

# What the Quran is all About ?

## DISCOVERING THE QURAN



### 1. Arrangement of the Quran

During the time of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ whenever a part of the Quran (whether an *ayah* or a *surah*) was revealed, it was immediately noted down in writing by some scribe. The entire Quran was revealed in 23 years. After the complete revelation of the Quran, during the lifetime of the Prophet, once the Angel Jibril (Gabriel) came to the Prophet and put all the revealed *ayahs* and *surahs* in a certain order in which we read it till now. The arrangement was not in the chronological order of the revelation dates, thus we find the first revelation “Read, in the name of your Lord...” in chapter 96. (*Surah al-Alaq 96:1*)

### 2. Contents of the Quran

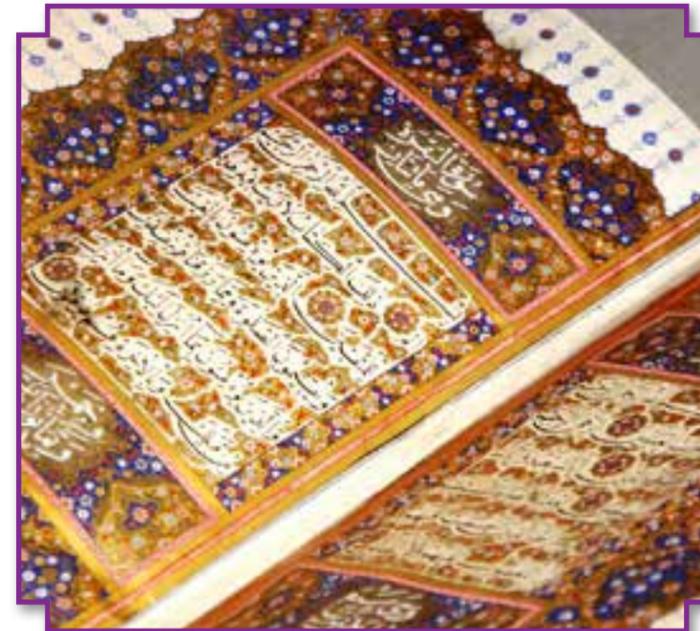
The Quran contains 114 chapters. Each chapter is called a *surah* in Arabic. Each *surah* has its own name, like *Al-Fatihah*, *Al-Baqarah*, *Al Imran*, etc. Every *surah*, with the exception of *Surah al-Tawbah* starts with the phrase, *bismillahir-rahmanir-rahim*, meaning “In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful”. Each *surah* contains a number of verses which are called *ayah* (pl. *ayahs*). There are more than 6000 *ayahs* in the Quran.

### 3. The Book of Allah

The Arabic word ‘*quran*’ means ‘recitation’ or ‘reading’. The Quran is the sacred book of Islam. It is an exceptional book, and not just an ordinary book written by some human being. It records the words of Allah. The Quran, being the true word of Allah, serves as an eternal guide for all humanity. The main theme of the Quran is the Creation Plan of Allah.

### 4. The Revelation of the Quran

One night in 610 A.D., when the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was in the Cave of Hira on Mount Nur near Makkah, as he would remain deep in thought about the Creator of the universe and the meaning of life, the Angel Jibril (Gabriel) appeared before him and, for the first time, taught him some *ayahs* of the Quran, starting with “Read in the name of your Lord...” The Quran was revealed part by part at different times over a period of 23 years.



### 5. The Shortest Surah: Surah al-Kawthar

The 108<sup>th</sup> *surah* of the Quran is the shortest *surah* of all. Its name is *Al-Kawthar*, which is the name of a fountain in Paradise, literally meaning ‘Abundance’. It has only three short *ayahs* that give the good news to the Prophet that Allah has granted him the fountain of *Kawthar* in Paradise.

### 6. The Book of Guidance

Being the words of Allah, the Quran shows us the right path and prevents us from taking the wrong path. It teaches us the benefits of living a virtuous life and warns us against going astray. It acts as a spiritual and moral guide for mankind, making them conscious of their Creator – Allah and His creation plan.

### 7. Studying the Quran

Reciting the Quran in Arabic is a form of worship. But the real benefit of reading the Quran can be achieved if one understands its meaning. So, it is very important to read its translation as well, so that one can understand the meanings and messages of the Quran and also reflect on them. This is called *tadabbur*.

### 8. The First Surah: Surah al-Fatihah

The first chapter or *surah* of the Quran is known as *Al-Fatihah*, meaning the ‘Opening.’ It contains seven beautiful verses beginning with praise of the Almighty Allah and a prayer for guidance to the right path at the end. These seven verses are also known as *al-Sab‘ al- Mathani*, or “the most oft repeated verses” as they are repeated several times in the daily prayers.

