

It is significant that the Quran begins with a prayer, and also *ends in prayer*—the final three Suras being also essentially prayers, the most commonly recited in *salat* after *Al-Fatiha*. So let's examine these four Suras as to their significance in order of their number of *ayat*, which form a series from 4 to 7. For each Sura we give the number of its *ayat* showing they form a series, a brief synopsis of the contents of each Sura, and an Arabic letter that represents and corresponds with the meaning of each Sura:

1. **112 - Al-Ikhlass** (Devotion), **4 ayat**, declaration of Allah's singular **Oneness**, in the "heart" 4th house, and heart of the Quran as it describes Allah's essence

Aleph = **ا** This letter is also the numeral one, keyword of this Sura and Allah's essence. Its sound is a basic *voice*: "Ah." Perhaps the sound represents Allah's *presence*.

2. **113 - Al-Falaq** (The Cleaving/ Daybreak), **5 ayat**, 1st of the final pair of protection **du'a** (supplications), this Sura for **protection against external dangers**

Lam = **ل** *Connecting* letter, hook shape represents help and contact=supplication. It also represents the Arabic word *le'* or **ل**, spelled "lam aleph," which means "no." Protection involves prohibition of something, whose keyword is clearly "no." One keeps sacred boundaries by saying (and acting upon) "no" to the tendency to transgress.

3. **114 - Al-Nass** (People), **6 ayat**, 2nd of final pair of **protection du'a**, this one **against inner dangers**.

Lam = **ل** As above, noting this letter also functions *grammatically* to connect as a preposition "to", and its sound, like the English "L", is a connecting sound. It represents also protection of what is sacred by prohibiting transgression, saying the Arabic word for "no" which begins with *lam*. These two *lams* also symbolize the pair of names Al-Rahman and Al-Raheem, The Creative (*yang*) and the Receptive (*yin*), the twin sides of "help."

4. **1 - Al-Fatiha (Opening)**, **7 ayat**, opens each *rak'a* of *salat*; the quintessential prayer for *salat*, and "key/ opening" to the Quran. The Prophet said we pray on 7 "bones" or contact points of prostration, and this Sura forms the "blueprint" for prostration, hence also *salat*. The opening/ gate to faith and paradise is surrender = prostration to Allah. (Quran 2:58, where Allah commanded the children of Israel to enter "the gate of the city" **prostrating** and asking humbly for forgiveness, which they refused to do.)

Heh = **ه** A circle whose sound is a **breath** = Return to Allah (circle, also an **opening**), rebirth/ resurrection (breath=return to life). Because this **first** Sura is also the **last** of the series, the circle is the most appropriate letter for it; both beginning and reconnecting, it turns the end into a beginning. And as the Sura which represents prostration itself, that "circle" of the forehead contacting the ground, it is not so much the key as the *keyhole* through which our souls pass to meet Allah, glory to Him in the highest.

Quran 68:42 “The Day will come when they will be exposed, and they will be required to prostrate, but they will be unable to.” 68:43 “With their eyes subdued, humiliation will cover them. They were invited to prostrate when they were whole and able.”

These four Suras’ representative letters thus form *thikr Allah*:

الله

The name Allah in Arabic, which includes the diacritical mark over the two lam’s resembling a crown. Note that these are 4 letters, the number of chambers in the human heart. Allah is indeed the “heart” of the universe in this world and the next. And as a crowning touch, we can hear His name in our very heartbeats: *AL-lah, AL-lah, AL-lah...* Perhaps measuring a lifetime with *thikr Allah*.

These four notably brief (containing few words, giving more space to the chambers) but powerful Suras form in a sense the heart of the Quran, each a chamber, but with a powerful relationship to *thikr Allah*: each also represents a letter in Allah’s name. The first above clearly represents aleph, **the letter that also is a one**; the second and third represent the two lam’s in the middle, each asking for help/ protection from Allah as Lord, the *relationship* symbolized by the two *connecting* letters; and the fourth above, *Al-Fatiha*, representing the letter heh, the opening circle and breath of life, symbolizing how *salat*, maintaining an “open” line of contact with Allah, helps us return to Allah’s acceptance.

Notice that by connecting the *beginning* with the *end*, the Quran itself forms a *circle*, a kind of eternity within time, created by the “heart” of prayer, something we can actively choose to do while reciting these unique Suras. And that shows how *Al-Fatiha* and *salat* prayer itself indeed is a key of sorts to unlock the power of the Quran, representing our point of contact with the Almighty, All-Merciful. For in the end, everything will be gone except the face of Allah.

Quran 55:26

نَافَا هِيَلَعَتَمَلِكٌ

Everyone upon the earth will perish,

55:27

مَا رَكَرَا وَوَلَلَجَلَا وَذَكَّرَهُ جَوَّ نَقَبِيَو

And the face of **your Lord** will remain; One with Majesty and Honor.