have rejected them, and instead have taken up the arts of the barbarians. Is this not a great error?

Mou Tzu said: ... What Confucius said was meant to rectify the way of the world, and what Mencius said was meant to deplore one-sidedness. Of old, when Confucius was thinking of taking residence among the nine barbarian nations, he said, “If a gentleman-scholar dwells in their midst, what baseness can there be among them?” ... The Commentary says, “The north polar star is in the center of heaven and to the north of man.” From this one can see that the land of China is not necessarily situated under the center of heaven. According to the Buddhist scriptures, above, below, and all around, all beings containing blood belong to the Buddha-clan. Therefore I revere and study these scriptures. Why should I reject the Way of Yao, Shun, Confucius, and the Duke of Chou? Gold and jade do not harm each other, crystal and amber do not cheapen each other. You say that another is in error when it is you yourself who err.

Why Must a Monk Renounce Worldly Pleasures?

The questioner said: Of those who live in the world, there is none who does not love wealth and position and hate poverty and baseness, none who does not enjoy pleasure and idleness and shrink from labor and fatigue. ... But now the monks wear red cloth, they eat one meal a day, they bottle up the six emotions, and thus they live out their lives. What value is there in such an existence?

Mou Tzu said: Wealth and rank are what man desires, but if he cannot obtain them in a moral way, he should not enjoy them. Poverty and meanness are what man hates, but if he can only avoid them by departing from the Way, he should not avoid them. Lao Tzu has said, “The five colors make men’s eyes blind, the five sounds make men’s ears deaf, the five flavors dull the palate, chasing about and hunting make men’s minds mad, possessions difficult to acquire bring men’s conduct to an impasse. The sage acts for his belly, not for his eyes.” Can these words possibly be vain? Liu-hsia Hui would not exchange his way of life for the rank of the three highest princes of the realm. Tuankan Mu would not exchange his wealth for the wealth of Prince Wen of Wei. ... All of them followed their ideas, and cared for nothing more. Is there no value in such an existence?

Does Buddhism Have No Recipe for Immortality?

The questioner said: The Taoists say that Yao, Shun, the Duke of Chou, and Confucius and his seventy-two disciples did not die, but became immortals. The Buddhists say that men must all die, and that none can escape. What does this mean?

Mou Tzu said: Talk of immortality is superstitious and unfounded; it be eternal. How much the less can man!” Confucius says, “The wise man leaves the world, but humanity and filial piety last forever.” I have observed the six arts and examined the commentaries and records. According to them, Yao died, Shun had his [death place at] Mount Ts’an-t’ang-wu, Yü has his tomb on K’ai-pei, Po I and Shu Ch’i have their grave in Shou-yang. King Wen died before he could chastise Chou, King Wu died without waiting for King Ch’eng to grow up. We read of the Duke of Chou that he was reburied, and of Confucius that [shortly before his death] he dreamed of two pillars. [As for the disciples of Confucius], Po-yü died before his father, of Tzu Lu it is said that his flesh was chopped up and pickled.

6

Selections from the Koran

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 many Jews and Christians along ancient trade routes (see Map 7.2). The new faith centered on the Koran (or Qu’ran), which is said by Islamic believers, or Muslims, to be the word of God as spoken by the Angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad about 610. Muhammad then recited these words so that others could memorize them or write them down. After Muhammad’s death (632), these writings and memories were gathered together to form the Koran (literally “Recitation”).

The chapters (or surahs) of the Koran, 114 in all, are organized primarily by length, with the longest, which tended to be the most recent, first. 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, surah 1, “The Opening,” followed in rough chronology by a few of the earliest surahs: numbers 99, 109, and 112. We conclude with excerpts from the later surahs, number 2, “The Cow,” and number 4, “Women.” What beliefs do these surahs

1 The title “The Cow” refers to verses 67-73 in surah 2 of the Koran (not included here), which tell of a dispute between Moses and the Israelites. After Moses tells the Israelites that God wants them to sacrifice a cow, they hesitate by asking a number of questions as to what kind of cow. The Muslim meaning is that one should submit to God, nor debate his commands. [Ed.]
convey? How are they similar to, and different from, the beliefs of Judaism and Christianity? Which messages of the Koran would be effective in aiding the expansion of the religion?

