholars have built upon the Yusuf 'Ali translation. In 1989, Saudi Arabia's Ar-Rajhi banking company financed the U.S.-based Amana Corporation's project to revise the translation to reflect an interpretation more in conjunction with the line of Islamic thought followed in Saudi Arabia. Ar-Rahji offered the resulting version for free to mosques, schools, and libraries throughout the world. The footnoted commentary about Jews remained so egregious that, in April 2002, the Los Angeles school district banned its use at local schools. While the Yusuf 'Ali translation still remains in publication, it has lost influence because of its dated language and the appearance of more

recent works whose publication and distribution the Saudi government has also sought to subsidize.

*The Noble Qur'an in the English Language by Muhammad Taqi al-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan.*

Now the most widely disseminated Qur'an in most Islamic bookstores and Sunni mosques throughout the English-speaking world, this new translation is meant to replace the Yusuf 'Ali edition and comes with a seal of approval from both the University of Medina and the Saudi Dar al-Ifta. Whereas most other translators have tried to render the Qur'an applicable to a modern readership, this Saudi-financed venture tries to impose the commentaries of Tabari (d. 923 C.E.), Qurtubi (d. 1273 C.E.), and Ibn Kathir (d. 1372 C.E.), medievalists who knew nothing of modern concepts of pluralism. The numerous interpolations make this translation particularly problematic, especially for American Muslims who, in the aftermath of 9-11, are struggling to show that Islam is a religion of tolerance.

From the beginning, the Hilali and Muhsin Khan translation reads more like a supremacist Muslim, anti-Semitic, anti-Christian polemic than a rendition of the Islamic scripture...

Although this Saudi-sponsored effort, undertaken before 9-11, is a serious liability for American Muslims in particular, it still remains present in Sunni mosques, probably because of its free distribution by the Saudi government.

# Forgotten Witness

Extract from:

## FORGOTTEN WITNESS: EVIDENCE FOR THE EARLY CODIFICATION OF THE QUR'AN

Estelle Whelan,  
Columbia University

Excerpt from *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 118, no. 1, 1998, pp. 1-14.

In the last two decades a controversy has arisen over the period in which the text of Muslim scripture became codified. The traditional Islamic view can be summarized as follows.

Both Abu Bakr (632-34) and Umar (634-44) made efforts to gather together the scraps of revelation that had been written down by the faithful during the lifetime of the Prophet, on bones, on palm leaves, on potsherds, and on whatever other materials were at hand, as well as being preserved in "the breasts of men."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Narrated Zaid bin Thabit Al-Ansari, who was one of those who used to write the Divine Revelation:

Abu Bakr sent for me after the (heavy) casualties among the warriors (of the battle) of Yamama (where a great number of Qurra' (reciters of the Koran) were killed). 'Umar was present with Abu Bakr who said, "'Umar has come to me and said, 'The people have suffered heavy casualties on the day of (the battle of) Yamama, and I am afraid that there will be more casualties among the Qurra' (those who know the Qur'an by heart) at other battle-fields, whereby a large part of the Qur'an may be lost, unless you collect it. And I am of the opinion that you should collect the Qur'an.'"

Abu Bakr added, "I said to 'Umar, 'How can I do something which Allah's Apostle has not done?'"

'Umar said (to me), "By Allah, it is (really) a good thing."

So 'Umar kept on pressing, trying to persuade me to accept his proposal, till Allah opened my bosom for it and I had the same opinion as 'Umar.

(Zaid bin Thabit added:) Umar was sitting with him, Abu Bakr, and was not speaking to me).

But it was the third caliph, Uthman (644-61), who first charged a small group of men of Medina with codifying and standardizing the text.

Alarmed by reported divergences in the recitation of the revelation, he commissioned one of the Prophet's former secretaries, Zayd b. Thabit, and several prominent members of Quraysh - Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr, Sa'id b. al-'As, and Abd al-Rahman b. al-Harith are those most often mentioned - to produce a standard copy of the text, based on the compilation in the keeping of Hafsa, daughter of Umar.<sup>33</sup>

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"You are a wise young man and we do not suspect you (of telling lies or of forgetfulness): and you used to write the Divine Inspiration for Allah's Apostle. Therefore, look for the Qur'an and collect it (in one manuscript)."

