

## Evolution of Doctrines in Medinan Surahs

The surahs attributed to Muhammad (PBUH)'s Medinan period show not only changes in literary format but also new doctrinal developments. Most notable is a novel emphasis on detailed legal regulations (discussed briefly above) and the expectation that believers are sufficiently committed to engage in militant "striving" on God's behalf (an expectation shared by some strands of late antique Christianity).

The enemies to be fought are primarily the "unbelievers" and "associators" who are now accused of exiling Muhammad and his followers from their midst and denying them access to "the inviolable place of prostration," generally identified with the Meccan Kabah sanctuary (e.g., 2:191, 8:30-34).

The presentation of Muhammad (PBUH) also changes noticeably throughout the Quran. Whereas early proclamations describe him primarily as a "warner" sent by God to warn his compatriots and who has no responsibility other than the "clear delivery" of God's message, Medinan surahs command believers to obey Muhammad (PBUH) and charge him with passing judgment among them.

In one passage, Muhammad (PBUH) is even described as an "exemplar" for the believers. Thus, the central role that imitation of the Prophet plays in traditional Islamic piety can be traced back to the Quran. Medinan surahs critique Jewish and Christian beliefs, highlighting the Quran's stance on monotheism and guiding believers to [learn the Quran](#) for comprehensive understanding. For example, 5:17, 72-77, 116-118 single out Christianity's signature belief in the divinity of Jesus as the son of God as an egregious case of associationism.