

Sura Najm

1. What does the word 'najm' mean? What does Pumba from The Lion King define it as?

Star – 'balls of gas burning billions of miles away'

2. Some scholars believe the first section of this sura refers to the event of 'al isra wal meraj'. What is the definition of the phrase in English? Briefly explain what it is. On what date of the Islamic calendar do we observe it?

'Night Journey and Ascension'. It is when Jibrael took Prophet Muhammad (saw), on the back of a Buraq, on a special journey through the seven heavens and right up to the 'Throne of Allah (swt)' – all in a single night. We celebrate this event every year on the 27th of Rajab.

The Prophet is said to have described the journey: *"During the Meraj, I met with the various Prophets; I saw the Angels; Heaven and Hell were shown to me; I was brought to the Arsh and reached to Sidratul Muntaha. I also met people in Heaven who were being showered with the blessings of Allah and also I saw people in Hell who were being punished by the harshest types of punishment..."* (Mi'raj, the Night Ascension by Mulla Fayd al-Kashani)

3. Who is 'your companion', as referred to in ayats #2-3 of this sura? What is the Holy Quran telling us about them?

'Your companion' is referring to Prophet Muhammad (saw). These ayats are telling the Meccans (and us) that the Prophet has a true religion, is following it correctly and is not subject to his own whims – he did not author revelation himself, but rather his speech is guided (The Study Quran by Seyyed Hossein Nasr)

Who does 'one of awesome power' in ayat #5 refer to? What is this ayat telling us in relation to the previous ayats?

Most scholars believe 'one of awesome power' refers to Angel Jibrael. This ayat is telling us that revelation came to Prophet Muhammad through Jibrael.

4. What is the significance of 'سِدْرَةَ الْمُنْتَهَى',? In which ayat of this sura is it mentioned?

Ayat #14 – Lote Tree beyond the seventh heaven which neither angel nor any human being can pass.

5. What is ayat #11 of this sura claiming?

In relation to Meraj, scholars say that although the Prophet did 'see' Allah (swt), he did not see the Divine Essence in and of Itself, but saw the highest Self-Disclosure (tajalli) of God with both his heart and his physical eye (The Study Quran by Seyyed Hossein Nasr)

6. Who are the three idols mentioned in this sura which the Quraysh worshipped at the time of Prophet Muhammad (saw)? Give the ayat number(s).

Ayats #19 & 20 – Lat, Uzza and Manat

In ayats #23-24, the Holy Quran criticises the followers of these idols; what two evils does it highlight and how do they apply to us?

Assumptions and desires. Assumptions are what one follows in the absence of knowledge and in this ayat Allah (swt) asserts that He has sent guidance. Similarly, when guidance does not fit into one's paradigm, the tendency of human beings is to fashion religion according to their own desires, rather than conforming themselves to revealed religion. We must be careful that we are not falling into a similar trap by always seeking knowledge/truth and allowing our faculty of reasoning to supersede that of our desires.

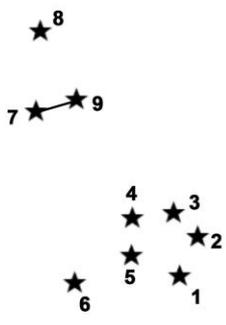
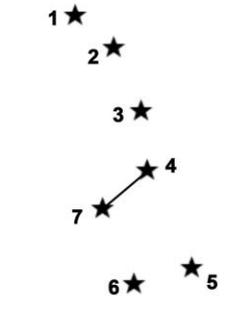
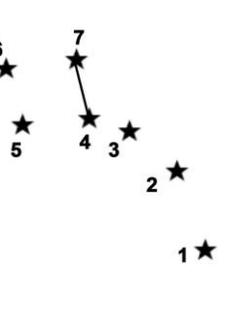
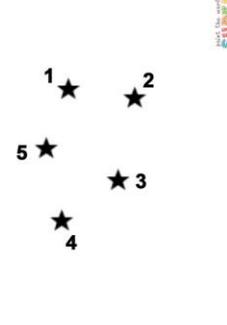
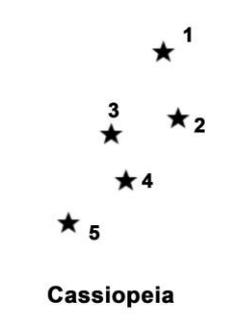
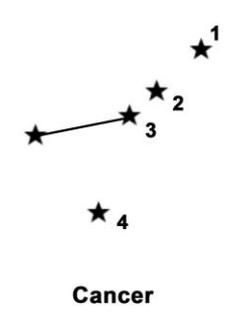
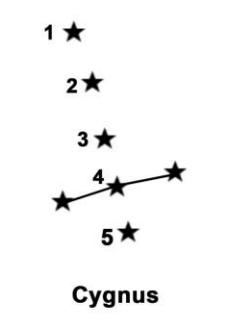
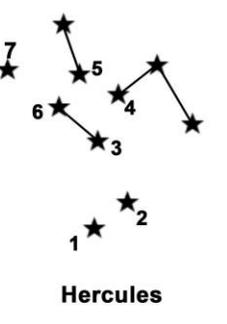
7. Who (or what) is Sirius as mentioned in ayat #49 of this sura?