### 9. The Longest Surah: Surah al-Baqarah

The second *surah*, named *Al-Baqarah*, containing 286 *ayahs*, is the longest *surah* or chapter of the Quran. This *surah* has several narratives, such as the creation of the Prophet Adam ﷺ, the stories of the Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ and the Children of Israel, etc. It also contains several commandments of Allah. The longest *ayah* of the Quran also appears in this *surah* (*Surah al-Baqarah 2:282*).



# Beautiful Promises

They say, 'The Fire is not going to touch us, and [even if it does], it will only be for a few days!' Say [to them], 'Have you received a promise from God—for God never breaks His promise—or do you attribute something to God which you do not know?' (Surah al-Baqarah 2:80)

But those who have faith and work righteousness, they are Companions of the Garden; therein they shall abide (for ever). (Surah al-Baqarah 2:82)



So remember Me; I will remember you. Be thankful to Me and do not be ungrateful. (Surah al-Baqarah 2:152)

We said, 'Go down, all of you, from here: then when guidance comes to you from Me, anyone who follows My guidance will have no fear, nor will they grieve— (Surah al-Baqarah 2:38)

God is the patron of the faithful. He leads them from darkness to the light. As for those who deny the truth, their supporter is Satan, who brings them out of light into darkness. They are the heirs of the Fire, and there they will remain forever. (Surah al-Baqarah 2:257)

Satan threatens you with the prospect of poverty and commands you to do foul deeds. But God promises His forgiveness and His bounty. God is bountiful and all knowing. (Surah al-Baqarah 2:268)

It is not your responsibility to make them follow the right path; God guides whomever He pleases. Whatever wealth you spend is to your own benefit, provided that you spend only to seek the favour of God. Whatever wealth you spend [for God's cause] shall be repaid to you in full and you shall not be wronged. (Surah al-Baqarah 2:272)

Those who believe, do good deeds, attend to their prayers and engage in almsgiving, shall be rewarded by their Lord and shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. (Surah al-Baqarah 2:277)

surely, with every hardship there is ease. (Surah al-Sharh 94:6)

For, if you do not do so, then know that you are at war with God and His Messenger. But if you repent, you may retain your capital. Do not wrong [others] and you will not be wronged. (Surah al-Baqarah 2:279)

They swear their strongest oaths by God that God will never raise the dead to life—nonetheless, it is a promise truly binding on Him, even though most people do not realize it— (Surah al-Nahl 16:38)

As for those who have believed and do good works, they shall be given their reward in full. God does not love evil-doers. (Surah al'Imran 3:57)

If God helps you, none can overcome you, but if He withdraws His help from you, who is there who can help you besides Him? In God, then, let the believers place their trust! (Surah al'Imran 3:160)

This Quran is an exposition for the people and a guidance and admonition for those who fear God. And do not become faint of heart, nor grieve—you will have the upper hand, if you are believers— (Surah al'Imran 3:138-139)

But God undertakes to accept repentance only from those who do evil out of ignorance and those who repent soon after. God turns towards such people with mercy; He is all knowing and all wise. (Surah al-Nisa 4:17)

That makes it more likely that people will bear true witness, or else they will fear that their oaths will be contradicted by the oaths of others. Heed God and listen; God does not guide a rebellious, disobedient people. (Surah al-Ma'idah 5:108)



Whoever does a good deed will be repaid tenfold, but those who do a bad deed will only be repaid with its equivalent and they shall not be wronged. (Surah al-An'am 6:160)

That which you are promised shall surely come to pass and you cannot prevent it. (Surah al-An'am 6:134)

Not so those who are patient and do good deeds. They shall have forgiveness and a great reward. (Surah Hud 11:11)

Prepare any strength you can muster against them, and any cavalry with which you can overawe God's enemy and your own enemy as well, and others besides them whom you do not know, but who are known to God. Anything you spend in the way of God will be repaid to you in full. You will not be wronged. (Surah al-Anfal 8:60)

If you tried to count God's blessings, you would never be able to number them. God is ever forgiving and most merciful. (Surah al-Nahl 6:18)

# Great Men and Women Mentioned in the Quran

PROPHETS AND PEOPLE



## 1. Shaman

Shaman was a secret believer in the message of the Prophet Musa ﷺ (Moses) in the Firawn (Pharaoh) household. In the Quran he is called 'the believing man'. After the Prophet Musa ﷺ had preached to Firawn and has certain amount of success, Firawn and his people planned to take the life of the Prophet Musa ﷺ. At that moment Shaman tried to dissuade Firawn from killing him. He argued that it was not correct to kill a man just because he believed in Allah, especially when he was of good character and behaviour.



## 2. Al-Khidr

Al-Khidr (the green one) is described in the Quran as one of Allah's servants who was gifted with His mercy and knowledge. Due to these gifts from Allah he could also bring about changes in the affairs of the world. The Prophet Musa ﷺ (Moses) was asked by Allah to travel to the union of the seas and to meet Al-Khidr, so that he could share some knowledge with the Prophet Musa ﷺ.



