



قرآن
Qur'ân
30 for 30

Seerah Edition

Ramadan 1443 h.

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Introduction

In the Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Perfectly Merciful

All praise is due to Allah, and may His peace and blessings be upon the final Messenger Muhammad and all those who follow his way with righteousness until the end of time. The Qur'an 30for30 series began as a YouTube series during the pandemic in Ramadan 1441 h.

The purpose of the series is to help connect Muslims with the Qur'an and understand its message on a deeper level. Alhamdulillah, the first two seasons of the series have reached and benefited millions of people, and the first ebook has also reached and benefited tens of thousands of readers.

This second ebook is based on the second season of Qur'an 30for30 recorded in Ramadan 1442 h. However, it is not a word-for-word transcription of the series. Instead, we have decided to take the core ideas of that series and build our content around it in a way that does not repeat the content of Book One. The second season of Qur'an 30for30 focused on the *seerah* of the Prophet ﷺ, which will be the primary focus of this book.

We have divided this book into thirty chapters, each focusing on one *juz* of the Qur'an. Book One gave a brief summarized thematic overview of each *juz*. This second book instead will focus on a few verses only from each *juz*. We have carefully selected those verses that have a strong link to the *seerah* or well-known reasons for revelation.

The goal is to show the importance of the *seerah* in *tafsir*. In this way, verses can be understood contextually, in a way that helps understand when and why they were revealed. Due to the brief nature of this work, we are only able to focus on a few verses per *juz*. We hope that this glimpse into the world of *tafsir* inspires our readers to seek out more knowledge in this blessed field of study.

In the feedback we received from Book One, we learned that readers want a deeper understanding of the Qur'an. We hope to provide that understanding, and build upon it, with each new book in this series. To assist the readers in getting the maximum benefit from this book, we have included in this introduction some key terms related to this important field of knowledge.

Tafsir and its types

Tafsir refers to the science of interpreting the Qur'an and extracting its deeper meanings. Over the centuries, many experts have researched and

deeply reflected on the Qur'an, coming up with thousands of pages of in-depth interpretations of it. The field of *tafsir* seems to have no end, with new methods and books being produced every year for over fourteen centuries. This depth is part of the miraculous nature of the Qur'an, and a reflection of the infinite nature of Allah's Speech.

The method used in this book is focused on the primary method of *tafsir*, known as *tafsir* by narration (*tafsir bil riwayat*). This methodology focuses on the narrations of past generations, particularly the first three generations of Islamic scholarship, to help ground our understanding of the Qur'an in orthodoxy. Most of the narrations in this book fall into the category of *asbab al-nuzul*.

***Asbab al-nuzul* (Reasons for revelation)**

Asbab al-nuzul refer to narrations about why and when specific verses of the Qur'an were revealed. The Qur'an was revealed in pieces over a period of twenty-three years. During this period, many *surahs* and verses were revealed due to specific events in the life of the Prophet ﷺ. These events were narrated by his companions and form a core part of narrated *tafsir*. Such narrations help us understand the Qur'an better by providing us with important context and background.

These narrations are crucial for understanding the Qur'an properly. We hope the few examples provided throughout this book help revive the study of this field in our time. When the reason for revelation of a verse or a *surah* is known, the depth and beauty of the Qur'an is appreciated so much more.

The concept of *seerah*

The *seerah*, in this context, refers to the life of the Prophet ﷺ from which we draw our inspiration. It is the story of the greatest human to ever walk the face of this earth. The *seerah* and the Qur'an are directly intertwined.

At each phase across twenty-three years of preaching Islam, the Prophet ﷺ faced particular challenges that led to immediate revelation of verses and *surahs*. This is why many of the narrations on *asbab al-nuzul* can be found in books of *seerah* as well.

By focusing on the *seerah* in this book, we hope to give the reader an appreciation for both the message (the Qur'an) and the Messenger ﷺ, allowing the reader to understand the fundamental role that the prophetic model plays in the field of *tafsir*.

Thematic *tafsir*

Thematic *tafsir* refers to the contemporary approach of identifying the core themes of a *surah* or *juz* and showing how the various verses in a *juz* link to this theme. This approach developed in the twentieth century as a response to Orientalist claims that the Qur'an is incoherent and jumps randomly from topic to topic. Thematic *tafsir* books demonstrate how the Qur'an flows from one topic to another in a way that is consistent and methodological.

The method of thematic *tafsir* is not entirely new. Early *tafsir* books categorized the *surahs* of the Qur'an into Makkan and Madinan, dividing them based on whether they were revealed before or after the *Hijrah*. They identified core themes of Makkan revelation (like the afterlife and stories of the past) and Madinan revelation (like jihad and detailed Shariah laws).

A note on translations

Most of the translations of Qur'anic verses in this book are taken from *Quran in English* by Talal Itani with slight modifications. The translations of hadiths from major hadith collections are mostly taken from the Darus Salam translations with slight modifications. Some hadiths are translated directly by the authors, when no previously available translation could be sourced.

Most quotations from early *tafsir* works are translated directly by the authors and not taken from any existing *tafsir* translation works.

How to use this book

This book can benefit the reader in many ways. You can read it as a companion piece to our daily YouTube videos, or on its own as a companion to your daily Qur'an recitation during Ramadan. You could use it to review the core meanings of the Qur'an or to teach your kids the meanings of the Qur'an.

We tried to write this in a way that makes it an easy read, while providing a deeper understanding of the Qur'an. We hope that our readers all find it beneficial and will continue to benefit from it for years to come.

We ask Allah to accept this small effort to promote and explain His Word. We ask Allah to forgive our mistakes and overlook our faults, and to bless this effort and all those involved in making it a reality.

Omar Suleiman and Ismail Kamdar

29 Jamad al-Akhir 1443 h.



Juz One

Surah al-Baqarah fills up the first two and half *juz* of the Qur'an. It was revealed gradually across the first and second years after *Hijrah*. The various verses and themes found in this, the longest *surah* in the Qur'an, reflect the questions and situations of early Madinan society. Many of these verses have clear reasons for revelations that have been passed down through narrations.

The early years in Madinah were a period of settling down, establishing a city-state, and building the fundamentals of the Islamic community. The various laws of the Shariah related to acts of worship like prayer, fasting, and charity were elaborated during this period, as were the early community laws related to marriage, divorce, war, business, and inheritance. This is why this *surah* contains so many verses related to the laws of Islam; most of them are found in the second *juz* of the Qur'an.

The first *juz* focuses more on the spiritual states of people. The descriptions of believers and disbelievers are briefly listed at the start of the *surah*. These two categories had already been elaborated on in various Makkan *surahs*. This is followed by two entire pages focused on describing a new group of people that the Muslims had to deal with in Madinah: the hypocrites. Hypocrites did not exist in Makkah, making this a new challenge. This is why the Qur'an opens with a detailed description of this category of people, those who pretend to be Muslim for worldly reasons. Right at the start, the Qur'an begins with a warning that belief should be sincere.

Among the people are those who say, "We believe in Allah and in the Last Day," but they are not believers. They seek to deceive Allah and those who believe, but they deceive none but themselves, though they are not aware.

In their hearts is sickness, and Allah has increased their sickness. They will have a painful punishment because of their denial. And when it is said to them, "Do not make trouble on earth," they say, "We are only reformers." In fact, they are the troublemakers, but they are not aware.

And when it is said to them, "Believe as the people have believed," they say, "Shall we believe as the fools have believed?" In fact, it is they who are the fools, but they do not know.

And when they come across those who believe, they say, “We believe”; but when they are alone with their devils, they say, “We are with you; we were only ridiculing.” It is Allah who ridicules them and leaves them bewildered in their transgression.¹

The bulk of this *juz* focuses on stories of the past prophets, specifically on the story of the Prophet Moses and his trials with the Israelites. In Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ dealt directly with various Jewish tribes. The leaders of these tribes recognized that he was the prophesized prophet, but most rejected him because he was not from their tribe.

These stories were reminders to them of their covenant to obey the messengers. They also served as a reminder to the Muslims to be true in their belief and their obedience to the Prophet ﷺ.

And when a scripture came to them from Allah, confirming what they have—although previously they were seeking victory against those who disbelieved—but when there came to them what they recognized, they disbelieved in it. Allah’s curse is upon the disbelievers.²

The various themes of Surah al-Baqarah show us the challenges of early Madinan society. The passages about the hypocrites teach us that the believers had to face a new internal threat. The passages about the people of the book show us the developing tensions between the growing Muslim population and the Jewish tribes of Madinah. The laws revealed in this *surah* show us how the Shariah took shape in the early years. Through these various passages, we get a deep insight into the life of the early Madinan Muslims, while learning many lessons that still apply today.

1 Qur’an 2:8–15.

2 Qur’an 2:89.



Juz Two

Surah al-Baqarah flows through the second *juz* and halfway through the third *juz*, making it the longest *surah* in the Qur'an. There is a shift in the core content of the *surah* at this point. The earlier verses in the first *juz* focused more on the stories of past prophets, while the second *juz* includes a heavy emphasis on laws.

This *juz* may be the most law-focused *juz* in the entire Qur'an, as it includes verses related to prayer, charity, fasting, war, marriage, divorce, and many more topics.

The bulk of this *juz* was revealed during the second year after *Hijrah*. It was a time in which the companions had many questions, and the laws of Islam were starting to take shape. Many of these passages begin with "They ask you about," showing how keen the companions were to learn more about their religion.

The laws revealed in this *juz* became the foundations of the faith, as the various pillars of Islam like the pilgrimage and fasting were crystallized.

The *juz* begins with the changing of the *qiblah* (direction of prayer) from Jerusalem to Makkah. In the early years of Islam, Jerusalem was the *qiblah* to distinguish the believers of Makkah from the pagans that worshipped the idols around the Kabah.

In Makkah, the Muslims were able to stand on one side of the Kabah so that they would be facing both the Kabah and Jerusalem at the same time. In Madinah, the Kabah and Jerusalem were on opposite sides, so facing both was impossible.

The Prophet ﷺ and his companions continued facing Jerusalem until the verses were revealed making the Kabah the permanent *qiblah* until the end of time.

We have seen your face turned towards the heaven.

So, we will turn you towards a direction that will satisfy you.

So, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque. And wherever you may be, turn your faces towards it. Those who were given the Book know that it is the Truth from their Lord; and Allah is not unaware of what they do.³

3 Qur'an 2:144.

The passage that follows include a strong reminder that life is a test, and the believer should be prepared for various trials and difficulties in this world. These verses put the migration into context, while preparing the companions for the trials yet to come, including the battles against the Quraysh.

*We will certainly test you with some fear and hunger, and some loss of possessions and lives and crops. But give good news to the steadfast. Those who, when a calamity afflicts them, say, "To Allah we belong, and to Him we will return." Upon these are blessings and mercy from their Lord. These are the guided ones.*⁴

These verses prepared the companions for the Battle of Badr that occurred that same year. It was the year in which the verses of fasting were revealed. We often overlook this point that the Battle of Badr took place during the first Ramadan in which fasting was obligated. The blessings of Ramadan included the first major victory of Islam, as the Muslims finally turned the tide against their oppressors at Badr.

Surah al-Baqarah ends with a reminder that Allah does not test a person with more than they can handle. This is followed by a supplication for the same. This is a very powerful supplication that every Muslim should memorize and recite often.

*Allah does not burden any soul beyond its capacity. To its credit is what it earns, and against it is what it commits. "Our Lord do not condemn us if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord do not burden us as You have burdened those before us. Our Lord do not burden us with more than we have strength to bear; and pardon us, and forgive us, and have mercy on us. You are our Lord and Master, so help us against the disbelieving people."*⁵

⁴ Qur'an 2:155-57.

⁵ Qur'an 2:286.



Juz Three

Surah Ale-Imran was revealed a year after Surah al-Baqarah in the third year after *Hijrah*. The various themes discussed in this *surah* reflect the core events in Madinah during that year.

The themes of the Battle of Uhud, the correct beliefs regarding Jesus, and discussions about hypocrisy and relationships with the People of the Book, all reflect the primary political events of 3 AH. During that year, the Prophet ﷺ dealt with all of these issues.

The story of Jesus is narrated in more detail here than in Surah Maryam. Surah Maryam was revealed in Makkah, where Christianity did not really have a presence. This *surah* served more as a theological foundation for the Muslims of Makkah, while also serving as *dawah* to the leaders of Abyssinia.

In Madinah, particularly in 3 AH, the Prophet ﷺ began receiving delegations from Christian lands. To answer the questions of these delegations, Surah Ale-Imran was revealed with a detailed account of the life of Jesus ﷺ, and a firm reminder regarding the correct beliefs about Jesus and His Creator.

Another key event discussed in this *surah* is the Battle of Uhud. The Battle of Uhud occurred a year after the Battle of Badr and was not as successful. The Muslims faced setbacks both before and during the battle. Before the battle, three hundred hypocrites abandoned the ranks of the believers and returned to Madinah, leaving the army perplexed, unprepared, and morally deflated.

During the battle, a group of archers abandoned their posts to pursue some loot, leaving the rear of the army exposed to a counterattack. The Makkans took advantage of this and surrounded the Muslims, leading to the only military defeat during the Madinan phase.

Many verses in this *surah* reflect on this Battle and the lessons related to it.

*Remember when you left your home in the morning,
to assign battle-positions for the believers. Allah is All-Hearing
and All-Knowing. When two groups among you almost faltered,
but Allah was their Protector. So, in Allah let the believers put their trust.*⁶

⁶ Qur'an 3:121-22.

In this *surah*, Allah revealed that the battles were tests for the believers, and that those who ran away after the Makkans surrounded them were forgiven. He also revealed that obedience to Allah and His Messenger is necessary for success in this world too. Finally, it is revealed that these events also served to expose the hypocrites so that the believers would not be fooled by their schemes.

*And that He may know the hypocrites. And it was said to them, "Come, fight in the cause of Allah, or contribute." They said, "If we knew how to fight, we would have followed you." On that day they were closer to infidelity than they were to faith. They say with their mouths what is not in their hearts; but Allah knows what they hide.*⁷

In the long run, the events of 3 AH benefited the Muslim community greatly. The discussions with the delegation of Christians clarified in which areas Islam and Christianity both agreed and disagreed. This made it clear that the fundamental differences between Islam and Christianity regarded the nature of Allah and the humanity of Jesus. The events at Uhud served as a powerful lesson for the Muslims which they wholeheartedly embraced.

The mistake of Uhud was not repeated during the Prophet's ﷺ lifetime by those who witnessed Uhud. The schemes of the hypocrites were exposed, and the believers were able to fend off many of their future schemes.

