

Satanic Verses

You may have heard of the "satanic verses", an alleged incident in the history of Islam. In the pre-Islamic paganism of Mecca, Allat, Manat, and Al-Uzza were the daughters of Muhammad, part of the pantheon of deities of that region.

The Kaaba was a shrine in Mecca that housed idols of the many deities and the various groups of people had various special days when they would come to Mecca to pay respects to their particular deity. This was an excellent tourist industry for Mecca.

Muhammad was driven out of Mecca in 620 CE to Yathrib, which is now known as Medina. Upon his return to Mecca in 629/30 CE, the shrine became the focal point for Muslim worship and pilgrimage. Muhammed "cleansed" the shrine of all other deities, dedicating it to his monotheistic worship of Allah.

Many of the people of Mecca were accustomed to worshipping Allat, Manat, and Al-Uzza. According to the tale, Muhammad sought to appease the Meccans, and so announced the following verses as part of the Qur'an, endorsing prayer to Allah's daughters:

"Have you thought upon Allat and Al-Uzza,
And Manat the third, the other?
These are the exalted gharāniq
Whose intercession is most sought after."

The word gharāniq appears to mean "crane" or some other form of bird. The implication is that they are able to rise up to Allah.

This pleased the people of Mecca, but displeased other followers who thought only Allah should be worshipped. What was Muhammed to do? Then, Gabriel appeared to him and rebuked him, telling him that these verses came not from God but rather from Satan.

In their place, Gabriel revealed a new passage (which still exists in the Quran to this day) condemning their worship (Qur'an 53:19-23):

"Have ye thought upon Al-Lat and Al-'Uzza
And Manat, the third, the other?
Are yours the males and His the females?
That indeed were an unfair division!

They are but names which ye have named, ye and your fathers, for which God hath revealed no warrant. They follow but a guess and that which (they) themselves desire. And now the guidance from their Lord hath come unto them."

We leave you to draw your own conclusions.