THINKING HISTORICALLY
The early surahs (those with higher numbers) almost certainly reflect the concerns of early Islam. What are these concerns? The later surahs (such as 2 and 4) were probably written after Muhammad, threatened by the ruling tribes, had fled Mecca and taken control of the government of Medina. They may even have been written after Muhammad’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 surahs? What would account for such a change?

Surah 1
The Opening
In the name of God
the Compassionate the Caring
Praise be to God
lord sustainer of the worlds
the Compassionate the Caring
master of the day of reckoning
To you we turn to worship
and to you we turn in time of need
Guide us along the road straight
the road of those to whom you are giving
not those with anger upon them
not those who have lost the way

Surah 99
The Quaking
In the Name of God the Compassionate the Caring
When the earth is shaken, quaking
When the earth bears forth her burdens
And someone says “What is with her?”
At that time she will tell her news
Surah 109
Those Who Reject the Faith

In the Name of God the Compassionate the Caring

Say: You who reject the faith
I do not worship what you worship
and you do not worship what I worship
I am not a worshipper of what you worship
You are not a worshipper of what I worship
A reckoning for you and a reckoning for me

Surah 112
Sincerity / Unity

In the Name of God the Compassionate the Caring

Version 1
Say he is God, one
God forever
Not begetting, unbegotten,
and having as an equal none

Version 2
Say he is God, one
God the refuge
Not begetting, unbegotten,
and having as an equal none

Version 3
Say he is God, one
God the rock
Not begetting, unbegotten,
and having as an equal none

Section 22

177. It is not the sole virtue that you turn your faces to the east or the west but true virtue is theirs, who believe in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and in the Prophets, and who give away their wealth (and substance) out of love for Him, to the near of kin, the orphans, the needy, the wayfarer and to those who ask (in charity) and in ransoming the slaves; and who observe the Prayer, who go on presenting the Zakāt (the purifying alms) and those who always fulfill their pledges and agreements when they have made one, and those who are patiently persevering in adversity and distress and (steadfast) in times of war. It is these who have proved truthful (in their promises and in their faith) and it is these who are strictly guarded against evil.

178. O you who believe! equitable retaliation has been ordained for you in (the matter of) the slain. (Everyone shall pay for his own crime), the freeman (murderer) for the freeman (murdered), and the slave (murderer) for the slave (murdered), and the female (murderer) for the female (murdered), but who has been granted any remission by his (aggrieved) brother (or family) then pursuing (of the matter) shall be done with equity and fairness, and the payment (of the blood money) to him (the heir) should be made in a handsome manner. This is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy. But he who exceeds the limits after this (commandment), for him is a grievous punishment.

179. O people of pure and clear wisdom! your very life lies in (the law of) equitable retaliation, (you have been so commanded) so that you may enjoy security.

180. It has been prescribed for you at the time of death to any one of you, that if the (dying) person is leaving considerable wealth behind, to make a will to his parents and the near of kin to act with equity and fairness. This is an obligation incumbent on those who guard against evil.

181. He who alters it (the will) after he has heard it, (should know that) it is those that alter it who shall bear the burden of sin. Allah in deed is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

182. If anyone apprehends that the testator is partial or follows a sinful course there will be no blame on him provided he sets things right (and so brings about reconciliation) between them (the parties concerned under the will). Surely, Allah is Great Protector, Ever Merciful.

Section 23

183. O you who believe! you are bound to observe fasting as those before you (followers of the Prophets) were bound, so that you may guard against evil.
184. (You are required to fast) for a prescribed number of days. But if anyone of you is sick or is on a journey he shall fast (to make up) the prescribed number in other days. And for those who are able to fast is an expiation (as thanksgiving) the feeding of a poor person (daily for the days of fasting). And he who volunteers (extra) good, (will find that) it is even better for him. And that you observe fasting is better for you, if you only know.

185. The (lunar) month of Ramadzân is that in which the Qur'ân (started to be) revealed as a guidance for the whole of mankind with its clear evidences (providing comprehensive guidance) and the Discrimination (between right and wrong). Therefore he who shall witness the month, should fast (for full month) during it, but he who is sick or is on a journey shall fast (to make up) the prescribed number in other days. Allâh wishes facility for you and does not wish hardship for you. (This facility is given to you) that you may complete the number (of required fasts) and you may exalt the greatness of Allâh for His having guided you, and that you may render thanks (to Him) . . .