Surah Ale-Imran provides a great framework for studying the events of 3 AH and teaches us fundamental lessons, such as the importance of pure monotheism, sincerity of intention, unity of the believers, and preparing for the unexpected. These are all enduring lessons that still apply to our lives today.

⁷ Qur'an 3:167.



Juz Four

Surah al-Nisa was revealed soon after Surah Ale-Imran, with some of its verses revealed in late 3 AH, while the rest were revealed in early 4 AH. This *surah* also deals primarily with the aftermath of Uhud.

The Battle of Uhud had shaken the Muslim community and with this defeat came the loss of many great heroes of Islam like Musab Ibn Umair رضي الله عنه and Hamza Ibn Abdul Muttallib رضي الله عنه. This tragedy brought new problems to the young community and Surah al-Nisa was revealed to address many of these problems.

Surah Ale-Imran focused more on the spiritual and theological lessons of Uhud. Surah al-Nisa was more focused on resolving the family and community issues that arose in the wake of this tragedy. With the martyrdom of seventy great men came new problems, problems related to orphans, widows, inheritance, and stability of society as a whole.

The beginning sections of this *surah* address the family issues. Polygamy, which was unrestricted before Islam, was restricted to a maximum of four wives, and proposed as a solution to the problem of war widows and orphans, with a strong reminder that justice between wives was necessary. Inheritance laws were clarified and discussed in detail. The verses of inheritance are among the most detailed laws in the Qur'an. These verses gave women the right to inheritance over a thousand years before modern society did the same. This was shocking and alien to Arab culture at the time.

The wealth of orphans is also discussed in detail in this *surah*. This included the need for a guardian to take care of their wealth until they reach an age of financial responsibility. Along with this, several verses were revealed warning against usurping the wealth of orphans. The rights and responsibilities of husbands and wives were also clarified in these passages to ensure social cohesion on the most fundamental level.

Society, however, is not made up only of families. For a society to thrive and not face such a loss again, they had to deal with the internal and external threats as well. This is why there are several passages in this Surah about military laws, the dangers of hypocrisy, and the relationship between Muslims and other groups. All of these were necessary to protect the young city-state from future tragedies.

There are also many verses in this *surah* stressing the importance of obeying the Messenger ﷺ. In the aftermath of Uhud, the reason for these verses was clear.

The archers who disobeyed the Prophet ﷺ caused the defeat of the Muslim army and the martyrdom of many of their friends. Obedience to the Prophet ﷺ was necessary for success then and remains necessary for our success today. The warnings about this in Surah al-Nisa are very strongly worded.

*We did not send any messenger except to be obeyed by Allah's permission. Had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you, and prayed for Allah's forgiveness, and the Messenger had prayed for their forgiveness, they would have found Allah Forgiving and Merciful. But no, by your Lord, they will not believe until they call you to arbitrate in their disputes, and then find within themselves no resentment regarding your decisions and submit themselves completely.*⁸

*Whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, these are with those whom Allah has blessed, among the prophets, and the sincere, and the martyrs, and the upright. Excellent are those as companions.*⁹

*Whoever obeys the Messenger obeys Allah. And whoever turns away—
We did not send you as a watcher over them.*¹⁰

8 Qur'an 4:64–65.

9 Qur'an 4:69.

10 Qur'an 4:80.



Juz Five

The fifth *juz* contains many verses that were revealed in response to specific incidents. These verses were revealed during the early-to-middle years of the Madinan phase in response to various incidents. One of these incidents was related to the loss of Aisha's ﷺ necklace, and led to the revelation of the verse of *tayammum* in this *surah*.

Aisha ﷺ said, "We set out with Allah's Messenger ﷺ on one of his journeys till we reached Al- Baida' or Dhatul-Jaish, where a necklace of mine was broken (and lost). Allah's Messenger ﷺ stayed there to search for it, and so did the people along with him.

There was no water at that place, so the people went to Abu Bakr As-Siddiq ﷺ and said, "Don't you see what Aisha has done? She has made Allah's Apostle ﷺ and the people stay where there is no water, and they have no water with them.'

Abu Bakr ﷺ came while Allah's Messenger ﷺ was sleeping with his head on my thigh. He said to me, 'You have detained Allah's Messenger ﷺ and the people where there is no water, and they have no water with them.' So, he admonished me and said what Allah wished him to say. Nothing prevented me from moving but the position of Allah's Messenger ﷺ on my thigh.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ got up when dawn broke and there was no water. So, Allah revealed the Divine Verses of Tayammum.

So, they all performed Tayammum. Usaid bin Hudair ﷺ said, 'O family of Abu Bakr! This is not the first blessing of yours.' Then the camel on which I was riding was caused to move from its place and the necklace was found beneath it."¹¹

Another set of verses in this *juz* that has an interesting reason for revelation are verses 105 to 115, which discuss the importance of justice in every situation. These verses were revealed in relation to a hypocrite who tried to game the system.

Qatadah bin An-Nu'man narrated, "There was a household among us called Banu Ubairiq, among whom was a Bishr, a Bushair, and a Mubashshir. Bushair was a hypocrite who would recite poetry reviling the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ then he would attribute it to some of the Arabs. Then he would say, 'So-and-so said this and that [So-and-so said this and that].'

So, when the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ would hear that poetry, they would say, 'By Allah! No one but this filthy person

11 Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 334.

said this poetry, or as the man said, and they would say: ‘Ibn Al-Ubairiq said it.’

He said, “They were a poor and needy household during ignorance and Islam. The only food the people of Al-Madinah had was dates and barley. When a man was able to, he would import flour from Ash-Sham which he bought and kept for himself. As for his dependents, their only food was dates and barely.

So, an import arrived from Ash-Sham, and my uncle Rifa’ah bin Zaid bought a load of it, which he put in a storage area he had, where he kept his weapons, his shield, and his sword. But it was taken from him from under the house.

The storage was broken into, and the food and weapons were taken. In the morning, my uncle Rifa’ah came to me and said, ‘O my nephew! We were robbed during the night, our storage was broken into, and our food and weapons are gone.’”

He said, “They overheard us in the house, and questioned us, and someone said to us, ‘We saw Banu Ubairiq cooking during the night, and it looked like they had some of your food.’”

He said, “Banu Ubairiq said while we were questioning them amidst their dwellings. ‘By Allah! We do not think the one you are looking for is other than Labid bin Sahl, a man among us who is righteous and accepted Islam.’ When Labid heard that, he brandished his sword and said, ‘I stole? By Allah! You either prove this theft, or I take to you with this sword.’

They said, ‘Leave us, man! You are not the one who has it.’ So, we continued questioning in the dwellings until we had no doubt that they had taken it. So, my uncle said to me, ‘O my nephew! You should go to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and tell him about that.’”

Qatadah said, “So I went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, ‘A family among us are ill-mannered, and they conspired against my uncle Rifa’ah bin Zaid. They broke into his storage and took his weapons and his food. We want them to return our weapons, but we have no need for the food.’

So, the Prophet ﷺ said, ‘I will decide about that.’

So, when Banu Ubairiq heard about that, they brought a man from among them named Usair bin ‘Urwah to talk to him about that, and some people from their houses gathered and said,

‘O Messenger of Allah! Qatadah bin An-Nu’man and his uncle came to a family among us who are a people of Islam and righteousness, accusing them of stealing without proof or confirmation.’”

Qatadah said, “I went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and spoke to him, and he said, ‘You went to a family among them known for their Islam and righteousness and accused them of stealing without confirmation or proof.’”

He said, “So I returned wishing that I had lost some of my wealth, and that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had not been told about that. My uncle Rifa’ah came to me and said, ‘O my nephew! What did you do?’

So, I told him what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to me, so he said, ‘It is from Allah, whom we seek help.’

It was not long before the Qur’an was revealed, “Surely, we have sent down to you the Book in truth, that you might judge between men by that which Allah has shown you, so be not a pleader for the treacherous. (That is Banu Ubairiq) And seek forgiveness from Allah. (That is from what you said to Qatadah.) Certainly, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. And argue not on behalf of those who deceive themselves. Verily, Allah does not like anyone who is a betrayer, sinner.

They hide from the people, but they cannot hide from Allah. He is with them, as they plot by night with words He does not approve. Allah comprehends what they do. There you are, arguing on their behalf in the present life, but who will argue with Allah on their behalf on the Day of Resurrection? Or who will be their representative?

Whoever commits evil, or wrongs his soul, then implores Allah for forgiveness, will find Allah Forgiving and Merciful. And whoever earns a sin, earns it against himself. Allah is Aware and Wise. And whoever commits a mistake, or a sin, and then blames it on an innocent person, has committed slander and a clear sin.”¹²

So, when the Qur’an was revealed, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ brought the weapon and returned it to Rifa’ah. Qatadah said, “When the weapon was brought to my uncle, he was an elderly man with bad sight and I thought that he had entered into Islam (without real sincerity) but when I brought it to him, he said, ‘O my nephew! It is for Allah’s cause.’

So, I knew that his Islam was genuine. When the Qur’an was revealed, Bushair went with the idolaters, staying with Sulafah bint Sa’d bin Sumayyah.

So, Allah, Most High, revealed, “Whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger after the right path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the believers’ way, we shall keep him in the path he has chosen, and burn him in Hell, what

12 Qur’an 4:105-12.

an evil destination. Verily Allah forgives not associating others with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whomever He wills. And whoever associates others with Allah, then he has indeed strayed.”¹³

These stories give us a glimpse of the various challenges the Muslims faced in Madinah. A common theme that runs through these stories and the verses revealed because of them is the importance of trusting Allah and obeying His messenger ﷺ. Sometimes we cannot understand the wisdom behind a law or a test.

Even in such situations, trusting Allah and remaining firm in obeying Him is the path to success. Very often trials we do not understand today end up becoming the most important moments of our life in the long run.

The second story gives us a glimpse of the very human nature of Madinan society. Hypocrites lived among the believers, and it was not easy to tell who a hypocrite was. Often this would cause great communal problems which would require revelation to solve. The revelation in such situations exposed the hypocrites and elevated the status of the true believers.

¹³ Qur'an 4:115-16; Jami at-Tirmidhi, no. 3036.



Juz Six

This *juz* contains the last major *surah* to be revealed, Surah al-Ma'idah, which was revealed in the 10th year after *Hijrah*. This was the last of the long *surahs*. After it, a few small portions of verses and short *surahs* were revealed. This was the final set of laws revealed to the Prophet ﷺ and included the powerful line cementing this Shariah as the perfect law system for humanity.

*“Today I have perfected your religion for you, and have completed My favor upon you, and have approved Islam as a religion for you.”*¹⁴

This verse was so powerful that a Jewish Rabbi once expressed to Umar Ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه that this was the verse he admired most in the Qur'an.

Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه reported: A man from the Jews said, “O leader of the believers, there is a verse you recite in your book and, had it been revealed to us as Jews, we would have taken that day as a celebration.”

Umar رضي الله عنه said, “Which verse is it?”

The man recited the verse, “Today I have completed your religion for you, perfected My favor upon you, and have chosen Islam as your religion.”¹⁵

This verse was revealed at Mount Arafah during the farewell pilgrimage. Picture the scene. The Prophet ﷺ after twenty years of struggle stood humbly on Mount Arafah addressing over one hundred thousand Muslims for the last time.

The Prophet ﷺ worked his way through trial upon trial from a humble beginning of a handful of dedicated followers and was now the most powerful man in Arabia. Soon his followers would continue the growth until within a century, the Muslim world was the dominant civilization on earth.

At this critical moment, the Prophet ﷺ delivered his final sermon which included the following crucial advice to all his followers until the end of time.

Verily your blood and your property are as sacred and inviolable as the sacredness of this day of yours, in this month of yours, in this town of yours. Behold! Everything pertaining to the Days of Ignorance is completely abolished. Abolished are also the blood-revenges of the Days of Ignorance.

14 Qur'an 5:3.

15 Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 45; Sahih Muslim, no. 3017.

Fear Allah concerning women! Verily you have taken them on the security of Allah, and intercourse with them has been made lawful unto you by words of Allah. You too have rights over them, that they should not allow anyone to sit on your bed whom you do not like. But if they do that, you can chastise them but not severely. Their rights upon you are that you should provide them with food and clothing in a fitting manner. I have left among you the Book of Allah, and if you hold fast to it, you will never go astray.

And when you will be asked about me (on the Day of Resurrection), (now tell me) what will you say? They (the audience) said: We will bear witness that you have conveyed (the message), discharged (the ministry of prophethood) and given wise (sincere) counsel. He (the narrator) said: He (the Prophet ﷺ) then raised his forefinger towards the sky and pointing it at the people (said):” O Allah, be witness. O Allah, be witness,” saying it thrice.¹⁶

It was on this momentous occasion that this beautiful passage was revealed in Surah al-Ma'idah, cementing that the message was complete, and Islam was here to stay.

The rest of the *surah* contains many other verses related to powerful incidents during that final year of revelation. A common theme in many of these verses is the importance of the Shariah. The entire *surah* focuses on the overall importance of the Shariah, reinforcing that it is the final perfect law system, and the only acceptable path to Allah.

¹⁶ Sahih Muslim, no. 1218.



Juz Seven

Surah al-An'am marks a break from the themes covered during the first six *juz* of the Qur'an. While the previous *surahs* were Madinan and closely tied to the events of the Madinan era, Surah al-An'am is a Makkan *surah* focused on theological issues. The themes of prophethood and monotheism flow throughout this *surah* showing us the primary focus of early Makkan revelation.

Some of the pagans of Makkah refused to believe unless something miraculous happened in front of their eyes. Allah revealed that this was just an excuse and no matter what happened, they would find a way to explain it away and never believe. Even if a hundred miracles occurred before them, they would reject them by saying each miracle was the result of magic, an illusion, or a hallucination.

This is the reality of many atheists today, too. The Creator has surrounded us with millions of signs of His existence and power. When we choose to ignore these signs, we choose to blind ourselves to any proofs. Even if a dozen miracles happen before one's eyes, excuses will flow from the mouth when the heart is blind to the truth. This was the case of Makkans then, and it is the case of many skeptics today.

*Not one of their Lord's signs comes to them, but they turn away from it. They denied the truth when it has come to them; but soon will reach them the news of what they used to ridicule.*¹⁷

Had We sent down upon you a book on paper, and they had touched it with their hands, those who disbelieve would have said, "This is nothing but plain magic."