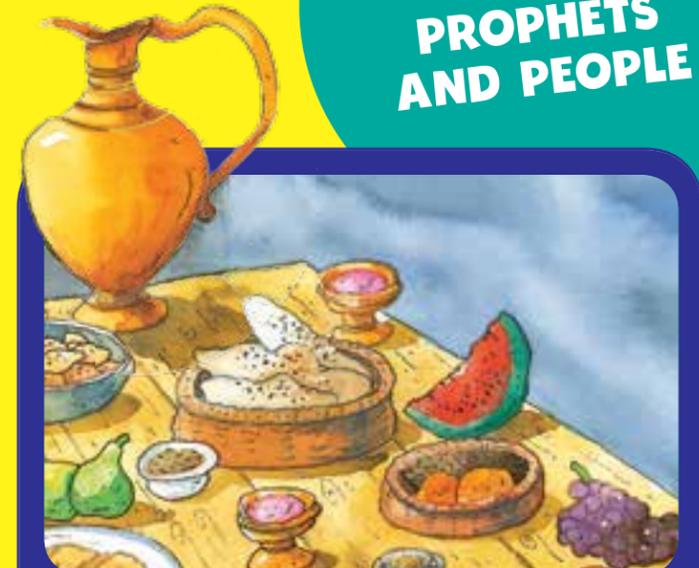
## 3. Luqman-The Wise

The Quran tells of how Luqman, a man of wisdom, advised his son to worship none besides Allah; to be kind to his parents; to say his prayers regularly; to enjoin good and forbid evil; to be ever patient; not to be proud and arrogant; and to be moderate in gait and speech. He also told his son that Allah was All-seeing. We should all follow Luqman's wise advice to his son, so that we may become good human beings.



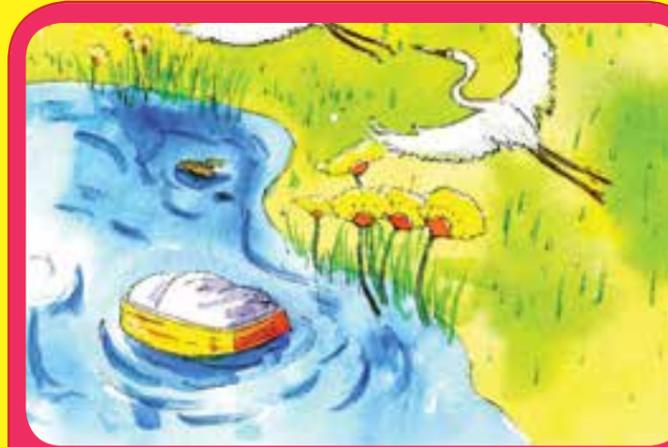
## 4. The Queen of Saba

When the Prophet Sulayman ﷺ came to know about how Bilqis, the Queen of Saba, and her people worshipped the sun instead of Allah, he sent a letter inviting them to worship Allah alone. To avoid any kind of conflict, the queen sent him gifts. When the Prophet Sulayman ﷺ did not accept them, she realized the authenticity of the Prophet Sulayman's ﷺ message. Along with her people she went forth to meet the Prophet Sulayman ﷺ and submitted herself to Allah.



## 6. Maryam

The Quran frequently mentions Maryam (Mary), the mother of the Prophet 'Isa ﷺ (Jesus), as an example for the believers of all times and exalts her above the entire womankind. Surah 19, which is named after her, gives details of her life. Calling her siddiqah (the truthful), the Quran clears her of the charges of unchastity levelled at her by the Children of Israel when she gave birth to the Prophet Isa ﷺ without a father.



## 5. Asiyah

Asiyah was the believing wife of Firawn (Pharaoh). She believed in Allah and in His supreme power. She also believed that, like everything else, Firawn was also a mere creation of His. She prayed to Allah to save her from Firawn and his sins and grant her a place in Paradise. She was a kind-hearted woman. She picked up the wooden box containing the infant Musa (Moses) from the Nile. She begged Firawn for the child's life and also to be allowed to bring him up. He agreed and she brought him up as her own son in the palace.



## 7. Mothers of the Believers

The wives of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, raised in status by Allah in the Quran to that of "mothers of the believers", led a pious life, supporting the Prophet in spreading the divine message. Khadijah, the first Muslim and the wife of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, gave him total support in carrying out his prophetic mission. A'ishah, the daughter of Abu Bakr, another wife of the Prophet, was very famous for her profound knowledge of Islam and numerous hadiths (sayings of the Prophet) were related by her.

# Islamic Expressions

## 1 Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim

The Phrase, *Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim* (In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful) is recited before doing anything, e.g. before taking meals, reading a book or beginning any new work. To commence any work in Allah's name is, in fact, to pray that Allah, the most Merciful the most Compassionate, should come to one's help and make one's work successful. In this way, man shows that he is the servant of the Almighty Allah.



