

Surah al-Mulk

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 30 ayaat. There are numerous ahaadeeth regarding its excellence. According to Ibn Majah, Nisai, Abu Dawood and Tirmidhi, Abu Huraira radhi Allahu anhu related that the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam said: "There are 30 ayaat in the Quran which intercede for its reader, and as result the reader is forgiven". This surah is also known as maani'a (the one that prohibits) and munji'a (the one that saves) i.e. the one that saves from the punishment of the grave, hence it has been the routine of many people of knowledge to recite this after Isha prayer.

The surah discusses three main topics:

The real King of this whole creation is only Allah, alone. It is only He who decides matters such as life and death, honour and humiliation, poverty and abundance, and prohibition and providence. He is All Knowing of everything, He made in the earth pathways for us to utilise, it is He who enables the birds to fly in the air, and He is the sole provider for all that exists, subhanahu wa ta'aala. (Ayaat 1,2,13,14,15,19,21).

There are proofs regarding the existence and Oneness of Allah:

- The sky as a roof.
- The stars as if they are lamps.
- The earth as a floor.
- The flowing rivers of water.

All inform us of the existence and greatness of their Creator. (Ayat 3-5).

The end result of the rejecters is mentioned. The hell fire which will be overflowing with rage as if it were to explode. (Ayat 5-7). When the rejecters see this, their faces will change and it will be said to them "this is what you used to long for". (Ayat 27).

Surah al-Qalam

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 52 ayaat. The fact that Allah has taken an oath by 'the pen', shows its importance as a favour from Allah. The ahadeeth also inform us of this; it is related by Ibn Abbas radhi Allahu anhu that: "The first thing that Allah created was the pen. After creating it, He commanded it to write. It asked what it should write. Allah told it: Write the taqdeer. So it wrote everything that would happen until the day of judgment. Then Allah created Noon, i.e. the ink."

It is this very 'pen' that allowed the transfer of knowledge from our pious predecessors, and allows the publishing of information throughout the globe. The Quran emphasised the importance of the pen, education and knowledge at a time when people were unaware of such matters.

Surah Qalam also discusses three main areas:

It discusses the status, greatness, and akhlaaq of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam. At first it takes an oath to reject the claims of the rejecters and says, " You (O Muhammad!) are not, By the Grace of Lord, a mad man". It then goes on to state that the Prophet is on an exalted station of character and for him there is an immense reward. (Ayat 3-4).

Muslim, Abu Dawood and Nisaai related from Aisha radhi Allahu anha, when asked about the Prophet's character sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam, she replied by saying that his character was the Quran. Whatever the Quran said, became the persona of the Prophet, and he was an embodiment and perfect practitioner of this divine guidance. This was one of the reasons for him being sent; so he could be a practical example for the whole of mankind and jinns. He was sent to perfect all standards of moral conduct.

The surah then contrasts the highly exalted perfection of the Prophet's character by highlighting the traits of his opposition as being very lowly, indulging in trivial matters such as accusing, back biting, stopping others from doing good, rebellion, being sinful, and proud. (Ayat 10-14). The commentators comment that these ayaat relate to the leaders of Quraysh, especially Waleed bin Mugheerah.

The second topic of significance, is the story of the 'people of the garden'. This was well known by the Arabs. This garden was situated near Yemen. Its owner would give the poor their right from its produce. However, after his death, his offspring started to make excuses in order to refrain from giving the poor a share of its produce. They plotted to keep the whole produce, and as a result Allah destroyed the whole garden. (Ayat 17-33). This story teaches us that we should not be selfish in what Allah has bestowed upon us, but instead we should share what we have been given with those who are needy.

The surah mentions the people of hell and the people of paradise, and then asks a searching question: can the people who do good, obey Allah, and remain loyal to Allah be the same as those who sin, reject His authority and are ever disobedient, be the same in terms of their outcomes?

The third important topic area is that of the hereafter, as it says:

" The Day the shin will be uncovered and they are invited to prostration but they [i.e., the disbelievers] will not be able." (Ayat 42).

The commentators have explained this to indicate the extreme and horrifying nature of the hereafter. At the end of the surah, the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam is being told to be patient in face of such opposition.

Surah al-Haqqah

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 52 ayaat. Of the different names for the day of judgement, this is also one. Haqqah means 'the thing that will surely come to pass', as on the day of judgment all the promises and warnings will come to pass. The real subject of this surah is the proof that the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam is the true messenger of Allah. The surah starts by mentioning the destruction of the nations of Thamud, Aad, and Lut. (Ayat 1-12).

Then the surah discusses those incidents that will take place before the day of judgement i.e. the blowing of the trumpet, the mountains and the earth being turned into dust, the sky exploding, the angels descending whom will encircle all the humans. (Ayat 13-17).

When the day of judgment takes place people will be presented in front of Allah, and the righteous people will be given their account in their right hand, which will please them and they will want to show this to others. In sharp contrast, the sinners and evildoers will receive their account in their left hand; they will be extremely regretful and will lament: "I wish I was not given my book and that I did not know my account. I wish that death had been the end of me, my wealth did me no good, and my dominance has also left me." (Ayat 29-35).

Then they will be entered into jahannum. Allah has highlighted two main signs of such seethed unfortunate people:

- a. They do not believe in Allah.
- b. They do not encourage the feeding of the poor and indigent. (Ayat 32-34).

Allah then takes an oath to prove the truth of this book and the prophethood of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam: " " (Ayat 38-43)

Surah al-Ma,árij

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 44 ayaat. The surah starts by telling us of the rejecters ridiculing at the invitation of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam by asking him to bring the punishment to them so that they can deal with it in this world. (Ayat 1-3).

