

Surah al-Ahqaaf

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 35 ayaat. The subject matter is again the three fundamental beliefs i.e. Tawheed, Risalah and Akhirah. The surah starts with the truth of the Quran, proofs for tawheed and resurrection. It also condemns the idols which the mushrikeen worshipped without any proof, despite the fact that these idols were unable to see, hear, benefit or harm anybody.

The other main topics in this surah are as follows:

1. When the Quran was recited to the mushrikeen they would claim that it is magic or that it has been invented. They would also say that if this 'emaan' was a good thing then these poor and down trodden people would not have embraced it before us.

2. The surah then puts forward the example of a pious son, who has the light of emaan in his heart and who is steadfast in the way to Allah. When his parents have brought him up and he reaches the age of full strength he makes three supplications to Allah:

- Give me the ability to be thankful for all the bounties.
- Make it easy for me to act according to your pleasure.
- Make by offspring righteous.

The surah then puts forward the example of a disobedient son, who is invited to accept emaan by his parents, but he replies arrogantly:

"Uff to you; do you promise me that I will be brought forth [from the earth] when generations before me have already passed on [into oblivion]?" (Ayat 17).

3. The surah then mentions the story of Aad who rejected the message of Hud alaihis salaam. These people were very tall and mighty. They had been experiencing severely hot weather for days, when all of a sudden Allah sent dark clouds to entice them all to come out of their homes in anticipation of rain. Then Allah sent a strong storm which picked them up and threw them down as if they were moths. They were destroyed and they fell to the ground as if they were hollow date palms. The mushrikeen of Quraysh are being warned to take heed of the message of this Quran, or face a similar consequence.

4. The surah ends by stating that the Creator of the heavens and the earth is able to bring you back to life after you have died. The last ayat addresses the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam:

"So be patient, [O Muhammad], as were those of determination among the messengers and do not be impatient for them. It will be - on the Day they see that which they are promised - as though they had not remained [in the world] except an hour of a day. [This is] notification. And will [any] be destroyed except the defiantly disobedient people?"

Surah Muhammad

This is a Madinan surah consisting of 38 ayaat. The name of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam is only mentioned in 4 surahs of the Quran: Al-e-Imran, Ahzaab, Muhammad, and Fath. This surah is also known as surah Qitaal, as it contains the commandments related to fighting with the rejecters.

The surah starts by differentiating between the kuffar and the believers. The kuffar follow falsehood, while the believers follow the truth. Whenever there are these two groups, then there will inevitably be a contest. Hence Allah is saying:

"So when you meet those who disbelieve [in battle], strike [their] necks until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure their bonds, and either [confer] favour afterwards or ransom [them] until the war lays down its burdens." (Ayat 4).

The captives of war can be dealt with in 4 ways:

- a. To free them as a favour.
- b. Ransom them for their freedom.
- c. Exchange them for your own captives.
- d. Make them your slaves.

The taking of them as slaves is not an essential act; it is an administrative decision which can be made in times of need. In addition, during that time, these slaves had no human rights, but Islam came to encourage the freeing of slaves as a great act of worship to the extent that Abdur Rahman ibn Auf radhi Allahu anhu bought 30,00 slaves just so that he may free them for the sake of Allah. Also, history is a witness to the fact that many a freed slave went on to become a great mufassir, muhaddith, conqueror, minister etc and they were never looked down upon by the Muslims due to their past.

The surah tells us that if we remain steadfast on His deen and if we stand up to help His cause, then He will help us and make us steadfast.

The surah also mentions some of the pleasures of jannah, which have been prepared and reserved for the true believers (may Allah count us from amongst them – ameen.)

The mention of qitaal had contrasting effects on the believers and the munaafiqoon. The believers would increase in emaan when they would hear about the qitaal in this surah. However, the munaafiqoon would feel as if they were about to pass out. In relation to this struggle, Allah informs us of His sunnah:

"And if you turn away, He will replace you with another people; then they will not be the likes of you." (Ayat 38).

Surah al-Fath

This is a Madinan surah consisting of 29 ayaat, revealed during the Prophet's sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam return from Hdaybiyyah in 6AH. According to Sahih Bukhari and Tirmidhi, it is narrated by Umar radhi Allahu anhu that the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam said: "This evening, a surah has been revealed to me, which is dearer to me than the whole world and whatever is in it." Then he recited some of the beginning ayaat from this surah.

This surah calls the Treaty of Hdaybiyyah a 'clear victory'. Although, some of the conditions of the treaty seemed unfair and many Muslims felt that they were being dealt with unjustly. However, the time that followed was testament to this being a great victory for the ummah. One of the aspects of this 'victory' was the fact that the number of Muslim rose from 1,400 at the time of the treaty to 10,000 at the time of the conquest of Makkah in 8AH. This was all possible due to this peace treaty, as the people of Arabia had an opportunity to deal with the Muslims and experience their strength of character, honesty, integrity and just dealings. The mushrikeen were forced to contemplate as to what had transformed these people from being drunkard bandits into righteous and noble people. Of course it was the emaan that had entered the hearts of these people and had permeated their every action.

