**Selections from the Quran, Seventh Century CE**

*Introduction: In the centuries following the expansion of Christianity and Buddhism, a new monotheistic salvation religion, Islam, originated in Arabia and spread rapidly among Arab polytheists as well as to many Jews and Christians along ancient trade routes. The new faith centered on the Quran (or Koran) which is said by Islamic believers, or Muslims, to be the word of God as spoken by the Angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammed about 610 CE. Muhammed then recited those words so that others could memorize them or write them down. After Muhammed’s death in 632, these writings and memories were gathered together to form the Quran (literally “recitation”).*

*The chapters (or suras) of the Quran, 114 in all, are organized primarily by length, with the longest first, and in reverse chronological order. This means that the earliest pieces, which are among the shortest, are found at the end of the book. We begin with the first, an exception to this length rule, sura 1, “The Opening,” followed in rough chronology by a few of the earliest suras, number 2, “The Cow,” and number 4, “Women.” What beliefs do these suras convey? How are they similar to, and different from, the beliefs of Judaism and Christianity? Which messages of the Quran would be effective in aiding the expansion of the religion?*

**HOLY QURAN**

SURA 1: THE OPENING

[In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate](https://genius.com/Holy-quran-english-interpretation-sura-1-the-opening-annotated#note-8267160)  
  
1 [Praise belongs to God, the Lord of all Being,  
The All-merciful, the All-compassionate,  
The Master of the Day of Doom.](https://genius.com/Holy-quran-english-interpretation-sura-1-the-opening-annotated#note-2665963)  
  
5 Thee only we serve; to Thee alone we pray for succour.  
Guide us in the straight path, the path of those  
Whom Thou hast blessed, [not of those against  
Whom Thou art wrathful, nor of those who are astray.](https://genius.com/Holy-quran-english-interpretation-sura-1-the-opening-annotated#note-8267229)  
May Allah Reward You Muhammed.

SURA 99: THE QUAKING

[99:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

[99:1] When the earth is severely quaked.

[99:2] And the earth ejects its loads.

[99:3] The human will wonder: "What is happening?"

[99:4] On that day, it will tell its news.

[99:5] That your Lord has commanded it.

[99:6] On that day, the people will issue from every direction, to be shown their works.

[99:7] Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it.

[99:8] And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.

**SURA 109: THOSE WHO REJECT THE FAITH**

In the name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful.

1. Say, “O disbelievers.

2. I do not worship what you worship.

3. Nor do you worship what I worship.

4. Nor do I serve what you serve.

5. Nor do you serve what I serve.

6. You have your way, and I have my way.”

**SURA 112: SINCERITY/UNITY**

In the name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful.

1. Say, “He is God, the One.

2. God, the Absolute.

3. He begets not, nor was He begotten.

4. And there is none comparable to Him.”

THINKING HISTORICALLY

The early *suras* (those with higher numbers) almost certainly reflect the concerns of early Islam. What are these concerns. The later *suras* (such as number 2 and 4) were probably written after Muhammed, threatened by the ruling tribes, had fled Mecca and taken control of the government of Medina. They may even have been written after Muhammed’s death when his successors struggled with problems of governance. Judging from these later chapters, what kinds of issues most concerned leaders of the Muslim community? How did the message or emphasis change from the early to the later *suras*. What would account for such a change?