*And they say, "Why was an angel not sent down to him?" Had We sent down an angel, the matter would have been settled, and they would not have been reprieved. Had We made him an angel, We would have made him a man, and confused them when they are already confused. Messengers before you were ridiculed, but those who mocked them became besieged by what they ridiculed.*¹⁸

The revelation of this *surah* was itself a grand event. The revelation was accompanied by so many angels that they filled the horizon. Some narrations

¹⁷ Qur'an 6:4-5.

¹⁸ Qur'an 6:7-10.

stated as much as seventy thousand angels, but as these narrations are weak, we do not list a specific number.

Nonetheless, the fact that the sky was filled with angels show that this is a powerful and important *surah* with a crucial message.

The leaders of the pagans recognized the Qur'an as a Divine revelation. As masters of Arabic poetry, they knew that it was beyond human capacity to produce a book like the Qur'an.

This was especially the case for Waleed Ibn Mugheirah who eventually wrote it off as magic, despite knowing otherwise. Arrogance and refusal to accept that Allah had chosen Muhammad ﷺ over them as the final messenger caused the Quraysh to reject the truth, even when it was as clear as day. Allah revealed the following verses in response to them.

*Those to whom We have given the Book recognize it as they recognize their own children; but those who have lost their souls do not believe. Who does greater wrong than someone who fabricates lies against Allah, or denies His revelations? The wrongdoers will not succeed.*¹⁹

The Makkan revelation focused primarily on the fundamentals of faith. This *surah* gives us a detailed look at the message of Makkan revelation. It is full of strong arguments for the prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ and the Oneness of Allah. This *surah* remains a powerful and persuasive message to any sincere seeker of the truth today.

¹⁹ Qur'an 6:20-21.



Juz Eight

Surah al-A'raf is the first of many *surahs* in the Qur'an that highlight the stories of the perished nations. These stories are narrated and repeated collectively across multiple *surahs*. They include the stories of Prophets Noah, Hud, Saleh, Shuaib, Lot, and Moses ﷺ. The collective narration of these six stories is a common feature across Makkan revelation.

The pagans of Makkah were familiar with many of these stories already. Some of these nations were Arab nations and the stories of their destruction had been passed down through the generations. What had been lost was the reason for their destruction. These *surahs* were revealed to remind the Makkans about why the past nations were destroyed: for rejecting their messenger and his message.

The story of Noah and the great flood is found across all cultures. It was the first time in human history that a civilization was wiped out for rejecting the Creator. The stories of how the Pharaoh was defeated, and how the people of Lot were destroyed are also very well-known across many cultures and religions.

The other three stories are less known outside of Muslim circles. Hud was sent to the nation of Ad who were destroyed for their tyranny and polytheism. Saleh was sent to the nation of Thamud, who were destroyed for similar reasons. Shuaib was sent to the city of Madyan who engaged in unjust business practices.

These three nations, and their stories, were well known to the Makkans. The purpose of these narrations in the Qur'an was to bring the Makkans' attention to the key point of these stories; the importance of believing in and obeying the Messenger of Allah. The Makkans were being warned through these stories that if they reject the messenger sent to them, a similar fate will await them.

*How many a town have We destroyed? Our might came upon them by night, or while they were napping. When Our might came upon them, their only cry was, "We were indeed wrongdoers." We will question those to whom messengers were sent, and We will question the messengers.*²⁰

²⁰ Qur'an 7:4-6.

The content of these stories can be rather heavy for some readers. The Qur'an alternates between reminders of Allah's Mercy and punishment. This creates a balanced attitude. A believer should not rely on Allah's Mercy so much that they stop doing good deeds and live a life of sin, expecting full forgiveness. At the same time, they should not despair of Allah's Mercy and feel that their sins cannot be redeemed.

Reflecting on and understanding the various stories in the Qur'an help us achieve this balance. To maintain this balance, it is crucial to reflect on these stories of perished nations, just as much as reflect on the stories of hope like the stories of Joseph, David, and Solomon. Each story plays a role in shaping our faith and our relationship with the Creator.

*And do not cause corruption on earth after its reformation. Pray to Him with fear and hope. Allah's Mercy is close to the doers of good.*²¹

As an early Makkan *surah*, there is also a strong focus on the afterlife in Surah al-A'raf. The afterlife was a foreign concept to the Quraysh, who did not think there was anything beyond death. As a new concept to them, it needed a lot of elaboration. To achieve this, this *surah* is full of descriptions of the afterlife. Each description creates a detailed picture in the mind and helps increase one's conviction in the reality of the next life.

²¹ Qur'an 7:56.



Juz Nine

Surah al-Anfal begins in the last quarter of the ninth *juz*. This is an early Madinan *surah* revealed immediately after the Battle of Badr. The Battle of Badr was the first major battle in Muslim history and a significant event that turned the tide in favor of the Muslims.

Until this moment, the Muslims had faced a lot of oppression at the hands of the pagans of Makkah. For thirteen years, the *dawah* in Makkah was faced with resistance, tyranny, and violence. The Muslims were forced to flee and had to relocate to Madinah. Here they established a base of operations and grew strong enough to face their oppressors. In the second year after the *Hijrah*, they had an opportunity to do so.

At the wells of Badr, the Muslims faced their transgressors in battle for the first time. Despite being outnumbered, the Muslims fought valiantly and with the help of an army of angels, they defeated the Makkans. The defeat was significant as most of the leaders of Makkah died in battle against the Muslims that night.

In light of this defeat, a new generation of Makkans had to take over the leadership. There was a significant difference between the two generations of leaders, as seen in the fact that most of the next generation eventually accepted Islam and joined the Prophet's ﷺ side. The likes of Umayyah Ibn Khalaf and Abu Jahl were defeated in Badr, and the Prophet ﷺ would not face an enemy as oppressive as them again.

Surah al-Anfal was revealed on this occasion and each of its passages directly relate to the various events surrounding this battle. This was the first time the Muslims had attained a military victory and were unsure regarding the proper method of dividing the war booty. The opening verses of this *surah* addressed this concern immediately.

*They ask you about the bounties. Say, "The bounties are for Allah and the Messenger." So be mindful of Allah, and settle your differences, and obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are believers.*²²

This is followed by a reminder that victory is from Allah. He gives victory to whom He wills. The believers attained victory because they obeyed Allah

²² Qur'an 8:1.

and His Messenger. This is a common theme found throughout the wartime *surahs*.

*The believers are those whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned, and when His revelations are recited to them, they strengthen them in faith, and upon their Lord they rely. Those who perform the prayer; and from Our provisions to them, they spend. These are the true believers. They have high standing with their Lord, and forgiveness, and a generous provision.*²³

The *surah* contains reminders about many of the miracles the Muslims experienced on the battlefield that day, including the assistance of the angels, a gentle rain that benefited them while damaging the opposition's camp, and the moment when the Prophet ﷺ threw a handful of dirt, and it entered the eyes of all his enemies. All of these moments are mentioned in this *surah* as reminders of Allah's blessings.

*When you appealed to your Lord for help, He answered you,
"I am reinforcing you with one thousand angels in succession."
Allah only made it a message of hope, and to set your hearts at rest.
Victory comes only from Allah. Allah is Mighty and Wise. He made
drowsiness overcome you, as a security from Him. And He sent down upon
you water from the sky, to cleanse you with it, and to rid you of Satan's
pollution, and to fortify your hearts, and to strengthen your foothold.*²⁴

*And it was not you who threw when you threw, but it was
Allah who threw. That He may bestow upon the believers an
excellent reward. Allah is Hearing and Knowing.*²⁵

The Battle of Badr is one of the most significant events in Muslim history. It is a reminder that Allah will assist the righteous, even if they are few in number. It is a reminder that miracles happen when Allah wills them. It is also a lesson to the tyrant and oppressor that their tyranny cannot last forever, and a day will come when justice will be served. This powerful *surah* covers all of these lessons eloquently leaving the reader with plenty to ponder.

²³ Qur'an 8:2-4.

²⁴ Qur'an 8:9-11.

²⁵ Qur'an 8:17.



Juz Ten

Surah Tawbah continues the theme of war from Surah al-Anfal. The themes of these two *surahs* are so similar that some early scholars considered them to be one *surah*. The focus on wartime advice in this *juz* can be a bit jarring for some first-time readers who are unfamiliar with the background of these *surahs*. Many verses in Surah Tawbah are context-specific and make a lot more sense when the reasons for revelation are clarified.

The opening passages are a declaration that the peace treaty between the Muslims and pagans was over, and that a war was coming. The Makkans and their allies had violated the peace treaty, which led to the revelation of these verses. It is part of Islamic ethics to announce a declaration of war, instead of surprising the enemy. By doing so, the Muslims were being fair and giving their opponents a fighting chance.

Surah Tawbah was revealed in pieces towards the end of the Madinan Era. Many of the passages in this *surah* revolve around the events of Tabuk and Hunain, two of the final skirmishes in the Prophet's ﷺ lifetime. Tabuk marked the first expedition of the Prophet's ﷺ army against the Byzantines, while Hunain was their final major battle against an Arab tribe.

These two events marked the turning of the tide in Arabia. The Muslims were now the dominant power of Arabia, and the Byzantines saw this as a threat to their power in the region. This led to the great battles between the two nations during the Rashidite Era in which many Byzantine lands like Damascus, Jerusalem, and Egypt became Muslim lands.

Hunain was an interesting event. The Muslims were a large army for the first time, and for many, their numbers deceived them. They felt confident that they would be victorious and let their guard down. As a result, the Muslim army was taken by surprise and ambushed. Many ran away, but the Prophet ﷺ and his staunchest supporters remained firm against the onslaught. Seeing the courage of the Prophet ﷺ, the Muslims eventually returned to their positions and were victorious.

Allah mentions this battle and some lessons from it in Surah Tawbah.

Allah has given you victory in numerous regions; but on the day of Hunain, your great number impressed you, but it availed you nothing; and the land, as spacious as it was, narrowed for you; and

*you turned your backs in retreat. Then Allah sent down His serenity upon His Messenger, and upon the believers; and He sent down troops you did not see; and He punished those who disbelieved. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers.*²⁶

Hunain was the final major battle in Arabia. After this, the Arab tribes throughout the region converted to Islam, one by one. The Byzantines saw this as the rising of a new threat against them and formulated an army to fight the Muslims. In response, the Prophet ﷺ gathered a large army and marched to Tabuk to face the Romans. The Roman army did not show up, and the Muslims returned home victorious and triumphant without any fighting.

The test of Tabuk, however, was in the preparation. Hypocrites were exposed when they refused to join the army based on the flimsiest of excuses. Others were exposed when they tried to demoralize the army along the way by insulting them. There are many passages in this *surah* about the hypocrites, exposing them one last time.

Those who stayed behind rejoiced at their staying behind the Messenger of Allah. And they hated to strive with their wealth and their lives in Allah's way. And they said, "Do not venture out in the heat." Say, "The Fire of Hell is much hotter, if they only understood."

Let them laugh a little, and weep much; in recompense for what they used to earn. If Allah brings you back to a party of them, and they ask your permission to go out, say, "You will not go out with me, ever, nor will you ever fight an enemy with me. You were content to sit back the first time, so sit back with those who stay behind."²⁷

Tabuk was a lesson in sincerity and courage. The believers had to leave their homes, wealth, and families and march in the summer heat across the desert to face an army sent by the superpower of the time. Marching out to face the unknown, the believers showed their sincerity, firm commitment, conviction, and courage. These foundations would serve the first generation of Islam very well in the coming years.

²⁶ Qur'an 9:25-26.

²⁷ Qur'an 9:81-83.



Juz Eleven

The eleventh *juz* includes the concluding verses of Surah Tawbah, as well as all of Surah Yunus. The *juz* ends at the beginning of Surah Hud. These two *surahs* (Yunus and Hud) were revealed in stages across the Makkan era and reflect the classical Makkan themes of monotheism, prophethood, and preparing for the afterlife.

Together they work to balance between hope in Allah's Mercy and fear of Divine punishment. Surah Yunus focuses more on topics of hope and optimism, while Surah Hud has such a strong warning that it even caused some of the Prophet's ﷺ hair to turn gray.

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه said, "Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه said: 'O Messenger of Allah! You have become gray.' He said: 'I have gone gray from Surah Hud, Al-Waqi'ah, Al-Mursalat and 'Amma Yatasa'alun and Idhash-Shamsu Kuwwirat.'"²⁸

These two *surahs* reflect the challenges that the Prophet ﷺ faced during the Makkan Era. Many of their verses and stories were revealed directly to tackle some of these challenges. The Makkans, for example, knew that the Prophet ﷺ was the most honest and trustworthy person they had ever met, yet they treated him like an unknown stranger whose words they could not trust. In response to this, Allah revealed the following verse.

*Say, "Had Allah willed, I would not have recited it to you, and He would not have made it known to you. I have lived among you for a lifetime before it. Do you not understand?"*²⁹

In this verse, Allah calls on the Makkans to reflect on their lifetime of experience dealing with the Prophet ﷺ. Even in his youth, he was known as the most honest person in the city, why then would he lie about something so great?

The perfect character of the Prophet ﷺ is one of his greatest signs and strongest proofs of prophethood. Even in the modern world, it is a key point to discuss when calling people to the truth.

Surah Yunus was revealed during a difficult point in the Prophetic mission. The Prophet ﷺ had been preaching in Makkah for years and did not have many followers. Persecution was on the rise, and some of his greatest sup-

²⁸ Jami' at-Tirmidhi, no. 3297, grade: sahih.

²⁹ Qur'an 10:16.

porters passed away around this time. The optimism in this *surah* served to inspire him to keep going no matter how dark things seemed to get.

The direct comparison to the story of Yunus عليه السلام was very relevant at this point. Prophet Yunus عليه السلام gave up on his mission as one point and left his city without Allah's permission. The famous incident of the whale took place, and after he sought Allah's forgiveness and returned to the city, he found that it had become a city of true faith.

The Prophet ﷺ soon after this would also have to leave the city, but this time with Allah's permission. He too would return many years later and Makkah would become a city of true faith until the end of time.

*If only there was one town that believed and benefited by its belief. Except for the people of Jonah. When they believed, We removed from them the suffering of disgrace in the worldly life, and We gave them comfort for a while.*³⁰

Each of the *surahs* in this *juz* ends with a beautiful description of the Prophet ﷺ and his role as the messenger to this world, with a strong reminder to the Makkans to believe in what has been revealed to them.