It is the brightest star in the night sky (the name means 'glowing' in Greek) and belongs to the constellation Canis Major. Pre Islamic Arabs worshipped it.

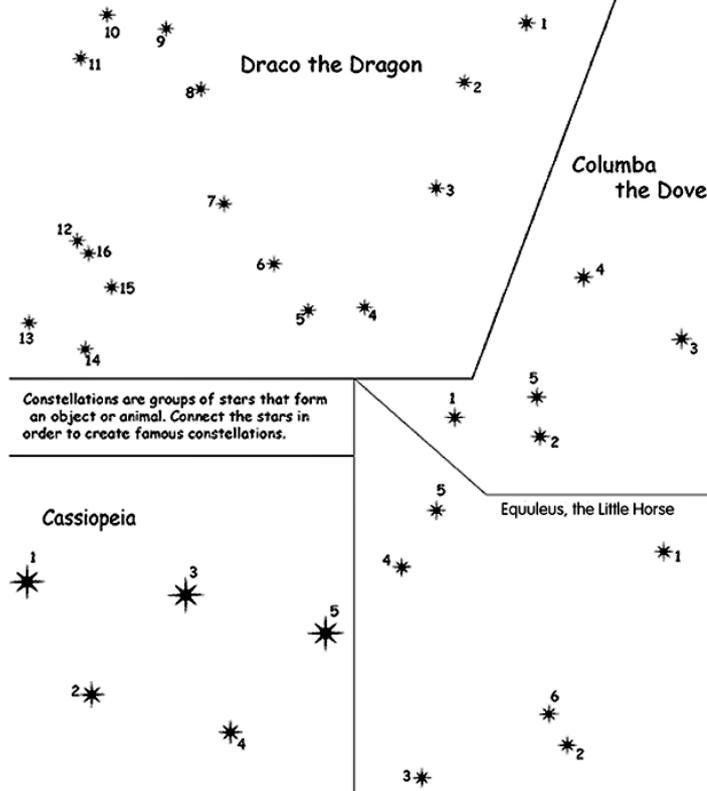
What two other names were used for the character 'Sirius' in the Harry Potter books?

Padfoot and Snuffles

8. Connect the dots to form some of the constellations found in the night sky!

 <p>Leo</p>	 <p>Big Dipper</p>	 <p>Little Dipper</p>	 <p>Cepheus</p>
 <p>Cassiopeia</p>	 <p>Cancer</p>	 <p>Cygnus</p>	 <p>Hercules</p>

Constellation Star to Star



9. What is the translation of the following ayat: **فَيَايَ آلَاءِ رَبِّكَ تَتَمَارَىٰ**؟

‘Then which of the favours of your Lord do you doubt?’

It bears resemblance to an ayat that was repeated 31 times in which other sura of the Holy Quran? (Hint: we had a quiz on it previously!)

Sura Rahman

10. Read the translation for ayat #32 of this sura. What do you understand by it?

This question is subjective; answers may vary. The Holy Quran is telling us that we should abstain from the very worst deeds (like murder). However, we are not perfect, and Allah (swt) is very much aware of that (He did create us after all!) We will commit some sins in our life but Allah (swt) is ready to forgive us. This life is about the journey – so it is of no use to claim at any point that we are ‘pure enough’; rather we should be continuously striving towards bettering ourselves. Allah (swt) knows best.

Bonus: If your mum and dad say it’s okay, go outside on a clear night to do some stargazing and see if you can find Sirius and Canis Major...as well as some of the other constellations. You can use one of the stargazing apps, such as ‘Sky Map’, ‘Star Walk 2’ or ‘The Milky Way’ to help you!