## 2 Insha-Allah

*Insha-Allah* means God willing, or if Allah wills. The Quran commands the believers never to say, "I will do it tomorrow," without adding, "If Allah wills." Adding this phrase to such sentences means that the believer truly accepts the will of the Almighty about future happenings. While inviting his parents to come to Egypt, the Prophet Yusuf عليه السلام (Joseph) used this phrase.

## 3 Alhamdu-lillah

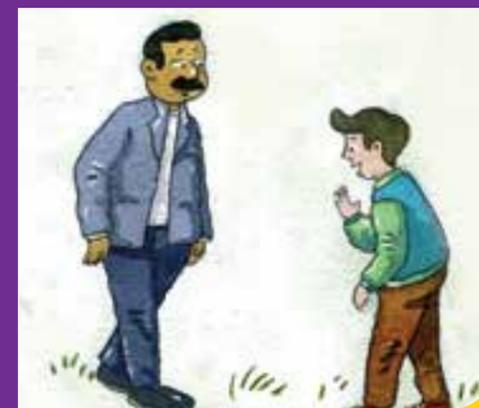
*Alhamdu-lillah* means "All praises are due to Allah". This is a phrase used most often by the believers. This shows his satisfaction with and gratitude for the blessings and mercy which Allah has showered on him. It is also used on some other occasions, such as after sneezing; after drinking water; after the accomplishment of a task; after doing good deeds, etc.

## 4 Masha-Allah

The meaning of *Masha-Allah* is 'As Allah has willed.' This phrase is used while admiring something or someone, in recognition that all good things come solely from Allah. For example, if someone shows his friend the new watch he purchased, his friend should respond with "*Masha Allah!* What a lovely watch," thus acknowledging that the achievements and blessings are by the will of Allah.

## 5 As-salamu-alaykum

This is the form of Islamic greeting, meaning "Peace be on you." The response is: *wa 'alaykum'ussalam (wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu)*, meaning "and on you be the peace (and mercy of Allah and His blessings)." The phrase '*salamun alaykum*' occurs several times in the Quran. Allah says in the Quran, "And when those who believe in Our revelations come to you, then say: Peace be upon you!" The Quran urges the believer to respond more courteously and pleasantly to one who greets him. It says: "When a (courteous) greeting is offered to you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy." This Islamic greeting shows that Islam is a religion of peace.

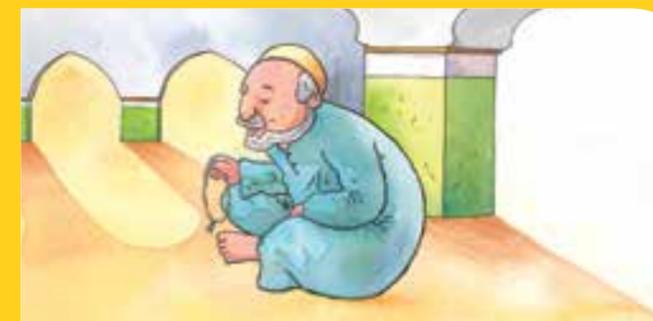


## 6 A'udhu billahi min ash-shaytanir-rajim

This expression means "I seek refuge in Allah from the outcast Satan". In many places the Quran urges the believers to be alert and to seek refuge in Allah from Satan, the source of all evils. As he always tries to arouse evil thoughts in our mind, it is advisable to seek refuge from Satan constantly, especially, when one is in danger of Satan's temptations. We are also commanded in the Quran to seek refuge in Allah before starting to read the Quran. "So when you want to recite the Quran, seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the outcast (the cursed one)."

## 7 Astaghfirullah

*Astaghfirullah* (I seek forgiveness of Allah) is an expression one uses when one feels guilty or wants to prevent oneself from doing wrong. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ sought Allah's forgiveness more than seventy times a day. In fact, seeking Allah's forgiveness is one of the prominent signs of the true believers.



## 8 La hawla wa la quwwata illa billah

This phrase means "There is neither power nor strength except with Allah." It is used to express denial of one's own claim to power and is an acknowledgement that all matters are ultimately controlled and decreed by Allah. The phrase is also spoken in such unfavorable situations as are beyond one's control and strength. In this way, by expressing his helplessness and powerlessness, a believer puts his trust in Allah, and submits himself to Him.

