

REVELATION



Al-Fatiha
(The Opening)

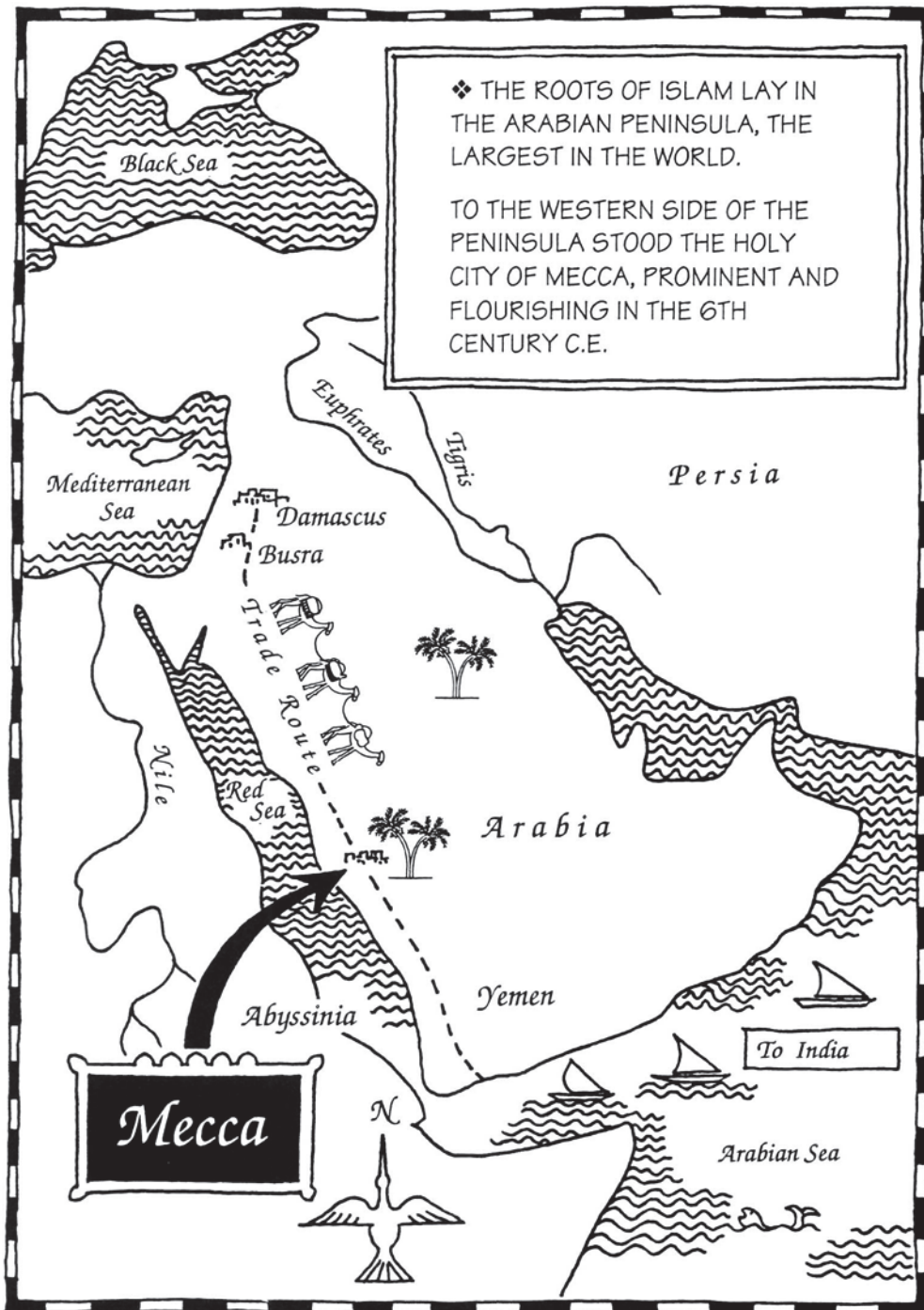
"In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

*Praise belongs to God, the Lord of all Being,
the All-merciful, the All-compassionate,
the Master of the Day of Doom.*

*Thee only we serve; to Thee alone we pray for succor.
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."*