*There has come to you a messenger from among yourselves, concerned over your suffering, anxious over you. Towards the believers, he is compassionate and merciful. If they turn away, say, "Allah is enough for me; there is no Allah except He; in Him I have put my trust; He is the Lord of the Sublime Throne."*³¹

*Say, "O people, the truth has come to you from your Lord. Whoever accepts guidance is guided for his own soul; and whoever strays only strays to its detriment. I am not a guardian over you." And follow what is revealed to you, and be patient until Allah issues His judgment, for He is the Best of judges.*³²

30 Qur'an 10:98.

31 Qur'an 9:128-29.

32 Qur'an 10:108-9.



Juz Twelve

The dual themes of hope and fear continue in the twelfth *juz*. Surah Hud focuses on the stories of the perished nations. These were all nations who the Makkans were familiar with. Ad, Thamud, Madyan, and the people of Lut were all ancient civilizations that were destroyed for rejecting Allah’s messengers. The message here to the Makkans was clear: they would face the same consequences if they rejected the final messenger.

Surah Yusuf, however, is all about hope and optimism. It was revealed at a time when the Prophet ﷺ needed this the most. Surah Yusuf was revealed during the year of sorrow. The Prophet ﷺ had lost his closest supporter, his beloved wife Khadija رضي الله عنها and his external protector, his uncle the tribal chief Abu Talib. Both had passed away in the same year, a few months apart.

Without his uncle’s support, the Prophet ﷺ faced renewed persecution in Makkah and sought help elsewhere. He went to Taif seeking their protection. Their response was abusive and traumatizing. It was during this difficult year when things looked bleaker than ever that Surah Yusuf was revealed. Surah Yusuf tells the entire story of Yusuf in one powerful *surah*.

The story parallels that of the Prophet ﷺ, giving him hope for the future. Just as the Prophet ﷺ faced persecution from his own family (his uncle Abu Lahab), Yusuf too faced persecution from his own brothers.

Just as the Prophet would soon be forced to leave Makkah, move to a new land, and eventually become the leader of that land, Yusuf too was forced to flee to Egypt and eventually became a leader in Egypt.

The message was clear, the Prophet’s trials were preparing him for something greater. Just like Yusuf, he would rise above the challenges of life and eventually Islam would dominate the region.

The Prophet ﷺ related to this story so much that the conquest of Makkah mirrored Yusuf’s confrontation with his brothers when he was in power. The Prophet ﷺ even told the Makkans the same beautiful words that Yusuf spoke to his brothers; He said, “There is no blame upon you today. Allah will forgive you. He is the Most Merciful of the merciful.”³³

The lessons contained in this *surah* are timeless. Every generation finds its message of hope and optimism relevant to their specific circumstances. It remains one of the most beloved and most frequently studied *surahs* in

33 Qur’an 12:92.

the Qur'an today. The themes of family, hope, true dreams, leadership, redemption, resisting temptation and rising through trials resonate with every believer.

Surah Yusuf is close to all our hearts. It is the best of stories. In it is a reminder to be optimistic and trust Allah's plan even when life does not seem to go our way. The *surah* ends with a beautiful reminder about the purpose of revelation.

*In their stories is a lesson for those who possess intelligence.
This is not a fabricated tale, but a confirmation of what came before it,
and a detailed explanation of all things, and guidance,
and mercy for people who believe.³⁴*

³⁴ Qur'an 12:111.



Juz Thirteen

Surah Rad and Surah Ibrahim were revealed towards the end of the Makkah Era, just before the migration of the Prophet ﷺ to Madinah. They marked a final reminder to the Quraysh to follow the Prophet ﷺ or else Allah would give the gift of Islam to another community.

While the majority of Makkans had rejected the message, Islam was spreading quickly through every tribe in Madinah. This was primarily due to the *dawah* efforts of Mus'ab Ibn Umair رضي الله عنه whom the Prophet ﷺ had sent to Madinah to teach Islam to its people.

This marked a turning of the tide in favor of Islam. In Madinah, the Muslims would grow into the majority, establish their new home, and eventually grow into a thriving civilization that spread across the globe. These *surahs* were revealed when this process was just getting started.

Surah Rad takes a very stern tone in addressing those who continuously rejected Islam after the truth had been made clear to them. The Makkans had known the Prophet ﷺ his entire life, had attested to his honesty and trustworthiness, and witnessed many miracles in his presence, especially the miracle of the Qur'an itself.

Despite this, they continued to reject the truth, mock the message, criticize the prophet, and make ridiculous demands for miracles. Surah Rad addresses this attitude with some stern warnings.

Those who disbelieve say, "If only a miracle was sent down to him from his Lord." Say, "Allah leaves to stray whomever He wills, and He guides to Himself whoever repents."³⁵

Even if there were a Qur'an, by which mountains could be set in motion, or by which the earth could be shattered, or by which the dead could be made to speak. In fact, every decision rests with Allah. Did the believers not give up and realize that had Allah willed, He would have guided all humanity? Disasters will continue to strike those who disbelieve, because of their deeds, or they fall near their homes, until Allah's promise comes true. Allah never breaks a promise.

Messengers before you were ridiculed, but I granted the disbelievers respite, and then I seized them. What a punishment it was!³⁶

³⁵ Qur'an 13:27.

³⁶ Qur'an 13:31-32.

*We sent messengers before you, and We assigned for them wives and offspring. No messenger could bring a sign except with the permission of Allah. For every era is a scripture.*³⁷

Surah Ibrahim reminded the Quraysh that their city was established by Ibrahim as a seat of monotheism. He had in fact prayed for that city, and so in answer to his prayer it would eventually return to being the center of monotheism. The mention of this *dua* here was in fact a prophecy that Islam would eventually become the religion of Makkah.

The *dua* is narrated at length in this *surah* for the Quraysh to reflect on. There are many lessons we can learn from the wording of this supplication.

Recall that Abraham said, “O my Lord, make this land peaceful, and keep me and my sons from worshipping idols.

My Lord, they have led many people astray. Whoever follows me belongs with me; and whoever disobeys me—You are Forgiving and Merciful.

Our Lord, I have settled some of my offspring in a valley of no vegetation, by Your Sacred House, our Lord, so that they may perform the prayers. So, make the hearts of some people incline towards them, and provide them with fruits, that they may be thankful.

*Our Lord, You know what we conceal and what we reveal. And nothing is hidden from Allah, on earth or in the heaven.*³⁸

The *surah* ends with a firm warning that tyrants will not escape Allah’s punishment. This was a warning to the Makkans to repent and stop oppressing the Muslims. It remains a warning to every tyrant in the world today.

*Do not ever think that Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers do. He only defers them until a Day when the eyes stare.*³⁹

37 Qur’an 13:38.

38 Qur’an 14:35–38.

39 Qur’an 14:42.



Juz Fourteen

Surah Hijr continues the same theme as Surahs Rad and Ibrahim. Revealed in the late Makkan Era, it focuses on reminding people to believe in the Prophet ﷺ and obey him. The stories of the perished nations are repeated in this *surah* as a final reminder to the Makkans not to follow in their footsteps.

The following verses show how the Quraysh were adamant in their disbelief, even though the signs of Allah were all around them.

*We sent others before you, to the former communities.*⁴⁰

*Even if We opened for them a gateway into the sky, and they began to ascend through it, they would still say, “Our eyes are hallucinating; in fact, we are people bewitched.”*⁴¹

Surah al-Nahl focuses on the blessings of Allah, and the importance of gratitude to Allah for those Blessings. This is a late Makkan *surah* that focuses on this core aspect of Islamic theology. One of the primary goals of Makkan revelation was to teach people the correct beliefs, and why they should worship the Creator alone. Gratitude is considered the highest level of worship as it was the reason that the Prophet ﷺ himself excelled at worship.

Aisha رضي الله عنها narrates that Allah’s Messenger ﷺ performed the ritual prayer until his feet became swollen, so he was asked, “Must you burden yourself with this, when Allah has already forgiven you your former and your latter sins?” He replied, “Shall I not be a thankful servant?”⁴²

This Surah focuses on many of the blessings Allah has given us that we often take for granted. We are reminded that our food, drink, homes, and so much more are all gifts from Allah that we should be grateful for.

He created the human being from a drop of fluid, yet he becomes an open adversary. And the livestock—He created them for you. In them are warmth and benefits for you, and of them you eat. And there is beauty in them for you, when you bring them home, and when you drive them to pasture.

40 Qur’an 15:10.

41 Qur’an 15:14–15.

42 Sahih Muslim, no. 2819.

*And they carry your loads to territory you could not have reached without great hardship. Your Lord is Clement and Merciful. And the horses, and the mules, and the donkeys—for you to ride, and for luxury. And He creates what you do not know.*⁴³

This *surah* contains the beautiful reminder that we can never count all of the blessings of Allah in our life. Reflecting on this *surah* should fill our hearts with gratitude and cause us to worship Allah out of gratitude for all His Blessings.

*And if you tried to enumerate the favors of Allah, you would not be able to count them. Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.*⁴⁴

Towards the end of the *surah* is a powerful verse that is often repeated in many lectures. It is considered a comprehensive verse that summarizes the commands and prohibitions of Islam.

*Allah commands justice, and goodness, and generosity towards relatives. And He forbids immorality, and injustice, and oppression. He advises you, so that you may take heed.*⁴⁵

There are two beautiful incidents in the *seerah* related to this verse. The first is the story of Uthman Ibn Maz'un رضي الله عنه.

Abdullah Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه narrated that while the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم was sitting in the courtyard of his house, Uthman bin Maz'un رضي الله عنه passed by and smiled at the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم. The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said to him, “Won’t you sit down?” He said, “Certainly.” So, the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم sat facing him, and while they were talking, the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم began looking up at the sky, looking at it for a while, then he brought his gaze down until he was looking at the ground to his right. Then the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم turned slightly away from his companion Uthman to where he was looking.

Then he began to tilt his head as if trying to understand something, and Ibn Maz'un was looking on. When the matter was finished and he had understood what had been said to him, the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم stared at the sky again as he had the first

43 Qur'an 16:4–8.

44 Qur'an 16:18.

45 Qur'an 16:90.

time, looking at whatever he could see until it disappeared. Then he turned back to face Uthman again.

Uthman said, “O Muhammad, I have never seen you do anything like you did today while I was sitting with you.”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “What did you see me do?”

Uthman said, “I saw you staring at the sky, then you lowered your gaze until you were looking to your right, then you turned to him and left me. Then you tilted your head as if you were trying to understand something that was being said to you.”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Did you notice that?”

Uthman said, “Yes.”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “A messenger from Allah came to me just now, when you were sitting here.”

Uthman said, “A messenger from Allah?”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Yes.”

Uthman said, “And what did he say to you?”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited (Surah al-Nahl 16:90), “Verily, Allah orders justice and kindness...”

Uthman said, “That was when faith was established in my heart, and I began to love the messenger.”⁴⁶

The other story related to this verse is about a tribal chief who wanted to know the essence of the Islamic message.

Aktham ibn al-Saifi was the chief of his people. When he learnt about the Prophet ﷺ, his claim to prophethood and his propagation of Islam, he decided to visit the Prophet ﷺ personally. But his people suggested to him that he was their chief, the highest-ranking person among them, therefore, his going there personally was not appropriate.

Then, Aktham proposed the alternative that they should select two persons from the tribe who should go there, survey the situation and report back to him. These two people presented themselves before the Prophet ﷺ and submitted that they had come from Aktham ibn al-Saifi to find out two things.

Aktham has two questions for you, “Who are you and what are you?”

The Prophet ﷺ replied, “The answer to the first question is that I am Muhammad ibn Abdullah, and the answer to the second question is that I am a servant of Allah and His messenger.”

⁴⁶ Tafsir Ibn Kathir; Musnad Imam Ahmad, grade: hasan.

After that, he recited this verse of Surah An-Nahl. The two emissaries requested him to recite those verses to them once again. He kept reciting the verse before them until the verse was committed to their memory.

The emissaries returned to Aktham and reported that by asking the first question their intention was to find out his lineage. But he did not give much attention to this. He simply considered it sufficient to give the name of his father.

Yet, when they checked on his lineage with others, they found out that he was very high in lineage and nobility. Then, they told Aktham that the Prophet ﷺ also recited some words before them which they would narrate to him.

When the emissaries recited the verse to Aktham ibn al-Saifi, he promptly said, “This tells us that he bids morals which are high and forbids morals which are low. Let all of you embrace his religion as soon as possible so that you stay ahead of other people, and not lag behind as camp followers.”⁴⁷

These stories show us the powerful impact of the Qur’an on a sincere heart. A sincere seeker of the truth who hears and reflects on these verses can only be convinced that it is indeed the word of Allah, and the truth.

47 Tafsir Ibn Kathir.



Juz Fifteen

The two *surahs* in this *juz*, Surah al-Isra and Surah al-Kahf, share a reason for revelation for some of their verses. The Quraysh wanted to prove that the Prophet ﷺ was a false prophet, so they asked the rabbis in Madinah for questions to ask him that only a true prophet would know the answers to.

Imam al-Tabari has reported from Abdullah ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه that the Quraysh of Makkah (disturbed by the rising influence of the Prophet ﷺ as a prophet) sent two of their men, Nadr ibn Harith and ‘Uqbah ibn Abi Mu’ayt, to the Jewish scholars of Madinah.

Their mission was to find out what they said about him as they were learned in past scriptures of the Torah and *Injil*. The Jewish scholars told them, “Put three questions before him. If he answers these correctly, you should know that he is a prophet and messenger of Allah, and if he fails to do that, you should know that he is a pretender and not a messenger. Firstly, ask him about the young men who had left their city in the distant past and what had happened to them, for this is a unique event.

Secondly, ask him about the person who had traveled through the East and West of the earth and what had happened to him. Thirdly, ask him about the *ruh* (soul, spirit) as to what it was?”

The two Quraysh emissaries returned to Makkah, informed their tribesmen that they had come back with a decisive plan of action and told them all about their encounter with the Jewish scholars of Madinah. Then, these people took these questions to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He heard the questions and said that he will answer them tomorrow.

But he forgot to say ‘Insha’Allah’ at that time. These people went back, and the Prophet ﷺ kept waiting for the Divine revelation in the hope that he would be told the answers to these questions through *wahy* (revelation).

But no revelation came the next day. In fact, fifteen days went by, and things stood as they were, with no new revelation. The Quraysh of Makkah started taunting the Prophet ﷺ which caused him significant pain.

After fifteen days, the angel Jibril came with Surah al-Kahf (in which the pause in revelation was explained as being due to not having said ‘Insha’Allah’ when promising to do something in the future).