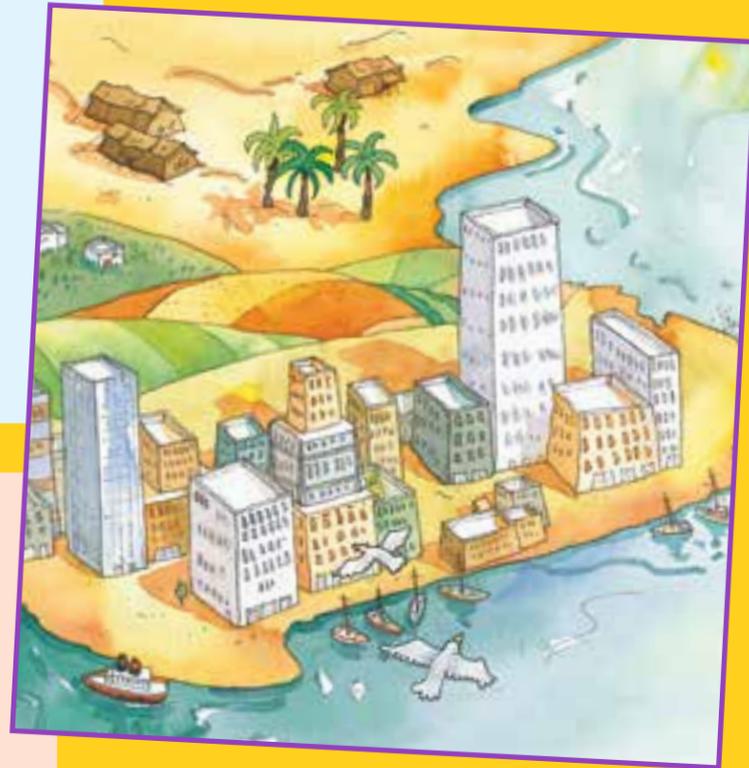
## 9 Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi rajiun

This means "We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return". This phrase is uttered upon hearing some bad news, e.g. a death, an affliction or a serious illness, etc. The Quran says: "Those who say, when afflicted with a calamity, 'We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return (*inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi rajiun*)' are the ones who will have blessings and mercy from their Lord; it is they who are on the right path."

# Akhirah or the Hereafter

## 1. What is Akhirah

The akhirah, or hereafter, is a limitless world where all things are in their ideal form. Death in this present world is not the end of life, but is rather the beginning of our real and eternal life. The present world is one of action, while the hereafter is where the harvest of actions is reaped. Those who are God-fearing and pious in this world will enter the eternal garden in the hereafter, to enjoy all kinds of blessings. But those who are oblivious of Allah in this present world will be thrown into the fire of Hell.



## 2. Doomsday

The earthquake of Doomsday will proclaim the termination of the period of trial. The freedom given to people in order to test them will be taken away. Then the time will have come for people to receive their rewards. The Quran declares: "When the earth is rocked in her last convulsion; when the earth shakes off its burdens and man asks 'what may this mean?'; on that Day it will proclaim its tidings, for your Lord will have inspired it. Thereupon, mankind will come in scattered groups to be shown their labours." (Surah al-Zalzalah 99:1-6)

## 3. Signs of Doomsday

One day, all the world, all of creation—human beings, animals, jinn, earth, skies—will come to an end. Nothing will be left except for Allah. The Prophet has foretold many signs that will appear before the end of this world. Some of them are: knowledge will be taken away and ignorance will prevail; intoxicants will be used widely; illegal activities will become widespread; adultery will become very common; earthquakes will increase; time will pass more quickly; tribulations will prevail; bloodshed will increase; trustworthiness will be lost; etc.



## 4. Paradise

Allah has created an ideal world of everlasting joy and bliss called paradise. Those who obey God, despite their freedom, and voluntarily impose the will of God upon themselves, are deserving of paradise. During the period of man's trial, all kinds of people have been allowed to inhabit the world. However, when the trial of man has run its course, only the righteous will be deemed fit to inherit the evergreen world of God. Others will be denied entrance into heaven; they will be cast into a world of everlasting anguish and despair.



## 5. Hell

Hell, just opposite of paradise, is a place of everlasting punishment, prepared for the wicked. The Quran says how unfortunate are those on the Left: "They will find themselves in scorching wind and scalding water, and under the shadow of black smoke, neither cool nor refreshing." (Surah al-Waqi'ah 56:42-44) "You shall eat the fruit of the tree of Zaqqum, and fill your bellies with it, and shall drink boiling water. You shall drink it like thirsty camels." (Surah al-Waqi'ah 56:51-55) In Hell, the wicked will wish for death, but death will not come to them. They will eternally remain in this state of torment.



## 6. The Judgement Day

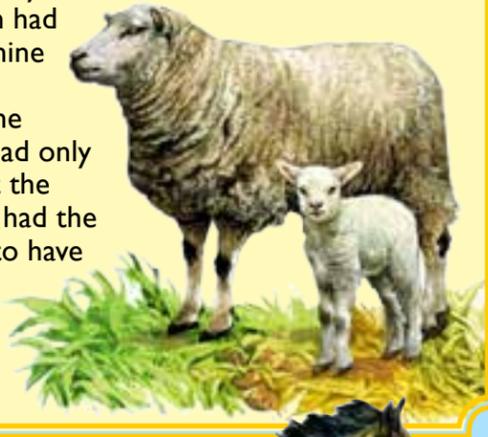
The Angel Israfil will blow the Trumpet, upon which all that are in the heavens and on earth will swoon, except such as it will please Allah (to exempt). This will be the end of all things. The Angel Israfil will blow the Trumpet for the second time, which will bring all the people to life. All of them will gather before their Creator, Allah, to be judged. The righteous will have their record in their right hands and the evil in their left hands. All will be brought to judgement and no secret will remain hidden.