By Allah, if he (Abu Bakr) had ordered me to shift one of the mountains (from its place) it would not have been harder for me than what he had ordered me concerning the collection of the Qur'an. I said to both of them, "How dare you do a thing which the Prophet has not done?"

Abu Bakr said, "By Allah, it is (really) a good thing."

So I kept on arguing with him about it till Allah opened my bosom for that which He had opened the bosoms of Abu Bakr and Umar. So I started locating Quranic material and collecting it from parchments, scapula, leaf-stalks of date palms and from the memories of men (who knew it by heart).

I found with Khuzaima two Verses of Surat-at-Tauba which I had not found with anybody else, (and they were): "Verily there has come to you an Apostle (Muhammad) from amongst yourselves. It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty He (Muhammad) is ardently anxious over you (to be rightly guided)." (9:128)

The manuscript on which the Quran was collected, remained with Abu Bakr till Allah took him unto Him, and then with 'Umar till Allah took him unto Him, and finally it remained with Hafsa, Umar's daughter.

*Bukhari 60.201*

<sup>33</sup> Thabit's original version, which the daughter of Caliph Umar kept under her bed, was retrieved on the order of Uthman who succeeded Umar as caliph.

#### **Narrated Anas bin Malik:**

Hudhaifa bin Al-Yaman came to Uthman at the time when the people of Sham and the people of Iraq were Waging war to conquer Arminya and Adharbijan. Hudhaifa was afraid of their (the people of Sham and Iraq) differences in the recitation of the Qur'an, so he said to 'Uthman, "O chief of the Believers! Save this nation before they differ about the Book (Quran) as Jews and the Christians did before."

So 'Uthman sent a message to Hafsa saying, "Send us the manuscripts of the Qur'an so that we may compile the Qur'anic materials in perfect copies and return the manuscripts to you."

If there was disagreement over language among members of the commission, it was to be resolved in accordance with the dialect spoken by Quraysh.

Once the standard text had been established, several copies were made and sent to major cities in the Islamic domain, specifically Damascus, Basra, Kufa, and perhaps others.

Although there are variations in detail, for example, in the list of names of those who served on Uthman's commission and in the list of cities to which copies were sent, this basic outline is not in dispute within the Muslim world.

Oral recitation nevertheless remained the preferred mode of transmission, and, as time passed, variant versions of the text proliferated - the kind of organic change that is endemic to an oral tradition.

In addition, because of the nature of the early Arabic script, in which short vowels were not indicated and consonants of similar form were only sometimes distinguished by pointing, writing, too, was subject to misunderstanding, copyist's error, and change over time.

In the early tenth century, at Baghdad, Abu Bakr Ibn Mujahid (d. 936) succeeded in reducing the number of acceptable readings to the seven that were predominant in the main Muslim centers of the time: Medina, Mecca, Damascus, Basra, and Kufa.

Hafsa sent it to 'Uthman. 'Uthman then ordered Zaid bin Thabit, 'Abdullah bin AzZubair, Said bin Al-As and 'Abdur Rahman bin Harith bin Hisham to rewrite the manuscripts in perfect copies.

'Uthman said to the three Quraishi men, "In case you disagree with Zaid bin Thabit on any point in the Qur'an, then write it in the dialect of Quraish, the Qur'an was revealed in their tongue."

They did so, and when they had written many copies, 'Uthman returned the original manuscripts to Hafsa.

'Uthman sent to every Muslim province one copy of what they had copied, and ordered that all the other Qur'anic materials, whether written in fragmentary manuscripts or whole copies, be burnt.

Said bin Thabit added, "A Verse from Surat Ahzab was missed by me when we copied the Qur'an and I used to hear Allah's Apostle reciting it. So we searched for it and found it with Khuzaima bin Thabit Al-Ansari. (That Verse was): 'Among the Believers are men who have been true in their covenant with Allah.'" (33:23)

*Bukhari 61.510*



Some Qur'an readers who persisted in deviating from these seven readings were subjected to draconian punishments.

Nevertheless, with the passage of time, additional variant readings were readmitted, first "the three after the seven," then "the four after the ten."

The modern Cairo edition, prepared at al-Azhar in the 1920s, is based on one of the seven readings permitted by Ibn Mujahid, that of Abu Bakr 'Âsim (d. 745) as transmitted by Hafs b. Sulayman (d. 796).