This Surah also narrates the event about the young men known as the People of the Cave, and the event concerning the travel of Dhul-Qarnayn from the East to the West.

Also included therein was a brief answer to the question asked about the ‘*ruh*.’ This question was addressed separately at the end of Surah Bani Israel (17:85) and this is the reason why Surah al-Kahf was placed after Surah Bani Israel.⁴⁸

The opening verses of Surah al-Isra have a different reason for revelation. These verses were revealed soon after the miraculous night journey of the Prophet ﷺ. This night journey served as a proof of prophethood and a test of the sincerity of the believers. It was at this event that Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه gained his title al-Siddiq due to his immediate testifying to the truth without any hesitation.

Both *surahs* were revealed in Makkah during the early to mid Makkan era and focus on matters of faith. Surah al-Isra clarifies some of the fundamental moral foundations of Islam, while Surah al-Kahf clarifies the various tests of life that people will face. From these two *surahs*, many fundamental lessons in theology can be derived. Surah al-Kahf also holds a special virtue of serving as a protection against the Antichrist.

Abu Darda reported Allah’s Messenger ﷺ as saying, “If anyone learns by heart the first ten verses of the Surah al-Kahf, he will be protected from the Dajjal.”⁴⁹

48 Al-Tabari; al-Suyuti.

49 Sahih Muslim, no. 809.



Juz Sixteen

The two *surahs* introduced in this *juz* are each related to a crucial conversion story in early Islamic history. Both are early Makkan *surahs* that are focused on the stories of the Prophets. Their powerful rhythm, beautiful imagery, and heart-softening messages were responsible for two of the most important conversions in early Muslim history.

Surah Maryam teaches us about Allah's Mercy through stories about the prophets and their families. At its heart is the story of Mary and the birth of Jesus. Jafar رضي الله عنه recited portion of this *surah* in the court of the Abyssinian king Najashi. This recitation caused the priests to weep, and Najashi to embrace Islam. Najashi was the first king to embrace Islam, marking a crucial moment in Muslim history.

Due to persecution at the hands of the Makkans, some of the companions had migrated to Abyssinia seeking asylum from its just Christian ruler Najashi. The Makkans sent Amr Ibn al-Aas to convince the king to send the Muslims back. The king listened to both sides of the story and eventually sided with the Muslims and secretly converted to Islam.

Two key elements led to his conversion. The first was a lecture Jafar رضي الله عنه gave to him describing Islam, which is translated below. The second was the recitation of portions of Surah Maryam.

Jafar's رضي الله عنه lecture is legendary and describes some of the most salient features of Islam. He explained to Najashi:

“O King! we were plunged in the depth of ignorance and barbarism; we worshipped idols, we were unchaste, we ate carrion, and we spoke vulgarities. We disregarded every feeling of humanity, and the duties of hospitality and neighborhood were neglected.

We knew no law but that of the strong, when Allah raised among us a man, of whose lineage, truthfulness, honesty, and purity we were aware; and he called to the Oneness of Allah and taught us not to associate anything with Him.

He forbade us from worship of idols; and he enjoined us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful and to regard the rights of the neighbors and kith and kin. He forbade us to speak evil of women, or to eat the provisions of orphans. He ordered us to flee from vices, and to abstain from evil; to offer prayers, to render alms, and to observe fasting.

We have believed in him, we have accepted his teachings and his injunctions to worship Allah, and not to associate anything with Him, and we have allowed what He has allowed, and prohibited what He has prohibited.

For this reason, our people have risen against us, have persecuted us to make us forsake the worship of Allah and return to the worship of idols and other abominations.

They have tortured and injured us, until finding no safety among them; we have come to your country and hope you will protect us from oppression.”⁵⁰

Surah Taha is related to the conversion of Umar Ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه. The story of Umar’s رضي الله عنه conversion is well known. He was on his way to attack the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم when he learned that his sister had converted to Islam. He went to her house and demanded an explanation. After calming down, he asked to read what they were reciting. He read the opening verses of Surah Taha and that was enough to convince him to accept Islam.

These two stories show us the powerful transformational effect of the Qur’an. When its message reaches a sincere heart, it changes a person forever because a sincere heart cannot ignore the fact that this is revelation from their Lord.

50 Al-Dhahabi, *Siyar al-alam an-nubala* (Beirut: Dar al-Risala al-Alimiyyah, 2014), 1:215.



Juz Seventeen

The *surahs* in the seventeenth *juz* were revealed around the time of the migration from Makkah to Madinah. Some of these *surahs* are Makkan, and some are Madinan, even though they were revealed in the same year. This *juz* shows some of the challenges of the year of migration as the Muslims adapted to a new life in a new land.

In Surah al-Hajj, Allah mentions a type of people who worship Allah conditionally. These are people who worship Allah expecting something in return, and when they do not receive what they asked for, they leave the faith or stop trying. This kind of transactional relationship with the Creator goes against the very purpose of life, and the essence of *tawhid*.

*And among the people is he who worships Allah on edge. When something good comes his way, he is content with it. But when an ordeal strikes him, he makes a turnaround. He loses this world and the next. That is the obvious loss.*⁵¹

This verse was revealed because in Madinah, some people had converted to Islam with wrong intentions. They thought that the true religion must make life easier for them. They converted to test the religion out. If their families and livestock had children, they would say it is a good religion. If not, they would leave Islam saying it is a bad religion. This mindset and approach to Islam is problematic and has no basis in the revelation.

It is similar to the prosperity doctrine that is preached today. Some preachers teach the idea that if you love Allah and believe in Him, then He will bless you with whatever you want in this world and make life easy for you. This causes people to accept the faith and worship Allah insincerely.

The Qur'an, in many places, provides a different framework. It proposes that the believer should expect tests in life and be ready to make sacrifices for the sake of Allah. Life in this world is not Paradise, and we will not always get what we want in this world. Allah put us on this earth to test us, and part of that test means facing the hardships of life and being patient through them.

The Ansar understood this well. They understood that by accepting Islam, allowing the Makkan Muslims to migrate to their land, and protecting the Prophet ﷺ, they were opening themselves up to new challenges and tests.

⁵¹ Qur'an 22:11.

The Makkans would not sit quietly while Islam spread in a nearby city. They would retaliate and this would lead to war. The Ansar embraced Islam wholeheartedly despite knowing this, proving their sincerity and commitment to the faith.

The result of their pledge was a war between Makkah and Madinah, which started very soon after this. In this same *surah*, Allah gave permission to the believers to fight back against the Makkans for the first time.

*Permission (to fight back) is given to those who are fought against, and Allah is Able to give them victory.*⁵²

This was the first time revelation had come down allowing war. Conditions would be revealed to minimize casualties and prioritize peace. These verses show how things shifted in the year of migration.

The move to Madinah brought a lot of good. The Muslims now had their own land, strong community support, and protection from the tyrants of Makkah. But they also faced new challenges including war with the Makkans, and the rise of hypocrites from within.

⁵² Qur'an 22:39.



Juz Eighteen

The three *surahs* found in this *juz* share a common theme of describing the qualities of the true believer. The opening verses of Surah al-Muminun list some of the most important qualities of the true believer. The Prophet ﷺ said about these verses, “Ten verses have been revealed to me; whoever practices them will enter Paradise.”⁵³

Surah al-Muminun gives us the theory on how to get to Paradise, Surah Nur shows us the consequences of not following these laws. Together these *surahs* give us a comprehensive overview of the core morals and ethics of our religion.

Surah Muminun calls on us to avoid idle speech and immorality and to fulfill our promises. Surah Nur shows the consequences of immorality, slander, and broken promises.

The bulk of Surah Nur was revealed because of one incident, known as the slander of Aisha رضي الله عنها. Aisha رضي الله عنها narrates this story in detail in a narration that is too long to replicate here. It is worth taking time to open the books of hadith and read the full narration in detail there.⁵⁴

The narration refers to a scandal started by the hypocrites in Madinah. The Prophet ﷺ was returning from a journey when Aisha رضي الله عنها got lost and left behind. She sat and waited for someone to find her. A young companion found her and took her home to the Prophet ﷺ. The hypocrites, upon seeing her enter the city with a stranger, started a scandalous rumor.

The scandal shook Madinah and many people believed it. At first, Aisha رضي الله عنها was unaware as she was ill and did not leave her home for a month. When she eventually heard of the slander, she was in shock. She went to her parents' home and stayed there hoping that Allah would clear her name. The Prophet ﷺ, in the meantime, investigated the matter fairly and thoroughly.

Eventually, a large section of Sur Nur was revealed, declaring her innocence, and criticizing those who slandered her and those who believed the slander. Aisha رضي الله عنها was honored with the revelation of these verses in her defense, verses that we continue to recite today.

53 Tafsir al-Qurtubi (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 2013), 12:95, grade: sahih.

54 Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 4141.

Those who perpetrated the slander are a band among you. Do not consider it bad for you, but it is good for you. Each person among them bears his share in the sin. As for him who played the major role—for him is a terrible punishment.

Why, when you heard about it, did the believing men and women not think well of one another, and say, “This is an obvious lie”? Why did they not bring four witnesses to testify to it? If they fail to bring witnesses, then in Allah’s sight, they are liars.

Was it not for Allah’s favor upon you, and His mercy, in this world and the Hereafter, you would have suffered a great punishment for what you have ventured into.

When you spread it with your tongues and spoke with your mouths what you had no knowledge of, you considered it trivial; but according to Allah, it is serious.

*When you heard it, you should have said,
“It is not for us to repeat this. By Your glory, this is a serious slander.”
Allah cautions you never to return to the like of it if you are believers.⁵⁵*

There are many lessons to take from this incident. Too often we are quick to believe slander against innocent Muslims and treat people as if they are guilty until proven innocent. In the age of social media, slander spreads faster than ever and often the damage done can never be undone. Once slander is out there on the internet, it becomes very difficult to delete it entirely.

As believers, we must firmly hold to the principles in this *surah* and treat people fairly. A person is innocent until proven guilty, and we should refrain from believing and spreading rumors until the truth is clearly established.

55 Qur’an 24:11–17.



Juz Nineteen

The theme of the qualities of the true believers continues in the nineteenth *juz*. These three *surahs*, Furqan, Shu'ara, and al-Naml, were all revealed in Makkah and demonstrate some of the core qualities of the true believers.

The opening verses of Surah al-Furqan were revealed as a response to the Quraysh of Makkah. The Quraysh made many arguments against the Qur'an and the Prophet ﷺ. They argued that it was just stories of ancient people, and that the Prophet ﷺ could not have been a prophet since he had normal human needs. The opening passage of this *surah* addressed all their doubts head on.

*Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His servant,
to be a warning to humanity. He to whom belongs the kingdom of the
heavens and the earth, who took to Himself no son, who never had a partner
in His kingship, who created everything and determined its measure.*

*And yet, instead of Him, they produce for themselves gods that
create nothing, but are themselves created; that have no power to harm
or benefit themselves; and no power over life, death, or resurrection.*

*Those who disbelieve say, "This is nothing but a lie that he made up,
and others have helped him." They have committed an injustice and a perjury.*

*And they say, "Tales of the ancients; he wrote them down;
they are dictated to him morning and evening."*

*Say, "It was revealed by Him who knows the Secret in the heavens
and the earth. He is always Forgiving and Merciful."*

*And they say, "What sort of messenger is this, who eats food,
and walks in the marketplaces? If only an angel was sent
down with him, to be alongside him a warner."*

*Or "If only a treasure was dropped on him." Or "If only
he had a garden from which he eats." The evildoers also say,
"You are following but a man under spell."*

*Look how they invent examples for you.
They have gone astray, and cannot find a way.*⁵⁶

There are many powerful passages in these *surahs* that showcase the Makkani *dawah*. Surah al-Shu'ara narrates the stories of the past nations and their prophets in a powerful rhythmic manner, reminding the Makkans that the Qur'an is beyond poetry and is a miracle they cannot ignore.

This *surah* also included the first call to warn the people of Makkah openly about Islam, "And warn your close relatives."⁵⁷ After this verse was revealed, the Prophet ﷺ started conveying the message of Islam to his close family, some of whom accepted, while others rejected.

The Surah ends with a reminder that not all poetry is evil. The Quraysh used poetry to ignite people's desire to sin, and to make propaganda against Islam. In response, some *sahaba* who were gifted in this field like Abdullah Ibn Rawaha and Hassan Ibn Thabit wrote poems in defense of Islam and the Prophet ﷺ. This tradition remains strong in every Muslim culture today. The closing verses of this *surah* praised such poets while condemning the rest.

*And as for the poets—the deviators follow them. Do you not see
how they ramble in every style? And how they say what they do not do?*

*Except for those who believe, and do good deeds, and remember Allah
frequently, and defend themselves after they are wronged. As for those who
do wrong, they will know by what overturning they will be overturned.*⁵⁸

Surah al-Furqan also ends with a powerful set of verses, describing the qualities of the true believers. Surah al-Muminun started with a description of these qualities, and Surah al-Furqan ends with a deeper description of similar qualities. This passage should be studied and reflected over so that we can emulate some of these amazing qualities.

*The servants of the Merciful are those who walk the earth
in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace."*

⁵⁶ Qur'an 25:1-9.

⁵⁷ Qur'an 26:214.

⁵⁸ Qur'an 26:224-27.

And those who pass the night prostrating themselves to their Lord and standing up. And those who say, “Our Lord, avert from us the suffering of Hell, for its suffering is continuous. It is indeed a miserable residence and destination.”

And those who, when they spend, are neither wasteful nor stingy, but choose a middle course between that.

And those who do not implore besides Allah anyone else, and do not kill the soul which Allah has made sacred—except in the pursuit of justice—and do not commit adultery. Whoever does that will face penalties.

The punishment will be doubled for him on the Day of Resurrection, and he will dwell therein in humiliation forever. Except for those who repent, and believe, and do good deeds. These—Allah will replace their bad deeds with good deeds. Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful.

Whoever repents and acts righteously has inclined towards Allah with repentance. And those who do not bear false witness; and when they come across indecencies, they pass by with dignity.

And those who, when reminded of the revelations of their Lord, do not fall before them deaf and blind. And those who say, “Our Lord, grant us delight in our spouses and our children, and make us a good example for the righteous.”

Those will be awarded the Chamber for their patience and will be greeted therein with greetings and peace.⁵⁹

59 Qur'an 25:63–75.



Juz Twenty

Surah al-Qasas and Surah al-Ankabut are late Makkan *surahs* that addressed some of the primary issues of that time. The core theme of Surah al-Qasas is the story of Musa ﷺ and the importance of family. Yet it also includes a warning that guidance is from Allah and that it is not always possible to guide your family to the truth.