# Animals and Birds

**MORE ABOUT THE QURAN**

## 1 Sheep

The sheep is a domestic animal that gives us milk, flesh, leather and wool. In many places the Quran mentions this animal. In *Surah Sad* it describes the story of disputants who came to the Prophet Dawud عليه السلام to judge between them fairly. One of them had ninety nine sheep while the other had only one yet the former had the desire to have his one too.



## 2 Camel

The camel has been frequently mentioned in the Quran. Being a unique animal especially suited to the desert, it can go for several days without drinking water. The Quran urges people to ponder upon this amazing creature of Allah. "Do they not look at the camels, how they are made?" The purpose of this is that man reflect on their creation and give thanks to Allah for creating such wonderful creatures.



## 3 Dog

The Quran, giving an example of those who deny His Signs, says, "His similitude is that of a dog: if you attack him, he lolls out his tongue, or if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls out his tongue. That is the similitude of those who reject Our signs." (*Surah al-A'raf* 7:176)

## 4 Horse

The horse is an obedient animal. Since time immemorial, horses have been kept by man as beasts of burden. They stood for power and were very important for the army and for travelling to far-off places. The Quran says, "And (Allah has created) horses, mules, and donkeys for you to ride and use for show." (*Surah al-Nahl* 16:8) The Prophet Sulayman عليه السلام (Solomon) was very fond of horses.



## 5 Hoopoe

The Prophet Sulayman عليه السلام (Solomon), by God's grace, was a very powerful king and knew the language of the birds. His army included birds, animals and jinn. Once, finding the hoopoe absent, (see *Surah al-Naml*) he became angry and threatened it with severe punishment if it failed to account for itself. But shortly thereafter, it brought news of the Queen of Sheba whose people were sun worshippers. Sulayman then sent a letter to the Queen of Sheba by the hoopoe (*hudhud*). On receiving it, the Queen came to the Prophet Sulayman عليه السلام and submitted herself to the true faith.



## 6 Cow

The cow is a very useful animal for man. Man has always reared the cow for its milk. The Quran says, "And surely in cattle (too) you will find an instructive Sign. From what is within their bodies, between excretions and blood, We produce, for your drink, milk, pure and agreeable to those who drink it." (*Surah al-Nahl* 16:66)



## 7 Donkey

In the ancient times, the donkey was a useful means of transport. It figured in several Quranic stories, such as that of the Prophet Uzayr عليه السلام who, while riding on his donkey, was shown a miracle by Allah which affirmed his faith in the Hereafter. Luqman, while advising his son, cautions him to be modest, always lowering his voice, as the ugliest voice is that of the braying donkey. The Quran says, moreover, that those who study divine books without following them are like donkeys that carry loads of books without understanding them.



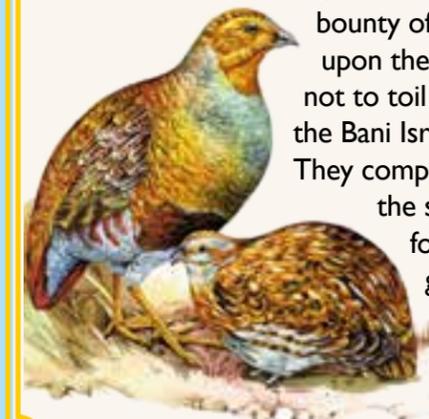
## 8 Raven

The Quran records the story of the two sons of the Prophet Adam عليه السلام. When the elder brother killed his younger brother after a fight, he felt very sorry when his anger cooled down. He was not sure what to do with the dead body. So Allah sent a raven who taught him to hide the dead body of his brother by scratching the ground. Seeing this, Qabil realized his powerlessness: "Woe is me! Was I not even able to be as this raven, and to hide the corpse of my brother?" (*Surah al-Ma'idah* 5:31)



## 9 Quail

The Quran tells us that when the Prophet Musa عليه السلام along with the Bani Israil journeyed from Egypt towards the holy land, Allah provided them with special food-- manna and quails. Manna, a kind of sweet dew, and the roast quails, a tasty dish, awaited them. This was a bounty of Allah bestowed upon them so that they had not to toil for their food. Yet, the Bani Israil were ungrateful. They complained about the sameness of the food and asked for greater variety.