187. (Though during Fasting you must abstain from all the urges of nature including the sexual urge) it is made lawful for you on the nights of the fasts to approach and lie with your wives (for sexual relationship). They are (a sort of) garment for you and you are (a sort of) garment for them. Allâh knows that you have been doing injustice to yourselves (by restricting conjugal relations with your wives even at night), so He turned to you with mercy and provided you relief; now enjoy their company (at night during Ramadzân) and seek what Allâh has ordained for you. Eat and drink till the white streak of the dawn becomes distinct to you from the black streak (of the darkness), then complete the fast till nightfall. And you shall not lie with them (your wives) while you perform 'itikâf (while you are secluding in the mosque for prayer and devotion to God). These are the limits (imposed) by Allâh so do not approach these (limits). Thus does Allâh explain His commandments for people that they may become secure against evil. . . .

Section 24

190. And fight in the cause of Allâh those who fight and persecute you, but commit no aggression. Surely, Allâh does not love the aggressors.

191. And slay them (the aggressors against whom fighting is made incumbent) when and where you get the better of them, in disciplinary way, and turn them out whence they have turned you out. (Killing is bad but) lawlessness is even worse than carnage. But do not fight them in the precincts of Masjid al-H arâm (the Holy Mosque at Makkah) unless they fight you therein. Should they attack you (there) then slay them. This indeed is the recompense of such disbelievers.

192. But if they desist (from aggression) then, behold, Allâh is indeed Great Protector, Ever Merciful.

193. And fight them until persecution is no more and religion is (freely professed) for Allâh. But if they desist (from hostilities) then (remember) there is no punishment except against the unjust (who still persist in persecution) . . .

195. And spend in the cause of Allâh and do not cast yourselves into ruin with your own hands, and do good to others, and verily Allâh loves the doers of good to others.

196. Accomplish the Hajj° (the Greater Pilgrimage to Makkah) and the 'Umrah (the minor pilgrimage) for the sake of Allâh. But if you are kept back, then (offer) whatever sacrifice is easily available, and do not shave your heads (as is prescribed for the Pilgrims) till the offering reaches its destination (in time, or place). And whosoever of you is sick and has an ailment of his head (necessitating shaving before time) then he should make an expiation either by fasting or alms-giving or by making a sacrifice. When you are in peaceful conditions then he, who would avail himself of the 'Umrah (a visit to the Ka'bah or a minor Hajj) together with the Hajj (the Greater Pilgrimage and thus performs Tammattu') should make whatever offering is easily available; and whosoever finds none (for an offering) should fast for three days during (the days of) the pilgrimage and (for) seven (days) when he returns (home)—these are ten complete (days of fasting in all). This is for him whose family does not reside near the Masjid al-H arâm (the Holy Mosque at Makkah). Take Allâh as a shield, and know that Allâh is Severe in retribution (if you neglect your duties).

Section 25

197. The months of performing the Hajj are well Known; so whoever undertakes to perform the Hajj in them (should remember that) there is (to be) no obscenity, nor abusing, nor any wrangling during the (time of) Hajj. And whatever good you do Allâh knows it. And take provisions for yourselves. Surely, the good of taking provision is guarding (yourselves) against the evil (of committing sin and begging). Take Me alone as (your) shield, O people of pure and clear wisdom!

198. There is no blame on you that you seek munificence from your Lord (by trading during the time of Hajj). When you pour forth (in large numbers) from 'Arafât then glorify Allâh (with still more praises) near Mash'aral-Harâm (Holy Mosque in Mu'dalifah), and remember Him (with gratitude) as He has guided you, though formerly you were certainly amongst the astray. . . .

°HAH juh
Surah 4
Women

Section 1

1. O you people! take as a shield your Lord Who created you from a single being. The same stock from which He created the man He created his spouse, and through them both He caused to spread a large number of men and women. O people! regard Allāh with reverence in Whose name you appeal to one another, and (be regardful to) the ties of relationship (particularly from the female side). Verily, Allāh ever keeps watch over you.

2. And give the orphans their property and substitute not (your) worthless things for (their) good ones, nor consume their property mingling it along with your own property, for this indeed is a great sin.