These verses were revealed when the Prophet's ﷺ uncle Abu Talib was passing away. He was one of the Prophet's ﷺ strongest pillars of support yet remained firm on the religion of his forefathers. As he was passing away, the Prophet ﷺ pleaded with him to accept Islam, but he refused to do so. Upon his death, this verse was revealed.

*You cannot guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom
He wills, and He knows best those who are guided.*⁶⁰

The death of Abu Talib is a tragic event with a deep lesson for us all; we cannot guide people. Guidance is a gift from Allah to the sincere seeker of the truth. No matter how much we love someone, if they close their hearts to the truth because of arrogance, blind following, or worldly desires, there is nothing we can do to change their hearts. All we can do is pray for the guidance of those who are alive and call them to the truth with gentle and wise preaching.

Surah al-Ankabut begins with a strong warning that the believer will be tested.

*Have the people supposed that they will be left alone to say,
“We believe,” without being put to the test?*

*We have tested those before them. Allah will surely know
the truthful, and He will surely know the liars.*⁶¹

This continues the lesson that life is a test, and that accepting Islam does not automatically mean all of your dreams will come true in this world. The prosperity doctrine is foreign to Islam. The first generation of Muslims faced unbelievable hardship upon accepting Islam. Our expectation as believers is that Allah will test us; we should expect life to alternate between periods of

⁶⁰ Qur'an 28:56.

⁶¹ Qur'an 29:2-3.

hardship and ease. Expecting only prosperity on earth is a delusional belief that sets us up for failure and disappointment.

This verse was revealed in the final years of the Makkan era before the migration. It prepared the believers for what was to come. The migration to Madinah represented a new beginning but it was not going to be easy. Old problems would be replaced with new problems. Each new blessing would come with new challenges.

The migration itself and adjusting to a new climate and culture would in themselves be tests. The following story, related by Aisha رضي الله عنها demonstrates some of the difficulties of this adjustment period.

When Allah's Messenger ﷺ came to Medina, Abu Bakr and Bilal got fever, and I went to both of them and said, "O my father, how do you feel? O Bilal, how do you feel?"

Whenever Abu Bakr's fever got worse, he would say, "Every man will meet his death one day, for death is really nearer to him than his leather shoelaces (to his feet)."

And whenever fever deserted Bilal, he would say aloud, "Would that I know whether I shall spend a night in the valley (of Makkah) with Idhkhir and Jalil (i.e., kinds of grass) around me, and whether I shall drink one day the water of Mijannah, and whether I shall see once again the hills of Shamah and Tafil?"

Then I went to Allah's Messenger ﷺ and told him of that. He said, "O Allah, make us love Medina as much as or more than we used to love Makkah, O Allah, make it healthy and bless its measures, and take away its fever to Al-Juhfa."⁶²

Life is a test, and the various passages in this *juz* demonstrate this over and over again. The believer does not expect a life of non-stop ease in this world. That is what we expect in Paradise. This world is a mixture of trials and ease, hardship and relief, good times and bad times.

62 Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 3926.



Juz Twenty-One

The twenty-first *juz* is comprised mostly of Makkan *surahs* which revolve around the *dawah* of the Prophet ﷺ to the people of Makkah. Surah Rum focuses on the many proofs of the existence of Allah, His various signs within the Creation. At the same time, the *surah* is itself a proof of prophethood, as it begins with a prophecy that clearly proves it is from Allah, and not from the mind of any human.

Surah Rum was revealed at a time when the Romans were losing a war against the Persians. The pagans of Makkah were excited by this news, as they viewed the Persians as closer to them religiously than the Romans who were Christians.

The tide had turned strongly against the Roman Empire, and it seemed like the end of this mighty empire. Many of its most important lands had fallen to the Persians, and all hope seemed lost. It was at this moment that Allah revealed the following prophecy.

*The Romans have been defeated. In a nearby territory. But following their defeat, they will be victorious. In a few years. The matter is up to Allah, in the past and in the future. On that day, the believers will rejoice. In Allah's support. He supports whomever He wills. He is the Almighty, the Merciful. The promise of Allah. Allah never breaks His promise, but most people do not know.*⁶³

This prophecy was very clear and multi-layered. Allah had promised that the Romans will be victorious within a few years. The Arabic word used indicated that it would happen within ten years. Allah also promised that the believers will be rejoicing and enjoying Allah's support on that day. It ends by saying that this is Allah's promise, and that Allah never breaks His Promise.

This was a major prophecy for that time. The integrity of the *dawah* revolved around these events coming to pass within a decade, events in foreign lands that the Muslims had no influence over at all.

In his book, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Edward Gibbon says, "At the time when this prediction is said to have been delivered, no prophecy could be more distant from its accomplishment, since

63 Qur'an 30:2-6.

the first twelve years of Heraclius announced the approaching dissolution of the empire.”⁶⁴

Yet the prophecy came to pass exactly as predicted. Within a few years, the Romans were able to turn the tables completely and take back all their territories from the Persians. On the same day in which they took back Jerusalem, the Muslims had also turned the tables against the Makkans by winning the Battle of Badr. The prophecy was fulfilled exactly as it was revealed, adding another major proof that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was indeed a true prophet, and the Qur’an was indeed from Allah.

Another important *surah* in this *juz* is Surah Luqman. The pagans of Makkah looked up to Luqman the Wise as a role model. In this *surah*, Allah revealed that Luqman was a monotheist who taught his son to worship Allah alone and live a life of service to Allah. The Makkans claimed to take their manners and character from Luqman yet neglected to take the most important thing from him: his theology.

In the middle of the story of Luqman, there is a strong reminder not to obey our parents when they ask us to commit evil, but to remain kind and merciful to them. This reminder was revealed due to an incident that occurred in the early Makkan period. Sad Ibn Abi Waqqas ؓ was one of the early converts to Islam. In fact, he may have been the seventh man to accept Islam. His mother vehemently opposed Islam and threatened to go on a hunger strike if Sad did not revert to paganism. The following verses were revealed to clarify the rights of parents and the rights of Allah.

We have entrusted the human being with the care of his parents. His mother carried him through hardship upon hardship, weaning him in two years. So, give thanks to Me, and to your parents. To Me is the destination.

*But if they strive to have you associate with Me something of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. But keep company with them in this life, in kindness, and follow the path of him who turns to Me. Then to Me is your return; and I will inform you of what you used to do.*⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: Electric Book Co., 2001), 8:94.

⁶⁵ Qur’an 31:14–15.

Sad Ibn Abi Waqqas رضي الله عنه lived by these verses. He refused to abandon Islam but remained a respectful son to his mother. He became a role model for any convert in the future who had to deal with parents or relatives that are antagonistic towards Islam. The revelation was clear; treat them well but do not obey them in the disobedience of Allah.

This *juz* is full of reminders about the proofs of Allah and the importance of *tawheed*. It includes the only verse which explicitly mentions the *fitrah* (the natural beliefs of human beings) which forms a core foundation of our theology today.

So, devote yourself to the religion of monotheism, the natural way (fitrah) that Allah has instilled in mankind. There is no altering Allah's creation. This is the true religion, but most people do not know. ⁶⁶

This *juz* also includes a lot of discussion on the importance of prayer, humility, reflection, and good character. These early *surahs* played a pivotal role in shaping the theology and the character of the early Makkan converts.

⁶⁶ Qur'an 30:30.



Juz Twenty-Two

Surah al-Ahzab was revealed around the time of the Battle of the Trench in 5 AH. Due to the many events occurring in that event, there are many passages in this *surah* that have clear reasons for revelation. The remaining *surahs* in this *juz* are early Makkan *surahs* focused on monotheism. This chapter, however, will focus on some of the reasons for revelation for Surah al-Ahzab.

The *surah* gets its name from the confederation (*ahzab*) of tribes that had united against the Muslims that year. Wanting to wipe Islam out once and for all, the Quraysh allied with many other tribes and marched upon Madinah in Shawwal 5 AH. The Muslims were heavily outnumbered.

The Prophet ﷺ gathered his companions together to discuss potential strategies and solutions. One companion, Salman the Persian, suggested that they build a ditch around the vulnerable and open sides of Madinah like the Persians used to do. The Prophet ﷺ agreed, and a ditch was built.

The *ahzab* were unable to cross the ditch in large numbers. As a result, the battle became a siege with multiple skirmishes. Both sides waited it out, but soon began to run out of food supplies. A powerful wind blew through the tents of the aggressors, destroying their supplies and forcing them to retreat. The Muslims had won with the help of Allah. This victory is mentioned in detail in this *surah*.

O you who believe! Remember Allah's blessings upon you, when forces came against you, and We sent against them a wind, and forces you did not see. Allah is Observant of what you do.

When they came upon you, from above you, and from beneath you; and the eyes became dazed, and the hearts reached the throats, and you harbored doubts about Allah. There and then the believers were tested and were shaken most severely.⁶⁷

There are many passages in this *surah* related to other important events that occurred that year. The concept of *tabanni* (taking an adopted son as one's biological son) was abrogated in this *surah*.

⁶⁷ Qur'an 33:9-11.

Allah did not place two hearts inside any man's body. Nor did He make your wives whom you equate with your mothers, your actual mothers. Nor did He make your adopted sons, your actual sons. These are your words coming out of your mouths. Allah speaks the truth, and guides to the path.

Name them after their fathers; that is more equitable with Allah. But if you do not know their fathers, then your brethren in faith and your friends. There is no blame on you if you err therein, barring what your hearts premeditates. Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.⁶⁸

When these verses were revealed, all such relations were changed to reflect biological realities. Zaid Ibn Haritha stopped going by the name Zaid Ibn Muhammad, and Salim, the freed servant of Abu Hudhaifa, stopped referring to himself as Salim Ibn Abi Hudhaifa. This showed their full commitment to the revealed law and the truth.

Another verse with an interesting reason for revelation is the verse listing all the qualities of the true believing men and women. Regarding the revelation of this verse, Umm Salama رضي الله عنها once asked the Prophet ﷺ why the Qur'an only mentions men when describing the qualities of true believers. Soon thereafter, this verse was revealed.

Muslim men and Muslim women, believing men and believing women, obedient men and obedient women, truthful men and truthful women, patient men and patient women, humble men and humble women, charitable men, and charitable women, fasting men and fasting women, men who guard their chastity and women who guard, men who remember Allah frequently and women who remember—Allah has prepared for them a pardon, and an immense reward.⁶⁹

There are many other verses in this *surah* that have clear reasons for revelation. This includes the verses about the marriage of Zaynab, the verse of Hijab, and the verses addressing the Prophet's wives with rules specific to them. Each of these stories reflect the development of the Shariah in the Madinan Era and give us a glimpse of the Prophet's life during that period.

⁶⁸ Qur'an 33:4–5.

⁶⁹ Qur'an 33:35.



Juz Twenty-Three

The four *surahs* in this *juz* (Yasin, Saffat, Sad, and Zumar) are Makkan *surahs* focus on monotheism and other aspects of theology. The one *surah* here that has several interesting reasons for revelation is Surah al-Zumar.

Before the Prophet ﷺ received revelation, there were some men in Makkah who refused to worship idols and were seeking the truth. These men included Waraqa Ibn Naufal and Zayd Ibn Amr Ibn Nufail. Waraqa Ibn Naufal accepted a monotheist denomination of Christianity and devoted his life to the scripture. He passed away before the public preaching of the Prophet ﷺ after he had confirmed to the Prophet ﷺ in private that he was indeed the messenger of Allah.

Zayd Ibn Amr travelled and studied with various Christian and Jewish preachers. However, he felt that they had changed the message of their prophets and did not feel at ease following them. Instead, he devoted his life to the Abrahamic way and tried to revive monotheism in Makkah. He passed away before the Prophet ﷺ received his first revelation.

Two of the earliest converts to Islam were Zayd's son and daughter, Sa'id Ibn Zayd رضي الله عنه and Atiqa Bint Zayd رضي الله عنها, the wife of Umar Ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه. They were raised as monotheists by their father, and he had told them that a prophet was expected in that region soon. Because of this, they embraced Islam very early.

Sa'id Ibn Zayd رضي الله عنه and Umar Ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه wondered about the fate of Zayd Ibn Amr. They knew that he was a righteous man who refused to worship idols, but he did not get a chance to officially embrace Islam. They asked the Prophet ﷺ about the fate of people like Waraqa and Zayd in the afterlife. Regarding the fate of such monotheists, Allah revealed the following verses:

As for those who avoid the worship of idols and devote themselves to Allah—theirs is the good news. So, give good news to My servants.

Those who listen to the Word and follow the best of it. These are they whom Allah has guided. These are the ones who possess great intellect.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Qur'an 39:17-18.

These verses give us a glimpse of Allah's Mercy. People who did not get to hear the beautiful message of Islam are held responsible to follow the best of what they find. Each person's case is judged on the Last Day based on what they had access to and their sincerity. The message of hope flows throughout this *surah*.

Another verse in this *surah* is known as the verse of hope. This verse provides hope that sincere repentance will always be accepted, no matter how big our sins are.

*Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves: do not despair of Allah's mercy, for Allah forgives all sins. He is indeed the Forgiver, the Clement."*⁷¹

Some of the companions in Makkah were tortured so much that they were forced to say blasphemous words and pretend to be apostates for years to avoid being killed. When they finally had the opportunity to leave all this behind and embrace Islam openly, they wondered whether they could be forgiven for what they had done. This verse was revealed to provide hope to them and every sinner until the end of time.

This *juz* teaches us to understand the attributes of our Creator and turn to Him in sincere worship. True success in the next life comes from submitting entirely to the Creator and obeying His Law. It is only when we embrace this message completely that we will experience the sweetness of faith, and the paths to Paradise will become clearer. At the end of those paths will be doors wide open, with angels waiting to greet us.

And those who feared their Lord will be led to Paradise in groups. Until, when they have reached it, and its gates are opened, its keepers will say to them, "Peace be upon you, you have been good, so enter it, to abide therein eternally."

*And they will say, "Praise be to Allah, who has fulfilled His promise to us, and made us inherit the land, enjoying Paradise as we please." How excellent is the reward of those who work hard!*⁷²

⁷¹ Qur'an 39:53.

⁷² Qur'an 39:73-74.