The surah starts by announcing the 'clear victory' and then goes on to promise the believers jannah, and the rejecters and munaafiqoon are given a warning.

The surah then goes on to talk of two groups:

The true believers who emigrated for the sake of Allah and who pledged allegiance to the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam in that they would aid him in every way and that they would not flee from the battlefield. Allah mentioned them as follows:

"Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muhammad], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest." (Ayat 18).

The munaafiqoon did not accompany the Prophet to Hdaybiyyah as they thought that the Muslims would not be able to return alive. Allah informed the Prophet of the fact that when you return these munaafiqoon would present their false excuses to you.

The end of the sura mentions three things:

- That Allah sent the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam with the guidance and the true deen, for it to prevail over all others.
- Allah commends the companions radhi Allahu anhum as being stern against the rejecters, merciful with the believers, and seeking the pleasure of Allah.
- There is a promise of a great reward for those who believe and do good.

Surah al-Hujurat

This is a Madinan surah consisting of 18 ayaat. The main topics are as follows:

It teaches us how to respect the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam i.e. not to voice your opinion until you know what Allah and His messenger say. We are also told not to address the Prophet in a loud voice, but to lower our voices in his presence or when we are being told of what he said.

The surah teaches some very important social and communal etiquettes which can lead to a harmonious society: Not to rely on rumours and to verify news if the source is not reliable.

It also praises the companions by saying:

"Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allah - they are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested for righteousness. For them is forgiveness and great reward." (Ayat 3).

Rumours can start feuds and confrontations, hence we are being instructed to make reconciliation between any Muslims who may have fallen prey to such ordeal. It also tells us that all the ummah is one brotherhood, and the way to maintain this unity is to make reconciliation and to have taqwaa of Allah.

It then mentions 6 social ills that destroy the very fabric of society:

- To ridicule each other, as one person thinks himself better than the other.
- To insult each other.
- To call each other offensive nicknames.
- To have a bad opinion about someone based on assumptions.
- To spy on each other.
- To backbite each other.

One of the major causes for social dissension is the superiority complex of being of a better lineage or background. Hence this surah gets to the root of this problem and informs us of the fact that no such thing makes a person superior in the eyes of Allah. It is in fact the taqwa that makes a person better than another, the knowledge of which is with Allah alone.

The last ayaat tell us that mere lip service with regards to having emaan is not sufficient, but in fact the emaan that is deep rooted in the hearts which moves one to spend in the path of Allah, is the desired and accepted emaan.

Surah Qaaf

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 45 ayaat. The Prophet sal Alalhu alaihi wa sallam would usually recite this in large gatherings such as the Eid and Jumuah. The surah takes an oath of the fact that all of mankind will be resurrected. This surah tells us that the mushrikeen would find it amazing that this man is the messenger and that they will be resurrected. They are reminded that the people of Nuh, Thamud, Aad, Lut, Firaun, and Shuaib all rejected the message and were punished as a result.

The surah then makes us aware of the accountability on the Day of Judgment. It tells us that Allah even knows the whisperings in our minds and our very inner thoughts. In addition there are two angels assigned to each person, who take stock of every action. On a person's death this account is filed away for it to be later retrieved on the day of account.

The Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam is being told to be patient in face of the indecency of the mushrikeen and to glorify and worship Allah in the morning and evening.

The last ayat says: "We are most knowing of what they say, and you are not over them a tyrant. But remind by the Quran whoever fears My threat." (Ayat 45).

Surah adh-Dhariyath

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 60 ayaat. After swearing by 4 types of winds, Allah tells us that the Day of Judgment will surely come. It also mentions the fact that the rejecters of old or new, are not united on their stance regarding the resurrection or the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam.

The surah then informs us of the good end of the pious who do good deeds, sleep for part of the night and seek forgiveness and repent during part of the night, and who have a share in their wealth for those whom ask and for these who do not.

Then 3 proofs for the Greatness of Allah are given:

- The earth, despite its spherical construction is laid out like a floor, with valleys acting as paths, its mountains, its plains, its seas, its rivers, and the rich minerals in the form of steel, copper, silver, gold, coal and petroleum. Hence, Allah has provided everything that we need for our sustenance.
- The human being himself is a great sign of the Greatness of Allah. Each human is unique in form, shape, identity, colour, gait, accent, voice, temperament and intellect, not to mention how we are unique in terms of our retina, finger prints and DNA. Then the complex systems which make up this amazing body are unparalleled by even the most advanced automated appliances.
- The sky and the fact that it provides for our sustenance is mentioned, in that it sends the rain and it has the sun and the moon which allow life to prosper.