3. And if (you wish to marry them) and you fear that you will not be able to do justice to the orphan girls then (marry them not, rather) marry women (other than these) as may be agreeable to you, (you may marry) two or three or four (provided you do justice to them), but if you fear that you will not be able to deal (with all of them) equitably then (confine yourselves only to) one, or (you may marry) that whom your right hands possess (your female captives of war). That is the best way to avoid doing injustice.

4. And give the women their dowers unasked, willingly and as agreed gift. But if they be pleased to remit you a portion thereof, of their own free will, then take it with grace and pleasure.

Section 2

11. Allāh prescribes (the following) law (of inheritance) for your children. For male is the equal of the portion of two females; but if they be all females (two or) more than two, for them is two thirds of what he (the deceased) has left; and if there be only one, for her is the half and for his parents, for each one of the two is a sixth of what he has left, if he (the deceased) has a child; but if he has no child and his parents only be his heirs, then for the mother is one third (and the rest two thirds is for the father); but if there be (in addition to his parents) his brothers (and sisters) then there is one sixth for the mother after (the payment of) any bequest he may have bequeathed or (still more important) of any (of their) debt. And for them (your wives) is one fourth of what you leave behind if you have no child; but if you leave a child, then, for them is an eighth of what you leave after (the payment of) any bequest you have bequeathed or (still more important) of any debt. And if there be a man or a woman whose heritage is to be divided and he (or she—the deceased) has no child and he (or she) has (left behind) a brother or a sister then for each one of the twain is a sixth; but if they be more than one then they are (equal) sharers in one third after the payment of any bequest bequeathed or (still more important) of any debt (provided such bequest made by the testator and the debt) shall be without (any intent of) being harmful (to the interests of the heirs). This is an injunction from Allāh, and Allāh is All-Knowing, Most Forbearing.

13. These are the limits (of the law imposed) by Allāh, and who obeys Allāh and His Messenger He will admit them into Gardens served with running streams; therein they shall abide for ever; and that is a great achievement.

14. But whoso disobeys Allāh and His Messenger and transgresses the limits imposed by Him He will make him enter Fire where he shall abide long, and for him is a humiliating punishment.

15. As to those of your women who commit sexual perversity, call in four of you to witness against them, and if they bear witness then confine them to their houses, until death overtakes them or Allāh makes for them a way out.

16. And if two of your males commit the same (act of indecency), then punish them both, so if they repent and amend (keeping their conduct good) then turn aside from them, verily Allāh is Oft-Returning (with compassion), Ever Merciful.

ALEXANDER STILLE

Scholars Are Quietly Offering New Theories of the Koran

This article from the New York Times recounts a recent development in the scholarship of early Islam, a faith that begins with the Koran (or Qu'ran). Some scholars argue that the Koran is both older and younger than previously thought. What are the reasons for these new interpretations? A review article like this provides little of the

30. No sheriff or other of Our bailiffs, or any other man, shall take the horses or carts of any free man for carriage without the owner's consent.

31. Neither We nor Our bailiffs will take another man's wood for Our castles or for any other purpose without the owner's consent.

35. There shall be one measure of wine throughout Our kingdom, and one of ale, and one measure of corn, to wit, the London quarter, and one breadth of dyed cloth, russets, and haberjets to wit, two cells within the selvages. As with measure so shall it also be with weights.

38. In the future no bailiff shall upon his own unsupported accusation put any man to trial without producing credible witnesses to the truth of the accusation.

39. No free man shall be taken, imprisoned, disseised, outlawed, banished, or in any way destroyed, nor will We proceed against or prosecute him, except by the lawful judgment of his peers and by the law of the land.

40. To no one will We sell, to none will We deny or delay, right or justice.

41. All merchants shall have safe conduct to go and come out of and into England, and to stay in and travel through England by land and water for purposes of buying and selling, free of illegal tolls, in accordance with ancient and just customs, except, in time of war, such merchants as are of a country at war with Us. If any such be found in Our dominion at the outbreak of war, they shall be attached, without injury to their persons or goods, until it be known to Us or Our Chief Justiciary how Our merchants are being treated in the country at war with Us, and if Our merchants be safe there, then theirs shall be safe with Us.