Juz Twenty-Four

The twenty-fourth *juz* and twenty-fifth *juz* consist of the Ha Meem *surahs* which are Makkan *surahs* that share a theme about the message, and the qualities of those who embrace it. About these *surahs*, Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه said, “The Ha Meem *surahs* are the beautiful gardens of the Qur’an.”⁷³

There are various passages in Surah Fussilat that were revealed due to specific incidents in the Makkan era.

*You were unable to hide yourselves from your hearing, and your sight, and your skins, to prevent them from testifying against you, and you imagined that Allah was unaware of much of what you do. It is that thought of yours about your Lord that led you to ruin—so you became of the losers.*⁷⁴

These verses were revealed because of the disbelievers who wondered whether Allah could hear them. They would meet in secret and discuss their plots to end the *dawah* in Makkah. In secret, the Makkan leaders committed great evil and planned greater evils. These verses were revealed to warn them that nothing is hidden from Allah. Our own limbs will testify against us or for us on the Last Day. Allah sees all, hears all, and has knowledge of everything, and nothing escapes His Will.

*Surely, those who say: “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remain firm, the angels will descend upon them saying: “Do not fear, and do not grieve, but rejoice in the news of the Garden which you were promised.”*⁷⁵

This verse was revealed in response to the songs and stories the Quraysh used to interrupt the recitation of the Qur’an. This verse was revealed in praise of Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه who replied to the behavior of the disbelievers in a dignified manner that brought people to Islam.

The Quraysh did not see the value of Islam, but Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه did. He knew that the real reward for believing was in the afterlife. This verse also gives us a glimpse of what a good ending looks like. The righteous believer does not face fear or sadness when dying, as the angels will greet him with reassurance and glad tidings.

⁷³ Tafsir al-Qurtubi, 15:253.

⁷⁴ Qur’an 41:22–23.

⁷⁵ Qur’an 41:30.

And who is better in speech than someone who calls to Allah, and acts with integrity, and says, “I am of those who submit”? Good and evil are not equal. Repel evil with good, and the person who was your enemy becomes like an intimate friend.⁷⁶

This verse gives us a glimpse of the *dawah* methodology of the Prophet ﷺ and the result of his method. The Prophet ﷺ was always kind and polite in his dealings with his enemies. As a result, many of them eventually softened, gave him an honest hearing, and finally converted to Islam.

Umar Ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه, Amr Ibn Al-As رضي الله عنه, Khalid Ibn Walid رضي الله عنه, Suhail Ibn Amr رضي الله عنه and Abu Sufyan رضي الله عنه are all examples of people who started as enemies of Islam, and later became among its staunchest defenders. This verse also teaches us not to write anyone off. We do not know for whom Allah has written guidance in the future. Our role is to call to Islam with wisdom and always give people hope for redemption through repentance.

⁷⁶ Qur'an 41:33-34.



Juz Twenty-Five

During the Makkan era, a famine hit Makkah that devastated the community. The Quraysh asked the Prophet ﷺ to pray that the famine would end. He did so, and the famine was lifted. Despite this, they remained firm in their disbelief and continued to reject Islam and harm the Muslims. Allah addresses this situation in the opening verses of Surah Dukhan.

So, watch out for the Day when the sky produces a visible smoke. Enveloping mankind: this is a painful punishment.

“Our Lord, lift the torment from us, we are believers.”

But how can they be reminded? An enlightening messenger has already come to them. But they turned away from him, and said, “Educated, but crazy!” We will ease the punishment a little, but you will revert.⁷⁷

Despite witnessing so many clear proofs of prophethood, the Quraysh leaders remained firm in their disbelief. A primary reason for this was arrogance. They could not accept that Allah had chosen an orphan from Banu Hashim as His Messenger over the likes of Waleed Ibn Mugheirah. Allah addresses this mindset directly in Surah Zukhruf.

But when the truth came to them, they said, “This is sorcery, and we refuse to believe in it.” They also said, “If only this Qur’an was sent down to a man of importance from the two cities.”

Is it they who allocate the mercy of your Lord? It is We who have allocated their livelihood in this life, and We elevated some of them in rank above others, that some of them would take others in service. But your Lord’s mercy is better than what they amass.⁷⁸

The next few verses addressed another issue raised during the Makkan era. The Quraysh had amassed a lot of wealth, despite their disbelief, while many of the Muslims were in financial difficulty despite being strong believers. Some of the new believers could not understand why Allah had given the enemies of Islam more wealth than the believers.

⁷⁷ Qur’an 44:10–15.

⁷⁸ Qur’an 43:31–32.

Allah makes it clear that the wealth of this world means nothing compared to the afterlife. Monetary worth does not equal worth in the sight of Allah. These verses make it very clear that the value of this world is so low, the only reason Allah did not give the disbelievers more is because that would tempt the weak-willed to disbelieve.

Were it not that humanity would become a single community, we would have provided those who disbelieve in the Most Gracious with roofs of silver to their houses, and stairways by which they ascend, and doors to their houses, and furnishings on which they recline, and decorations. Yet all that is nothing but the stuff of this life. Yet the Hereafter, with your Lord, is for the righteous.⁷⁹

In this world, Allah tests believer and disbeliever alike with varying income status. Some believers grow wealthy, while others do not, while others go through various economic phases of life. The same applies to the disbelievers. A person's monetary status does not reflect their value in the sight of Allah.

A wealthy person is not necessarily beloved to Allah, and a poor person is not necessarily abandoned. Each is being tested by different circumstances, and their value in the sight of Allah is determined by how they handle their situation. The wealthy person who remains firm in obeying Allah and is generous and compassionate will have a high rank with their Lord. Likewise, the one tested with poverty who continues to trust Allah, be patient, work hard, and find reasons to be grateful and content, will also experience a high rank in the sight of Allah. Our worldly possessions do not determine our rank, it is our piety and the state of our hearts that matter in the end.

⁷⁹ Qur'an 43:33-35.



Juz Twenty-Six

Surah al-Fath was revealed after the Treaty of Hudaibiyah. In Dhul Qa'dah 6AH, the Prophet ﷺ and his companions set off from Madinah to Makkah with the intention of *umrah*. The Prophet ﷺ had seen a dream in which he entered Makkah in peace and performed the *umrah*. As the dreams of Prophets are a form of revelation, he took this as an optimistic sign and travelled to Makkah.

The travelling party was stopped outside Makkah in an area called Hudaibiyah, as the Quraysh debated whether to allow them in or not. On one hand, stopping peaceful pilgrims would be a bad look for the Quraysh. On the other, allowing the Prophet ﷺ back in would be a sign of defeat and recognition of the growing power of the Muslims.

After a lot of discussion, the Quraysh's envoy Suhail Ibn Amr proposed a peace treaty with the Muslims. The conditions of the treaty were heavily in favor of the Quraysh. The Muslims would have to return home and not perform *umrah* until a year later. Anyone who left Islam would be allowed to move to Makkah, but nobody from Makkah who accepted Islam would be allowed into Madinah, starting with Suhail's son Abu Jandal who had pleaded with the Muslims to help him escape his father.

The Muslims were shocked when the Prophet ﷺ signed the treaty and returned Abu Jandal to his father. Unable to process what happened, they sat dejected with a sense of defeat. Umar Ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه expressed his concerns verbally, but Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه assured him that anything the Prophet ﷺ did was always in the best interests of the believers.

On their way back to Madinah, the opening verses of Surah al-Fath were revealed declaring the peace treaty a victory that would lead to even more victories for the believers.

We have granted you a clear victory. That Allah may forgive you your sins, past and to come, and complete His favors upon you, and guide you in a straight path. And help you with an unwavering support.

It is He who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers, to add faith to their faith. To Allah belong the forces of the heavens and the earth. Allah is Knowing and Wise.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Qur'an 48:1-4.

Upon hearing these verses, Umar رضي الله عنه was so happy and excited that he rode through the ranks of the Muslims repeating them. He knew that if Allah called the treaty a victory, then it definitely must be a victory.

The treaty proved to be a major turning point in the *seerah*. With peace finally prevailing between the tribes of Arabia, people could experience the *dawah* and the beauty of Islam for themselves, without the tension of war. Thousands flocked to Islam over the next few years, as entire tribes accepted Islam.

The next year, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his companions completed *umrah* in peace. The dream of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had come true, and it was just the beginning. Many Makkans converted to Islam. As they were not allowed to migrate to Madinah under the terms of the treaty, they formed their own community outside Makkah that proved to be a bigger hindrance for the Makkans. Eventually, the Makkans changed the conditions of the treaty allowing the converts to move to Madinah.

After this, Makkah experienced a massive brain drain as many of their leaders, including Uthman Ibn Talha رضي الله عنه, Khalid Ibn Walid رضي الله عنه, Amr Ibn al-As رضي الله عنه, and the Prophet's uncle Abbas رضي الله عنه all eventually migrated to Madinah. The ranks of the believers were growing faster than anyone could imagine.

Eventually, the Makkans violated the treaty, and in return the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم marched to Makkah leading an army of ten thousand to a peaceful conquest. The treaty of Hudaibiyah proved to be the greatest victory of the Muslims proving the power of peaceful *dawah*.

Within a short time, all of Arabia was Muslim and the Prophet's mission was complete. The Muslim world continued to grow and continues to grow today over a thousand years later. The victory of Hudaibiyah was the pivotal moment that started this ripple effect across the globe.



Juz Twenty-Seven

The Twenty-Seventh *juz* contains some of the most powerful imagery in the Qur'an. The *surahs* in this *juz* are generally Makkan *surahs* that provide vivid and detailed descriptions about the afterlife, and the world beyond ours. Towards the beginning of this *juz* is the remarkable Surah Najm, a *surah* so powerful that it caused even the pagan Arabs to fall in prostration when they first heard it recited.

Abdullah Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه narrates that The Prophet ﷺ prostrated while reciting An-Najm and with him prostrated the Muslims, the pagans, the jinn, and all human beings.⁸¹

This incident was so powerful that the news of the pagans prostrating reached the immigrants in Abyssinia who misunderstood that they had all converted to Islam. The immigrants returned to Makkah to find out the rumor was untrue, and many had to migrate to Abyssinia a second time.

When you study the content, rhythm, flow, and imagery of Surah Najm, its powerful impact becomes very clear. This Surah was designed to drive home the reality that Muhammad ﷺ is a true messenger, Islam is the true religion, and that the afterlife is a reality. It confirms that everything the Prophet ﷺ said about the religion is based on Divine Inspiration.

*Your friend has not gone astray, nor has he erred. Nor does he speak out of desire. It is but a revelation revealed. Taught to him by the Extremely Powerful.*⁸²

This *surah* also describes the Prophet's miraculous interactions with the angel Gabriel whom he saw in his original form twice. This was a special virtue gifted to the final prophet to confirm his status in the sight of Allah.

*The heart did not lie about what it saw. Will you dispute with him concerning what he saw? He saw him on another descent. At the Lotus Tree of the Extremity. Near which is the Garden of Repose. As there covered the Lotus Tree what covered it. The sight did not waver, nor did it exceed. He saw some of the Great Signs of his Lord.*⁸³

The above verses describe the two occasions on which the Prophet ﷺ saw the angel Gabriel in his true form. The first was on the horizon during the

81 Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 1071.

82 Qur'an 53:2-5.

83 Qur'an 53:11-18.

early days of prophethood. The second was during the miraculous journey to Paradise, the *Meraj*, in which he saw things that no other human was gifted with the sight of.

The rest of the *juz* is full of wondrous descriptions of Paradise, especially in the twin *surahs*, al-Rahman and al-Waqiyah. These two *surahs* are the only *surahs* that describe two levels of Paradise for two different types of believers: general Paradise for the average Muslim, and the higher levels of Paradise reserved for the righteous who excelled in worshiping Allah.

The verses describing the average believers bring hope to us all that we too will be among them, because they will be “many of the early generations and many of the latter generations.”⁸⁴ Yet the description of the Paradise of the righteous should give us a goal to strive for, especially because they are described as “many of the early generation and a few of the latter generations.”⁸⁵ A subtle miracle in these verses is that they indicate that the number of believers will increase over time, while the number of righteous will dwindle. This has proven true which each passing generation.

The descriptions of Paradise in the Qur’an should motivate us to be our best. During difficult times, they remind us that a better life awaits us in the afterlife if we are patient. During good times, they remind us to remain consistent in worshipping Allah and not to prioritize this world over the next. It is extremely beneficial to recite these *surahs* often and reflect on their deep meanings. This will help keep us grounded and motivated to strive for the afterlife, which is the real life.

84 Qur’an 56:39–40.

85 Qur’an 56:13–14.



Juz Twenty-Eight

The twenty-eight *juz* contains many short Madinan *surahs* that give us a glimpse of the challenges the Muslims faced in Madinah. The *surahs* that open and close the *juz* focus on divorce-related topics. The opening *surah* is Surah al-Mujadilah which has a very interesting reason for revelation.

Khuwaylah bint Malik ibn Tha'labah رضي الله عنه narrated, "My husband, Aws ibn as-Samit, pronounced the words, 'You are like my mother.' So, I went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, complaining to him about my husband.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ disputed with me and said, 'Remain dutiful to Allah; he is your cousin.' I continued (complaining) until the Qur'anic verse came down, "Certainly has Allah heard the speech of the one who argues with you, [O Muhammad], concerning her husband..."⁸⁶ till the prescription of expiation.

He ﷺ then said, 'He should set free a slave.'

She said, 'He cannot afford it.'

He said, 'He should fast for two consecutive months.'

She said, 'Messenger of Allah, he is an old man; he cannot keep fasts.'

He said, 'He should feed sixty poor people.'

She said, 'He has nothing which he may give in alms.'

At that moment a date-basket was brought to him. I said, 'I shall help him with another date-basket.'

He said, 'You have done well. Go and feed sixty poor people on his behalf and return to your cousin.'⁸⁷

The closing *Surah* is this *juz* is Surah Tahrim, which also relates to a story that almost led to divorce.

Abdullah Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه narrates, "For the whole year I had the desire to ask Umar bin Al-Khattab رضي الله عنه regarding the explanation of a verse (in Surat Al-Tahrim), but I could not ask him because I respected him very much. When he went to perform the Hajj, I too went along with him.

On our return, while we were still on the way home, Umar رضي الله عنه went aside to answer the call of nature by the Arak trees. I waited till he finished and then I proceeded with him and asked him, 'O chief of the Believers! Who were the two wives of the Prophet ﷺ who aided one another against him?'

86 Qur'an 58:1.

87 Sunan Abu Dawud, no. 2214, grade: hasan.

He said, 'They were Hafsa and Aisha.'

Then I said to him, 'By Allah, I wanted to ask you about this a year ago, but I could not do so owing to my respect for you.'