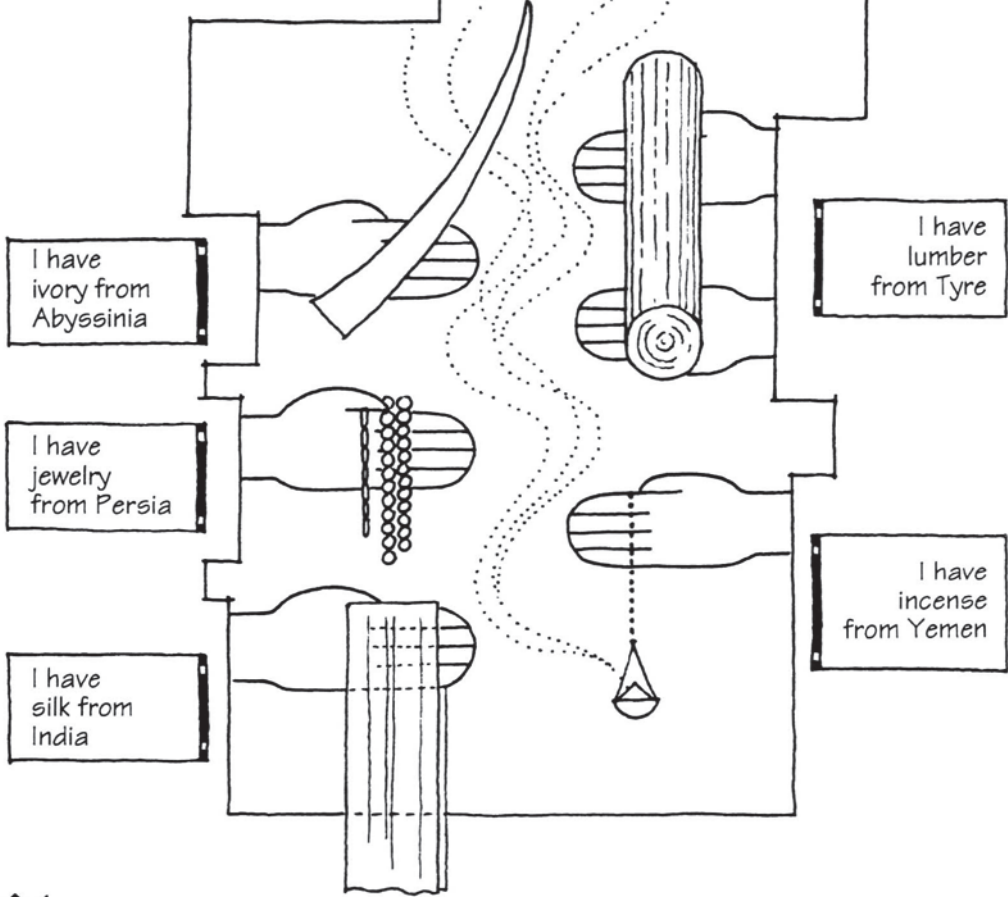
Koran 1: 1-7

The above verses constitute the first chapter of the Koran and are the most widely invoked words in the world of Islam.



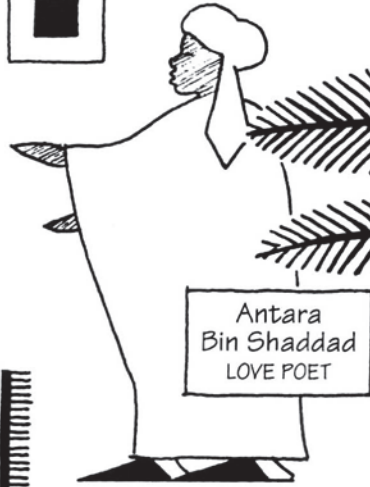
1 Mecca was a trading center.

MERCHANTS CROSSING FROM INDIA TO THE MEDITERRANEAN, AND FROM AFRICA TO PERSIA EXCHANGED THEIR GOODS IN THE MARKETS OF MECCA.



It was also a cultural center.

THE ARAB PEOPLE HAD A PASSION FOR POETRY.