42. In the future it shall be lawful (except for a short period in time of war, for the common benefit of the realm) for anyone to leave and return to Our kingdom safely and securely by land and water, saving his fealty to Us. Excepted are those who have been imprisoned or outlawed according to the law of the land, people of the country at war with Us, and merchants, who shall be dealt with as aforesaid.

52. If anyone has been disseised or deprived by Us, without the legal judgment of his peers, of lands, castles, liberties, or rights, We will immediately restore the same, and if any dispute shall arise thereupon, the matter shall be decided by judgment of the twenty-five barons mentioned below in the clause for securing the peace. With regard to all those things, however, of which any man was disseised or deprived, without legal judgment of his peers, by King Henry Our Father or Our Brother King Richard, and which remain in Our warranty, We shall have respite during the term commonly allowed to the Crusaders, except as to those matters on which a plea had arisen, or an inquisition had been taken by Our command, prior to Our taking the Cross. Immediately after Our return from Our pilgrimage, or if by chance We should remain behind from it, We will at once do full justice.

11 Types of cloth. [Ed.]
12 Cells . . . selvages: a measurement standard for woven cloth. [Ed.]
13 Dispossessed. [Ed.]

3

Islam: Sayings Ascribed to the Prophet

Islamic civilization originated in the seventh century to the south and west of European Christian civilization in Arabia, from where it expanded into North Africa and Spain, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and beyond. For Muslims the Prophet Muhammad (c. 570–632) was the last of a long line of spiritual visionaries who knew God, but like Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, he was only human. The Koran, on the other hand, was the direct word of God; no other writing was comparable. Nevertheless, when Muslims engaged in politics, considered laws, or studied social, economic, cultural, or other issues, they could also refer to a body of writing called hadiths: sayings, stories, and anecdotes related to the Prophet that were gathered by Muhammad's contemporaries. The hadiths described the decisions, acts, and the statements of the Prophet of Islam, who was the religion's first governor. What likely effect would the sayings included here have on the thinking of a devout Muslim in the aftermath of the Prophet's death? What likely Muslim attitude toward government and rebellion would come out of readings like these?

THINKING HISTORICALLY

What are the topics of these particular hadiths? Would you classify them as social, economic, political, or cultural? If this selection were all you had to construct a Muslim idea of government, what would it be? How are these political ideas different from those in medieval Europe?

I charge the Caliph\(^1\) after me to fear God, and I commend the community of the Muslims to him, to respect the great among them and have pity on the small, to honor the learned among them, not to strike them and humiliate them, not to oppress them and drive them to unbelief, not to close his doors to them and allow the strong to devour the weak.

The Imams\(^2\) are of Quraysh;\(^3\) the godly among them rulers of the godly, and the wicked among them rulers of the wicked. If Quraysh gives a crop-nosed Ethiopian slave authority over you, hear him and obey him as long as he does not force any of you to choose between his Islam and his neck. And if he does force anyone to choose between his Islam and his neck, let him offer his neck.

Hear and obey, even if a shaggy-headed black slave is appointed over you.

Whosoever shall try to divide my community, strike off his head.

If allegiance is sworn to two Caliphs, kill the other.

He who sees in his ruler something he disapproves should be patient, for if anyone separates himself from the community, even by a span, and dies, he dies the death of a pagan.

Obey your rulers, whatever happens. If their commands accord with the revelation I brought you, they will be rewarded for it, and you will be rewarded for obeying them; if their commands are not in accord with what I brought you, they are responsible and you are absolved. When you meet God, you will say, “Lord God! No evil.” And He will say, “No evil!” And you will say, “Lord God! Thou didst send us Prophets, and we obeyed them by Thy leave; and Thou didst appoint over us Caliphs, and we obeyed them by Thy leave; and Thou didst place over us rulers, and we obeyed them for Thy sake.” And He will say, “You speak truth. They are responsible, and you are absolved.”

If you have rulers over you who ordain prayer and the alms tax and the Holy War for God, then God forbids you to revile them and allows you to pray behind them.

If anyone comes out against my community when they are united and seeks to divide them, kill him, whoever he may be.

He who dies without an Imam dies the death of a pagan, and he who throws off his obedience will have no defense on the Day of Judgment.

