

Surah al-Hijr

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 99 ayaat. It also begins with the huroof muqath'aath (broken letters), with the first ayat expressing the greatness of the Qur'an. This surah also provides evidence for the three basic beliefs i.e. Tawheed, Risalah and Akhirah.

The main subjects in this surah are as follows:

1. On the day of resurrection, on seeing the devastation and destruction, the rejecters will wish that they had believed, but this will be of no benefit on that day. In contrast, today, when the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam invites them, they claim that he is possessed and they ridicule the call, just like the previous nations who were destroyed.

2. One of the unique features of the Qur'an is that Allah has Himself guaranteed its preservation and protection. One of the means of preservation has been the memorisation of the Qur'an by millions of people, which in itself is a miracle.

3. There are numerous ayaat which provide evidence for the Oneness of Allah and the existence of the Creator:

"And We have placed within the heaven great stars and have beautified it for the observers." (Ayat 16)

"And the earth - We have spread it and cast therein firmly set mountains and caused to grow therein [something] of every well-balanced thing." (Ayat 19).

"And We have sent the fertilizing winds and sent down water from the sky and given you drink from it. And you are not its retainers." (Ayat 22).

It is these winds which scatter the pollen and fertilize the other plants so that plants can reproduce and bear fruit.

4. There is mention of the creation of man and the story of Adam alaihis salaam and ibless (shaitan). The creation of Adam from soil, and then giving him the ability to move, sit, stand, walk, think, understand, to harness the elements and bring about progressive ideas, are all a reflection of the Wisdom and Ability of the Creator.

The story of Adam is the story of 'humanity'; when Allah created him with His own hands and then breathed into him the spirit, and commanded the angels to prostrate in front of him, they all did so, except ibless who was in the company of angels but was in fact a jinn. As a result of his disobedience, he was expelled and earned the eternal wrath. On his request, he was given the ability to try to mislead Adam and his progeny until the last day.

"[Iblees] said, "My Lord, because You have put me in error, I will surely make [disobedience] attractive to them on earth, and I will mislead them all, Except, among them, Your chosen servants." (Ayat 39 – 40).

"(Allah) said: "This is the Way which will lead straight to Me."

"Certainly, you shall have no authority over My slaves, except those who follow you of the Ghaween (Mushrikun and those who go astray.)"

"And surely, Hell is the promised place for them all." (Ayat 41-43).

5. The surah goes on to mention the favours and mercy of Allah upon His creation. No matter how sinful a person is, Allah's mercy can envelope it and He can forgive everything:

"Declare (O Muhammad) unto My slaves, that truly, I am the Oft-Forgiving, the Most-Merciful." (Ayat 49).

6. The story of the angels visiting Ibraheem alaihis salaam and giving him the glad tidings of a son is related, with emphasis on the fact that one should never give up hope:

"They (the angels) said: "We give you glad tidings in truth. So be not of the despairing ones."

"[Ibrahim] said: "And who despairs of the Mercy of his Lord except those who are astray?" (Ayat 55-56).

7. The angels then went to visit the prophet Luth alaihis salaam, to inform him that they are about to destroy his people for their misdeeds, and for him to accompany his family and leave during the dark hours:

"So as-Saiyah (torment - awful cry, etc.) overtook them at the time of sunrise; And We turned (the towns of Sodom in Palestine) upside down and rained down on them stones of baked clay." (Ayat 73-74).

8. The people of the valley of Hijr i.e. the people of prophet Saleh alaihis salaam had also lead a life of wrongdoing and idol worship, despite many reminders. They were even shown a compound miracle in the form of the appearance of a she camel from within the midst of a rock, the she camel being pregnant, being extraordinarily big in size, and giving milk in abundance. But these wretched people disobeyed the explicit command to not hurt her, and eventually killed her. As a result they were overcome by an 'awful cry'.

The last section of this surah mentions the great blessing of the Qur'an, and that whomsoever receives this should not look towards the wealth of this world.

The Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam is being commanded:

"Therefore proclaim openly that which you are commanded, and turn away from Al-Mushrikun" (Ayat: 94).

Just like the previous surah, this surah also starts and ends with mention of the Qur'an.

Surah an-Nahl

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 128 ayaat. The surah starts by mentioning the time near the resurrection and also provides evidence for the revelation.

Nahl refers to the 'honey bee' and this surah gives some amazing insight into the world of this wonderful creation:

a. Whether it is the job of building a hive or the division of labour, or the gathering of nectar from diverse trees, gardens and crops, the honey bee is amazing.

b. Their bee hives are composed of thousands of perfectly geometrically shaped sections. Each section has a specific purpose, e.g. for storing honey, a 'maternity home' for nursing the young bees, and a storage space.

c. There is a queen which allocates jobs to and managing thousands of worker bees with such precision and organisation.

d. The bees are given a number of different roles: guards, nursing the young, engineering, sculpting the hive, route navigators and collectors etc. The collector bees leave a specific mark on the flowers that they have visited, in order to prevent other bees from wasting time with such depleted flowers.

e. Any bees that return carrying any harmful substances, are inspected by the guard bees and if needed exterminated.

Allah says:

"And your Lord inspired to the bee, "Take for yourself among the mountains, houses, and among the trees and [in] that which they construct."

"Then eat from all the fruits and follow the ways of your Lord laid down [for you]." There emerges from their bellies a drink, varying in colors, in which there is healing for people. Indeed in that is a sign for a people who give thought." (Ayat 68-69).

Anyone who reflects on this amazing creation i.e. the bee, cannot deny Allah's existence.

This surah is also known as sura 'An Na'am' i.e. 'bounties' because it mentions so many of Allah's favours:

- a. The earth having been made as a roof and the earth as a floor.
- b. The creation of man from a single drop of fluid.
- c. The benefits that we gain from various types of cattle, i.e. their meat, skin, hair etc.
- d. The horses, donkeys and mules which are a matter of pride, means of transportation and haulage.
- e. The rain that He sends down and with this He creates so many diverse fruits e.g. olives, dates and grapes, as well as many crops and seeds.
- f. He has placed the moon and the sun, and the day and night, in the service of mankind.
- g. He provides food and jewels from the seas, and also allows you to travel through the earth on these huge water bodies.

Allah then mentions:

"And if you should count the favors of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." (Ayat 18).

This surah also includes that comprehensive and profound ayat about which Abdullah bin Masud radhi Allahu anhu said: 'this is the most comprehensive ayat regarding good and evil'. Even an arch enemy such as Waleed bin Mugheerah had to praise this ayat. Umar bin Abdul Aziz initiated the mentioning of this ayat in every Friday khutba:

"Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded."

(Ayat 90).

This ayat commands 3 things and forbids 3 things:

Commands:

Justice: This is needed in carrying out commandments and while dealing with others i.e. friends and strangers, spouses, servants and workers etc.

Ihsan: (Good conduct) This is every good action. This is related to Allah, related to the jam'aa (collective body) and family, and even animals.

Giving to relatives: Although it is good to give to all needy sections of society, it is more rewarding to financially help needy near relatives.

Forbids:

Immorality (in speech or action): Actions which are obviously bad e.g. zina, alcohol etc.

Bad conduct (actions prohibited by the Shari'ah): Actions which the human nature instinctively dislikes.

Oppression: This refers to not transgressing people's honour, sanctity, wealth and belongings.