Umar said, 'Do not refrain from asking me. If you think that I have knowledge (about a certain matter), ask me; and if I know (something about it), I will tell you.'

Then Umar added, 'By Allah, in the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance we did not pay attention to women until Allah revealed regarding them what He revealed regarding them and assigned for them that He has assigned. Once while I was thinking over a certain matter, my wife said, 'I recommend that you do so-and-so.'

I said to her, 'What have you got to do with the is matter? Why do you poke your nose in a matter which I want to see fulfilled?' She said, 'How strange you are, O son of Al-Khattab! You don't want to be argued with whereas your daughter Hafsa surely argues with Allah's Messenger ﷺ so much that he remains angry for a full day!'

Umar then reported that he at once put on his outer garment and went to Hafsa and said to her, 'O my daughter! Do you argue with Allah's Messenger ﷺ so that he remains angry the whole day?'

Hafsa said, 'By Allah, we argue with him.'

Umar said, 'Know that I warn you of Allah's punishment and the anger of Allah's Messenger ﷺ ... O my daughter! Don't be betrayed by the one who is proud of her beauty because of the love of Allah's Messenger ﷺ for her (i.e., Aisha).'

Umar added that he went out to Um Salama's house who was one of his relatives and spoke to her. She said, 'O son of Al-Khattab! It is rather astonishing that you interfere in everything; you even want to interfere between Allah's Apostle and his wives!'

By Allah, by her talk she influenced me so much that I lost some of my anger. I left her (and went home). At that time, I had a friend from the Ansar who used to bring news (from the Prophet) in case of my absence, and I used to bring him the news if he was absent. In those days we were afraid of one of the kings of Ghassan tribe.

We heard that he intended to move and attack us, so fear filled our hearts because of that. (One day) my Ansari friend unexpectedly knocked at my door, and said, 'Open!'

I said, 'Has the king of Ghassan come?'

He said, 'No, but something worse; Allah's Messenger ﷺ has isolated himself from his wives.'

I said, ‘Let the nose of Aisha and Hafsa be stuck to dust (i.e., humiliated)!’

Then I put on my clothes and went to Allah’s Messenger ﷺ’s residence, and behold, he was staying in an upper room of his to which he ascended by a ladder, and a black slave of Allah’s Messenger ﷺ was (sitting) on the first step. I said to him, ‘Say (to the Prophet ﷺ) Umar bin Al-Khattab is here.’

Then the Prophet ﷺ admitted me, and I narrated the story to Allah’s Messenger ﷺ. When I reached the story of Um Salama, Allah’s Messenger ﷺ smiled while he was lying on a mat made of palm tree leaves with nothing between him and the mat. Underneath his head there was a leather pillow stuffed with palm fibers and leaves of a tree were piled at his feet, and above his head hung a few water skins.

On seeing the marks of the mat imprinted on his side, I wept. He said, ‘Why are you weeping?’

I replied, ‘O Allah’s Messenger ﷺ! Caesar and Khosrow are leading the life (i.e., luxurious life) while you, Allah’s Messenger ﷺ though you are, is destitute.’

The Prophet ﷺ then replied. “Won’t you be satisfied that they enjoy this world and we the Hereafter?”⁸⁸

Eventually, the Prophet ﷺ reconciled with his wives. This incident shows us the human side of the *seerah*. The Prophet ﷺ demonstrated to us how to handle spousal disagreements with dignity and respect for the other’s opinions and emotions.

This *juz* also includes Surah Talaq which begins with the popular reminder that our sustenance is from Allah, and that we should seek it through piety and trusting Allah. This reminder is apt as divorce is often a time when people are worried about their future and their financial stability.

And whoever fears Allah, He will make a way out for him. And will provide for him from where he never expected. Whoever relies on Allah, He will suffice him.

*Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has set a measure to all things.*⁸⁹

There are many lessons we can learn from these *surahs*. Allah has protected the rights of both men and women, in and out of marriage. Our sustenance is from Allah, and nobody can deprive us of that which Allah has written for

⁸⁸ Sahih al-Bukhari, nos. 4913, 4914, 4915.

⁸⁹ Qur’an 65:2-3.

us. Allah has revealed a Shariah that protects the rights of both genders and creates an environment of harmony between the genders. Sometimes marital disputes happen, as this is part of the human experience. Even in such cases, Islam has given us a lot of guidance on how to resolve these disputes, while divorce remains permissible for the few cases in which it is impossible to resolve.



Juz Twenty-Nine

The bulk of *surahs* in the twenty-ninth *juz* are early Makkan *surahs* related to the importance of *dawah*. This *juz* is itself a training manual, teaching us both the practical and spiritual side of *dawah*. Surah Nuh gives us a blueprint for *dawah* in the methodology of Prophet Nuh عليه السلام. This *surah* was revealed very early in the Makkan Era to teach the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ about how the earliest messengers did *dawah* and how their people reacted.

In the story of Nuh عليه السلام we learn about the importance of both public and private *dawah*, as well as the importance of calling towards Allah’s forgiveness, and showing the benefits of accepting Islam.

*He said, “My Lord, I have called my people night and day.
But my call added only to their flight. Whenever I called them to Your forgiveness, they thrust their fingers into their ears, and wrapped themselves in their garments, and insisted, and became more and more arrogant.*

Then I called them openly. Then I appealed to them publicly, and I spoke to them privately. I said, ‘Ask your Lord for forgiveness; He is Forgiving. He will let loose the sky upon you in torrents. And provide you with wealth and children, and allot for you gardens, and allot for you rivers.’⁹⁰

Surah Jinn shows us that this message is truly universal. It is not only for the entire human race but transcends dimensions and reaches the world of the Jinn as well. The Prophet ﷺ was not only sent to humans, but he was also sent to the Jinn as well and many of them believed in him and followed the guidance.

Say, “It was revealed to me that a band of jinn listened in, and said, ‘We have heard a wondrous Qur’an. It guides to rectitude, so we have believed in it, and we will never associate anyone with our Lord.’”⁹¹

The next two *surahs* are among the earliest revelation, with some scholars stating that they were the second and third *surahs* to be revealed. When the Prophet ﷺ went home after the first revelation, he was shaken and asked his wife to cover him. His blessed wife Khadija رضي الله عنها embraced him, covered him,

90 Qur’an 71:5–12.

91 Qur’an 72:1–2.

and reassured him. Two *surahs* were revealed back-to-back, addressing him as the covered one, Muzammil and Mudathir. The first called on him to wake up at night and pray the late-night prayer. The second called on him to stand up and warn the people.

These two *surahs* represent the two sides of *dawah*, working on our own spirituality while presenting the message of Islam to the world. It is not a matter of choosing one over the other, we need to work on both simultaneously. From day one, the Prophet ﷺ focused on his *salah* and his *dawah*. This became the golden standard for every flagbearer of Islam, to become a person of regular night prayer and a caller to Islam.

The *juz* ends with contrasting *surahs* describing the Day of Judgment (Surah Qiyamah), Paradise (Surah Dahr), and Hellfire (Surah Mursalat). These three *surahs* show us the focus of the early *dawah* on the afterlife, balancing preparation for the last day with hope in Allah's Mercy and fear of disappointing Him.

Across these *surahs* we learn a variety of lessons about *dawah*. Surah Nuh shows us a practical role model of a *da'ee* in Prophet Nuh ﷺ. Surah Jinn reminds us that the message is not for us alone but is for all of humanity and more. Surahs Muzammil and Mudathir call on us to balance our public calling with private worship. Finally, Surahs Qiyamah, Dahr, and Mursalat remind us to focus on the afterlife as a primary focus of our *dawah*.



Juz Thirty

The thirtieth *juz* of the Qur'an is one that most readers are familiar with. These *surahs* are among the most memorized and recited in the Qur'an, due to their brevity. The majority of *surahs* in this *juz* were revealed in the early Makkan phase, similar to the twenty-ninth *juz*. Many of these *surahs* have clear reasons for revelations and direct links to the *seerah*.

Surah al-Naba was revealed in response to the Quraysh questioning the concept of the Last Day. Many *surahs* in this *juz* describe the Last Day in vivid detail. The concept of the Last Day and an afterlife was foreign to the pagans of Makkah. Although the Jews and Christians of Arabia believed in this concept, the pagans did not give it much thought. For this reason, early Makkan revelation contained a lot of descriptions and warnings about the end of time. The thirtieth *juz* includes at least ten *surahs* focused on describing the end-times and the resurrection.

Surah Abasa has one of the most famous reasons for revelation. During the early Makkan period, many of the weaker members of society had embraced Islam. To the leaders of Makkah, this was very off-putting, as they had a deep disdain for the poor and weak. Once, the Prophet ﷺ was trying to convince Waleed Ibn Mugheirah, a Makkan chief, to accept Islam when he was approached by a blind companion, Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktoum رضى الله عنه, for some advice.

Waleed was repulsed by the sight of a blind man, and this incident irritated the Prophet ﷺ who restrained his emotions and limited it to a frown. This was enough for revelation to descend reminding the Prophet ﷺ to prioritize the believers over the disbelievers, even if they seem weaker in the eyes of society.⁹² This *surah* can also be considered a proof of prophethood because no false prophet has ever brought revelation correcting himself in such a manner.

Another *surah* with a clear reason for revelation is Surah al-Alaq. It is unanimously agreed that the first five verses of Surah al-Alaq were the first revelation. The rest of the *surah* was revealed a few years later after an incident involving Abu Jahl. The first five verses address the importance of knowledge as a foundation of faith, the remainder of the *surah* chastises the stubborn

92 Muwatta Malik, 15:480.

disbeliever. These verses speak directly about Abu Jahl but can apply to anyone who follows in his footsteps until the end of time.

The first revelation occurred in the cave of Hira during the 40th year of the Prophet's ﷺ life. He was reflecting on the purpose of life when the angel Jibril appeared before him, embraced him, and asked him to recite. Replying that he did not know how to do so, Jibril repeated the question two more times, then recited the first five verses of Surah al-Alaq to him. These first few verses served as a strong reminder of the rights of the Creator, and the importance of building our faith upon authentic knowledge.

During the early Makkan period, a few months passed during which there was no revelation. This caused the Prophet ﷺ to worry that Allah had abandoned him, and he became very sad. In response to this, Surah al-Duha was revealed, followed quickly by Surah al-Inshira. These two *surahs* share the theme of optimism about the future. Allah promised the Prophet ﷺ that the future would be better than the past,⁹³ and that after hardship always comes ease.⁹⁴ These *surahs* have over time become proverbs that Muslims remind each other of during difficult times. In recent times, they have also become the foundation of the Islamic approach towards dealing with depression and trauma.⁹⁵

The bulk of the *surahs* in this *juz* show us the Prophet's ﷺ journey in early Makkan *seerah*. Surah al-Alaq reminds us of the first revelation, and his struggles against the likes of Abu Jahl. Surah Abasa shows us the quality of people who embraced Islam, and the arrogance of those who rejected Islam. Surah al-Quraysh and al-Feel are reminders that the Quraysh experienced many blessings from Allah, making their disbelief even more severe. While Surah al-Masad was a reminder that even in the Prophet's ﷺ own family, there were those who vehemently rejected Islam and caused him grief like his fiery uncle Abu Lahab.

Towards the very end of the *juz* lies one of the last *Surahs* to be revealed, Surah al-Nasr. This *surah* brings the *seerah* full circle. The mission that started with *Iqra*, and faced heavy opposition in the beginning, ended with

93 Qur'an 93:5.

94 Qur'an 94:5-6.

95 Najwa Awad and Sarah Sultan, "Your Lord Has Not Forsaken You: Addressing the Impact of Trauma on Faith," Yaqeen, January 10, 2019, <https://yaqeeninstitute.org/read/paper/your-lord-has-not-forsaken-you-addressing-the-impact-of-trauma-on-faith>.

people entering Islam in large numbers.⁹⁶ The rapid growth of Islam during this twenty-year mission was miraculous. Even more miraculous is that the growth did not stop with the passing of the Prophet ﷺ. It continued, and continues today over a thousand years later, when a quarter of the earth are Muslim, and more people embrace it every day.

There is no other man who claimed prophethood in the past two thousand years who has gained a following the way Prophet Muhammad ﷺ did. The rapid growth of Islam, through both good and bad times, and its continuous growth today when Muslims are in a state of political weakness is yet another proof of the truthfulness of his claim.

The Prophet ﷺ predicted, “This matter will certainly reach every place touched by the night and day. Allah will not leave a house or residence, but that Allah will cause this religion to enter it, by which the honorable will be honored, and the disgraceful will be disgraced.”⁹⁷

He said this at a time when religions were mostly locked to specific regions, and no religion had gained a global following yet. Today we see this prediction play out through globalization, as Islam can be found in almost every country around the world.

The *juz* ends with the two protectors, Surah al-Falaq and Surah al-Naas. As it begins with a reminder to seek guidance daily, it ends with a reminder to seek protection from misguidance and the forces of evil daily. These *surahs* are not just important reminders, but also powerful *duas* that we should recite every day. The message of the Qur’an comes full circle, beginning and ending with *dua*. We ask Allah to keep us firm on the straight path, and to protect us from the whispers of the devils among mankind and jinn. Ameen.

96 Qur’an 110:2.

97 Musnad Ahmad, no. 16957.

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About Yaqeen Institute

Islam has a centuries-long tradition of inspiring its adherents to contribute to humanity based on conviction in its tenets. Previous generations of Muslims were on the forefront of contributing to medicine, philosophy, architecture, and governance, among other areas. We are an institute aiming to rekindle this tradition.

Constant negative portrayals of Islam have put Muslims in a defensive position in which they constantly have to justify their convictions, while fighting off the natural doubts and insecurities that arise in such a climate. As such, young Muslims should be intellectually equipped and spiritually anchored in a way that empowers them to deal with the onslaught of doubt-inducing claims routinely leveled against Islam.

We aim to actively participate in the current discourse touching on all topics that are related to establishing conviction in the hearts and minds of young Muslims. The institute aims to be the trusted source regarding these topics by generating well-researched Islamic content that is disseminated through various formats including articles, infographics, animations, videos, and cutting-edge technology. This content is also carefully assembled into curricula that can be used by various educators and community leaders to help anchor young Muslims in their faith and produce thoughtful societal contributions.

The Institute is a non-profit research initiative that makes all its content free and accessible. This allows everyone looking for answers, and those tasked with giving answers, to always have a comprehensive resource readily available to them.

We believe that telling our own story is the only way to counter the narrative that has been forced upon our community.

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