Do not revile the Sultan,\(^4\) for he is God’s shadow on God’s earth. Obedience is the duty of the Muslim man, whether he like it or not, as long as he is not ordered to commit a sin. If he is ordered to commit a sin, he does not have to obey.

The nearer a man is to government, the further he is from God; the more followers he has, the more devils; the greater his wealth, the more exacting his reckoning.

He who commands a Sultan in what God condemns has left the religion of God.

4

Muhammad’s Night Journey

The Night Journey is a hadith that tells of the Prophet Muhammad, summoned by the angel Gabriel, traveling by air from Mecca to Paradise, or Heaven. There he meets many of the patriarchs and prophets of the Bible, including Adam, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. What does the following part of the story suggest about early Muslim attitudes toward Jews and Judaism?

THINKING HISTORICALLY

How would you classify this story? Is it a piece of social, economic, political, or cultural history? How might it fit into more than one of these categories?

Then the Prophet ascended to the seventh heaven, and that is where our Messenger saw Prophet Ibrahim.\(^1\) Prophet Ibrahim is the best of the prophets after our prophet, Muhammad. The Prophet saw Prophet Ibrahim with his back against al-Bayt al-Ma’mur.\(^2\) To the inhabitants of the skies, al-Bayt al-Ma’mur is like the Ka’bah\(^3\) is to us, the inhabitants of the earth. Every day 70,000 angels go there; then exit from it, and never return. The next day another 70,000 angels go, come

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\(^1\) KAY lihf Successor to the prophet; supreme authority. [Ed.]
\(^2\) A leader, especially in prayer; clergyman. [Ed.]
\(^3\) An aristocratic trading clan of Mecca; hostile to Muhammad, but after his death regained prominence. That religious leaders come from Quraysh was agreed after victory of the Meccan faction in 661. [Ed.]
\(^4\) Ruler of a Muslim country; king. [Ed.]

out, and never return. This will continue until the Day of Judgment. In this, there is an indication as to the greatness of the numbers of the angels—their numbers are far more than the numbers of the humans and the jinns\(^4\) together.

In the seventh heaven, Prophet Muhammad saw Sidrat al-Muntaha—a very big tree of sidr.\(^6\) Each of the fruits of this tree is as large as a big jar. The leaves of this tree are similar to the ears of the elephants. Sidrat al-Muntaha is an extremely beautiful tree. It is visited by butterflies made of gold. When these butterflies gather on this tree, its beauty is beyond description.

Then the Prophet ascended to what is beyond the seven skies; he entered Paradise. He saw examples of the inhabitants of Paradise and how their situation would be. He saw most of the inhabitants of Paradise are the poor people. . . .

Then the Prophet ascended beyond Paradise. He reached a place where he heard the creaking of the pens used by the angels who are copying from the Preserved Tablet.\(^7\) It is at that location Prophet Muhammad heard the Kalam of Allah,\(^8\) which is an attribute of the Self of Allah. He heard the Kalam of Allah which does not resemble our speech—so it is not something that occurs bit after bit. It is not letter after letter or a word that comes after another word. Rather, it is an attribute of Allah which is eternal and everlasting. It does not resemble our attributes. The Kalam of Allah has neither silence nor interruptions. It is an attribute of Allah, and it does not resemble the attributes of the creation.

The Prophet understood several things from hearing this Kalam of Allah. He understood the obligation of the five Obligatory Prayers. At first, Allah obligated fifty prayers. When Prophet Muhammad encountered Musalma,\(^9\) Musalma told him to make supplication (\textit{du\'a}) to his Lord to ease the obligation of fifty (50) prayers, because his nation could not handle that. Musalma said, "I have experience with the people of Israel, and I know your nation cannot bear that." So the Prophet asked his Lord to lessen these prayers for his people. Five prayers were eliminated. Once again, Musalma told the Prophet to ask Allah to lessen the number of prayers. Allah did. Nine times the Prophet made supplication to Allah to lessen these prayers—until these prayers were lessened to five Obligatory Prayers. So Prophet Musalma was a great benefit to us. Had we been obligated to pray fifty prayers a day, this would have been a difficult matter for us.

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\(^{1}\) Genies, spirits. [Ed.]

\(^{2}\) The lotus tree of the furthest boundary, beyond which no mortal can pass. [Ed.]