Antara Bin Shaddad
LOVE POET



Tarafa
SATIRIST



Nabigha Al-Dhubyani
ROYAL POET

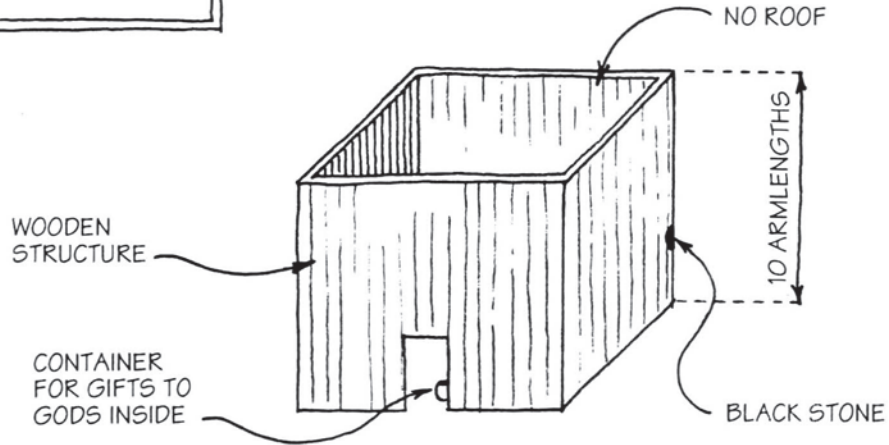
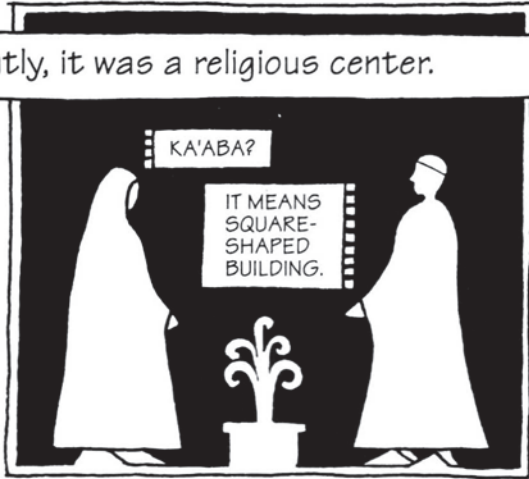
Imru'u 'l Qays
LEADING POET

Once a year, nomad poets gathered in the market town of 'Ukaz, east of the city, to recite their verse.

3 Most importantly, it was a religious center.

The Ka'aba was a house of Gods.

Once a year, Arab tribes went there on pilgrimage.



In Mecca stood the Ka'aba, a wooden structure encasing a circular black stone. Inside and around it were 360 deities brought by pilgrims from across the peninsula.

Those deities originated in Graeco-Roman mythology and most of them were female.

Manat was one of the oldest goddesses and was believed to control human fortune.

Al-Lat was the sun deity and was widely popular. Her name meant "The Goddess".

The Goddess Al-Lat



The Lion of Al-Lat

Al-Uzza, the "Mighty One", was favored by the Meccans, along with the Goddess *Hubal*, the tutelary goddess of the Ka'aba. The worship of these deities involved animal sacrifice.

There were, however, followers of monotheism in Mecca, as in the rest of Arabia.



There were Jews who were well-established in Yathrib, a rival city to Mecca. Their chief tribes lived both within the city and in Khaybar, north of it. The Jews were part of the custom, language and nomenclature of Arabia.