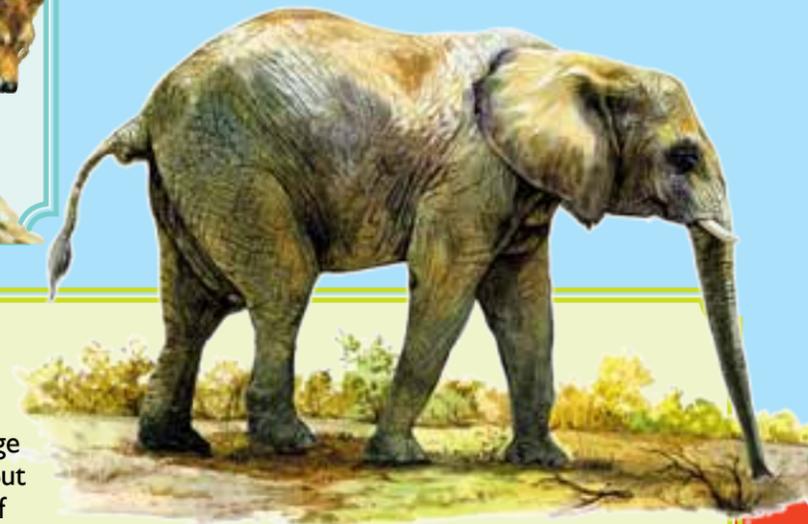
## 10 Wolf

A dangerous and cunning animal, it attacks and feeds on smaller animals, but also attacks humans, especially children. In the story of the Prophet Yusuf عليه السلام, his ten step brothers, being jealous of him, threw him into a dry well and lied to their old father that a wolf had eaten Yusuf. They also showed him his shirt with false blood on it.



## 11 Elephant

With their massive bodies and great strength, elephants were mostly used in royal armies. Before the birth of the Prophet Muhammad عليه السلام, the king of Yemen, Abraha, marched towards Makkah with a huge army of elephants, intending to destroy the Kabah. But even before he reached Makkah, Allah sent a flock of birds to pelt the soldiers with small stones, so that they fell ill. Abraha was thus forced to return to his country and died soon after. (see *Surah al-Fil* 105)



## 1 The City of Madinah

The city of Madinah is a blessed place to which the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ migrated from Makkah. Allah commanded the Prophet to migrate to the city of Madinah: The Quran says: "And say (O Muhammad): My Lord ! Let my entry (into the city of Madinah) be good and (likewise) my exit (from the city of Makkah) be good."

## 2 An Important Pledge

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ used to preach Islam to those who would come to Makkah on Hajj. So, some tribes of Madinah converted to Islam when the Prophet introduced Islam to them while they were on Hajj. Subsequently, these tribes also pledged to support Islam and the Prophet. This pledge is famously known as the Pledge of Aqabah.



## 3 Al-Muallim

When a large number of people from Madinah came into the fold of Islam, the Prophet thought of sending somebody from Makkah to teach Islam to them. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ sent Mus'ab Bin Umayr, one of the Companions, there to teach Islam before his migration.

## 4 The Migration to Madinah

The Makkans were conspiring to kill the Prophet. So, he was commanded by Allah to migrate to Madinah. The angel Jibril came to the Prophet and told him to leave Makkah and migrate to Madinah. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ left Makkah with Abu Bakr in the dead of night. And that night, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, his cousin, slept at his place, when some of the Quraysh attacked the Prophet's house.



## 5 Jannat al-Baqi

In Madinah, there is an important graveyard situated to the east of the Prophet's mosque. It is known as Jannat al-Baqi. Based on the sayings of the Prophet, this graveyard has many virtues. The Prophet's wife A'isha said that whenever the Prophet would stay in her house, he would go in the last part of the night to this graveyard. The Prophet's wife, A'isha too is buried here.

## 6 The First Friday Prayer

The Prophet prayed his first Friday prayer before entering Madinah in the middle of a valley known as Ranuqna. This place belonged to the tribe of the Banu Salim bin Awf. This mosque is known as Masjid-e-Juma.



## 7 The First Mosque

Before entering the city of Madinah, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ stayed at a place called Quba where a mosque was later built. It was inhabited by the tribe of Banu Amr bin Awf. This mosque is known as Masjid-e-Quba.



## 8 Virtues of Madinah

The city of Madinah has special distinction. It is the city where the Prophet Muhammad migrated to from Makkah. Allah made this place special because the Prophet supplicated for the well being of its inhabitants. According to a hadith, the Prophet encouraged people to live in Madinah. The Prophet prayed to Allah: "O Allah make Madinah beloved to us, as we love Makkah -- or more..." The Prophet also said that none would go out of the city with a dislike of it.

## 9 Al-Qiblatayn Mosque

A revelation from Allah came to the Prophet to change the Qibla while he was praying in a mosque in Madinah at the Banu Salamah village. Later this mosque was named al-Qiblatayn Mosque.