\(^{3}\) The sidr tree is mentioned in the Bible; native to Arabia, its flowers, fruit, leaves, and "honey" are used for medicinal purposes. [Ed.]

\(^{4}\) The Koran. [Ed.]

\(^{5}\) Voice of God; transcendent tongue of God. [Ed.]

\(^{6}\) Moses. [Ed.]

\(^{7}\) Genies, spirits. [Ed.]

\(^{8}\) The Koran. [Ed.]

\(^{9}\) Musalma

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**AL-TANUKHI**

**A Government Job**

Al-Tanukhi* (d. 994) was a judge in Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate. In this selection, he relates the story of his great-uncle Abu Qasim\(^5\) response when he asked him why he gave up a government job. What does Abu Qasim's story tell you about the job of government officials in Muslim Baghdad in the tenth century? How was government in Muslim Baghdad different from government in Europe in that period? How were ideas of government different in these two civilizations?

**THINKING HISTORICALLY**

This story concerns a political post, but in what ways is the story an economic one as well? Would you say the lesson of the story is political, economic, or religious?

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How did you come to repent of being in Government service, Abu Qasim? I once asked, What was the cause?

This was the cause, said my great-uncle. Abu Ali Jubbai (the great Rationalist theologian) used to stay with me when he came to Ahwaz. I was Clerk to the Ahwaz municipality as well as deputy Finance Minister, so that all business used to pass through my hands. I really ran the whole place. Once a year, when the Land Tax collections began, Abu Ali Jubbai used to come to Ahwaz to arrange to have the taxes due from certain persons, who over the years had come to regard themselves as his dependents, added to the Land Tax on his own private estate at Jubba. Everybody treated him with the highest honor and respect whenever he came to town. As a rule he would only stay with me; and I used to settle his business with the Governor. The Governor, of course, was not always a friend of mine, nor was he always a man who realized Abu Ali's position, or else the amount at which his assessment was fixed would have

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*ahl tah NOO kee

* ah BOO kah SEEM

**Source:** Judge Muhassin Tanukhi, "Resurrections of Loquacity or Table-talk (10th century)," in Eric Schroeder, Muhammad's People: A Tale by Anthology (Portland, ME: Bond Wheelwright Company, 1955), 566-68.
been even lower than it was. But he would always remit at least half or a third of the tax due from him.

Returning to Jubba, Abu Ali never kept for himself any of the money which in an ordinary case would have been taken in taxes from an estate like his. He used to deduct from the gross amount the sum he was to pay to Government, and then distribute the remainder among the members of his religious following, stipulating in return that each of them should entertain for a whole year one of the poor students who attended his lectures; the actual expense these students put them to was small, not a fifth of the amount due which Abu Ali's high standing had sufficed to get remitted. Then he would go to his own house, and there take out of the revenues of his estate a full tithe, which he used to give in alms among the poor people of his village, Pool, where he maintained his disciples. And he did all this every year.

On one occasion, he was staying with me at the usual season, I had done what he wanted in the matter of his Land Tax, and we were sitting talking in the evening.

Abu Ali, I said to him, are you afraid of the consequences for me in the Hereafter of the profession I am following?

How could I but be anxious, Abu Qasim? he replied. For be sure of this: if you should die employed as you now are, you will never breathe the fragrance of the Garden.

Why not? I asked. How am I guilty? I am only an accountant— I act merely as a copyist, an employee of the Treasury. It may be that somebody will come to me with a grievance, some man whose Land Tax has been unduly raised; and if I reduce it for him and set matters straight, he is only too glad to give me a present. At times perhaps I may appropriate something which really belongs to the Sovereign; but it only represents a share in the booty of the Muslims, to which I have a right.

Abu Qasim, he rejoined, GOD IS NOT DECEIVED. Tell me this: is it not you who appoints the land surveyors and sends them out to make their surveys, which are supposed to be accurate? And don't they go out into the country, and raise the acreage figures by ten or twenty per cent, with pen on paper, and then hand in these falsifications of theirs, and do you not make up your assessment registers on the basis of these same falsifications? And then hand over these registers to the Collector's officer, and tell him that unless he produces so much money at the Collector's Office within so many days his hands will be nailed to his feet?

Yes, I admitted.

And then the officer sets out with his escort of soldiers, horse and foot, his despatch riders and speed-up men, and flogs and cuffs and...