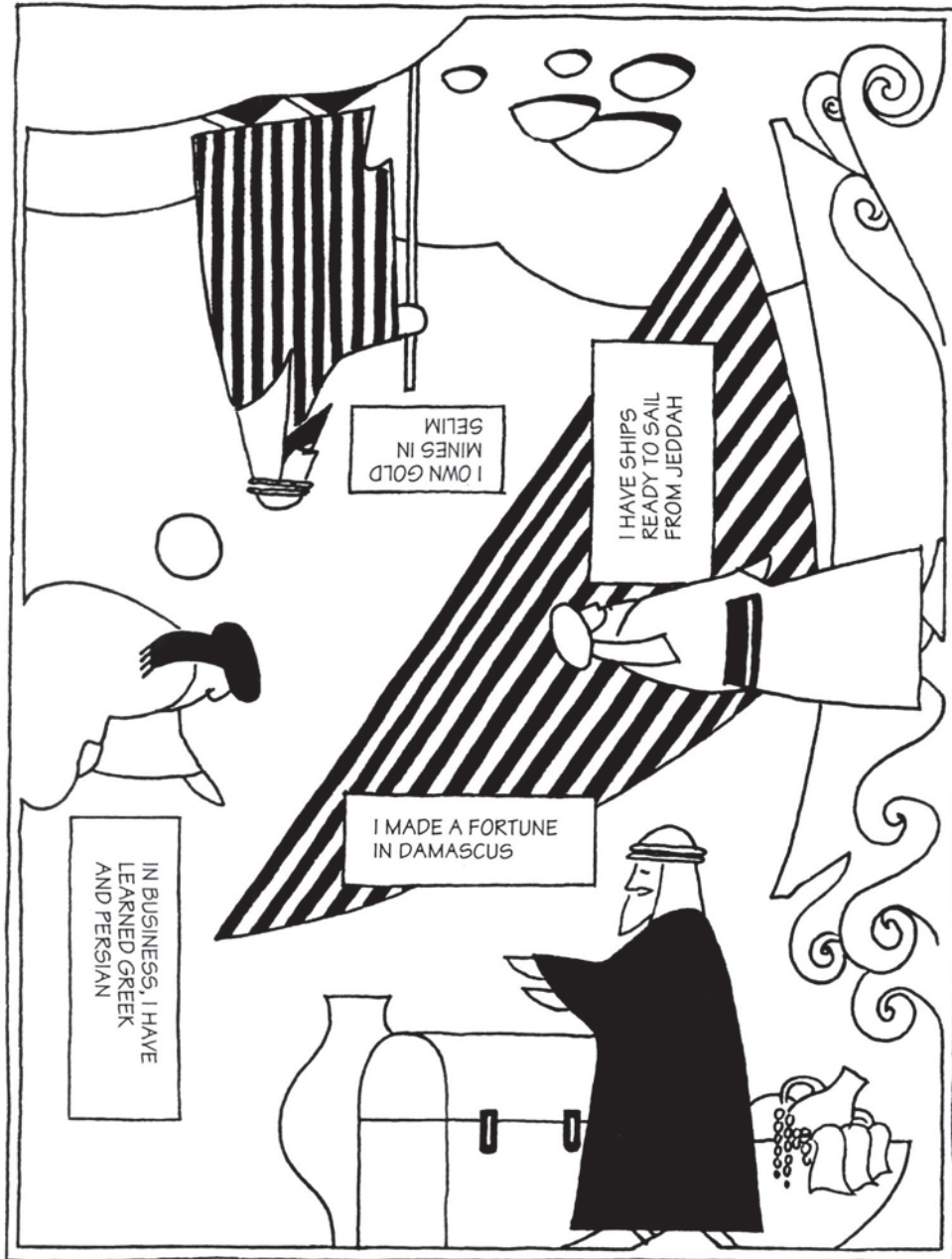


So were the Christians who inhabited Damascus and Hira in the north of the peninsula, Najran in the south and to a lesser extent, the Hijaz area. Christians were either Monophysites (Christ has one divine nature) or Nestorians (Christ is man born God). Both groups were persecuted by the Byzantine church and in the next century supported Islam because it offered them toleration.



There were also *al-Hanafiyyeen*, followers of the monotheism of the patriarch Abraham (Ibrahim). Ibrahim al-Khaleel, "the friend of God", professed faith in one universal God and in celebration, built, with his son Ishmael, the Ka'aba, the Holy Sanctuary. But after his death, polytheists turned it into a place of idols.

Kuraish was one of the Meccan tribes profiting from the pilgrims to the Ka'aba. The Kuraishites were dominant in Mecca's plutocracy and were unrivalled merchants in Western Arabia.



In 570 A.D., Abraha al-Ashram, the King of Yemen, attacked Mecca because the city was competing for trade with his capital Sana'a. He used an elephant transported from Abyssinia which frightened the Meccans who had never seen such an animal in warfare.