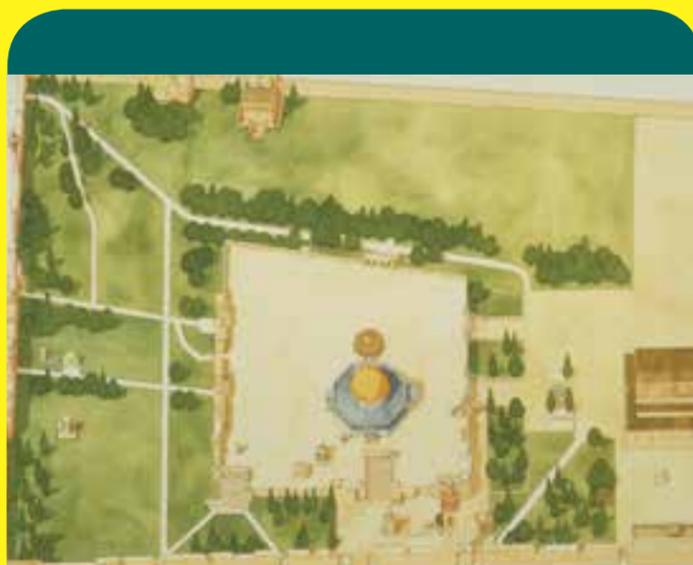


## 10 Al-Fath Mosque

During the Battle of the Trench the Prophet prayed on a mountainside for three days. Allah finally heard his prayer and the glad tidings of victory were revealed to him. This mosque is today known as Al Fath mosque. It is located on Mount Sala.

### 1 The City of Jerusalem

Jerusalem is a holy city blessed by Allah. The city of Jerusalem is known in Arabic as Al-Quds or Baitul-Maqdis (the noble, sacred place). Many Prophets lived in this blessed land. The Prophet Sulayman عليه السلام, who had power over the Jinn, the birds, the wind and the animals, ruled from here. It is situated in the Middle East near Jordan and Syria. Jerusalem has many sites of Islamic significance such as Masjid al-Aqsa, the Dome of the Rock, Masjid Umar, etc. It is reported that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "There are only three mosques to which you should embark on a journey: the sacred mosque, this mosque of mine, and the mosque of Al-Aqsa (Jerusalem)."



### 3 The Prophet's Night Journey

In the tenth year of prophethood the angel Jibril came to take the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ on the miraculous journey from Makkah to Jerusalem and then to the heavens. At Jerusalem, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said his prayers at the Farthest Mosque (al-Masjid al-Aqsa), where all other prophets joined him in prayer. It happened in 621 A.D. That night the Prophet was staying in the house of Umm Hani, the daughter of Abi Talib at Makkah.



### 2 The Farthest Mosque

The Quran mentions the Farthest Mosque to which the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was taken and where he led a *salah* of the prophets. A mosque was later built on this site. Today, it is known as Al-Aqsa Mosque. Its construction was started by Abd al-Malik and it was completed by his predecessor, Al-Walid.

### 4 The Ascension

Al-Mir'aj means the ascension. From Jerusalem the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ ascended to the heavens accompanied by the angel Jibril. The Prophet ascended up the seven heavens, one by one. He met prophets in each heaven. He met the Prophet Adam عليه السلام, the forefather of man, in the first heaven. The Prophet Yahya عليه السلام and Isa عليه السلام in the second heaven, the Prophet Yusuf عليه السلام in the third, the Prophet Idris عليه السلام in the fourth, the Prophet Harun عليه السلام in the fifth and the Prophet Musa عليه السلام in the sixth. When the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ came back home, he was amazed to find the spot where he had lain was still warm, and the cup he had tipped over was still emptying. This incredible experience had taken place in less than a moment.



### 5 Hebron

As commanded by Allah the Prophet Ibrahim عليه السلام traveled to different places. Before moving to Egypt, he settled in Jerusalem with his family. He is buried in Hebron, a small place near Jerusalem.

### 6 The Dome of the Rock

The Prophet had climbed upon a rock at Bayt al Maqdis from where he was taken to the heavens. A special structure was later built at this place. It is called the Dome of the Rock and it is sacred to Jews, Christian and Muslims alike. It was, in fact, the original prayers direction (*qiblah*) of the early Muslims before the direction of Makkah replaced it in the second year of the Hijrah. The Dome of the Rock was built by Abd al-Malik. The rock itself is oblong and measures 56 feet by 42 feet. Below it is a chamber accessible by a stairway where one can pray in a small area set aside for the purpose.

### 7 A Gift for the Ummah

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was given a beautiful gift for his Ummah when he went on al-Mir'aj. This gift is called Miftahul Jannah. Allah gave him the gift of *Salah* or daily prayer. Originally, fifty daily prayers had been ordained, but the prophet Musa عليه السلام asked him to return and ask for a reduction. First the prayers were reduced to 10 and then finally to five.