The surah then gives us a tour of the day of judgement and explains what will happen to the criminals on that day. It also tells us that on that day, the sky will be as if it is burnt, and the mountains will be as they were coloured wool. On that day no friend or relative will enquire of each other, but in fact everyone will run away from each other, trying to save their own selves. (Ayat 8-14).

This surah also tells us about the nature and psychology of man in that he loves to hoard and complains. If he faces any difficulty he starts to scream and shout and make a big fuss, but when he is given a favour he becomes proud and arrogant, and when he is given wealth he becomes selfish and miserly, except those who establish the prayer. These people have the following eight characteristics:

- They are regular in their prayers.
- There is a share in their wealth for those who ask and for those who refrain from asking.
- They bear witness to the last day, without an ounce of doubt.
- They fear Allah despite their worship and obedience.
- They keep away from zina and are satisfied with halal, and stay away from haraam.
- They fulfill their trusts and promises.
- They bear witness with truth and equity.
- They pray on time and are very mindful of its pillars and etiquette.

Allah then informs us that these people will be honoured with jannah.

At the end of the surah, Allah takes an oath that the resurrection and judgment are true, without any doubt. Allah is able to destroy these people and bring forth people who are better than them and who would worship Him alone.

Surah Nuh

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 28 ayaat. This surah exclusively mentions the story of Nuh alaihis salaam who is also known as 'Shaykh ul anbiya' because he lived for the longest duration as compared to the other prophets and he was the first messenger after Adam alaihis salaam. He invited his people to worship Allah and to follow him. He struggled by day and by night, in open and in secret, but the more he would invite them, the further away would his people run. (Ayat 1-6). He advised them to seek forgiveness (istighfar) and promised that if they did so, Allah would shower them with rain, give them wealth and gardens, and make rivers flow for them. He then reminded them of the bounties of Allah such as the creation of the seven heavens, placed

for us, the reflective moon, and the shining sun. But unfortunately such advice, admonition and reminder did not benefit his people, and eventually, when there was no more hope, he prayed for their destruction, and they were drowned in the famous flood.

Surah al-Jinn

This is a Makkan surah which consists of 28 ayaat. This surah addresses the jinns who are also responsible and accountable for their actions. Just like humans, the jinn can be believers or rejecters, good or bad etc. The surah informs us of a group of jinns who were highly impressed when they listened to the Quran. This happened when some of the jinns felt a change in the universe, so they approached the heavens but were repelled by the chasing stars. At that time the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam and his companions were at Nakhla where they were offering Fajr prayer. At this moment some jinns arrived there and heard the Quran, and understood the nature of the change that they were experiencing. Their hearts were moved and they submitted to the truth of the Quran. The jinns did not only believe in this revelation, they made it their mission to convey it to the other jinns. They presented the truth of the Oneness of Allah and that the people who try to associate children to Allah are fooled.

The surah also mentions the fact that the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam is a clear and plain reminder and warner; he can neither benefit or harm anyone, nor does he have any authority, other than what Allah has given to him.

Surah al-Muzzammil

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 20 ayaat. This surah addresses the different stages of the life of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam; his seclusion in order to devote his attention to Allah, his worship, obedience, his standing in prayer and recitation, and his struggle. 'Muzzammil' refers to the 'one enveloped by a garment', you invite to the during the day, and stand in prayer during a part of the night and recite the Quran. Such standing in night prayer is very beneficial to the spiritual development of a person, hence this has been followed by the mentioning: "soon you will given a heavy load to carry" i.e. the revelation. The revelation has a unique grandeur and weight, which can only be upheld by the self that has been enlightened with the recognition of Allah and His knowledge, which can be accomplished by the night prayer.

The next ayaat talk of the persecution he had to face at the hands of the mushrikeen. They would use their hands and their tongues to inflict abuse. (Ayat 10-13). The surah then mentions the story of Firaun in order to warn and scare the mushrikeen.

The surah ends by lightening the load from the shoulders of the prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam and the believers, by allowing them to pray for just part of the night, which they are capable of doing.

The people who are being punished will be asked why they are facing such torment, to which they will highlight four reasons:

- We never used to pray.
- We did not feed the poor and needy.
- We used to support the misguidance of people.
- We would deny the hereafter.

At the end of the sura we are told that this Quran is an admonition for the one who wanted to be admonished, and it is also essential that Allah wants to admonish him.

Surah al-Muddaththir

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 56 ayaat. The surah starts by commanding the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam to invite to Allah, warn the disbelievers and to remain patient in the face of difficulties. The surah then goes on to warn the criminals and rejectors of the punishment on the day that will be very severe for them.

The next ayaat mention the worst enemy of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam, namely Waleed bin Mugheerah. Despite listening to the Quran, and acknowledging it being the true speech of Allah, he would reject it due to pride and would say that the Quran is magic. (Ayat 26-27).

The surah mentions those stern angels who will be the wardens of hell, that the disbelievers and sinners will have to face and will be shown no mercy. (Ayat 27-31). Allah then takes an oath by the moon, the night and the morning to warn that the hellfire is one of the greatest calamities.

The surah emphasises the fact that every person is responsible and accountable for their actions, and that, they will be asked about their deeds. Those people who receive their record of deeds in the left hand will be engulfed due to their sins, while those who receive their record in the right hand will be successful. The wrong-doers will be asked as to what led them to this. So they will reply:

- We did not pray
- We did not feed the needy.
- We used to support those who indulged in vain talk.
- We used to disbelieve in the day of judgment. (Ayat 37-47)

The surah ends by stating that this Quran is 'advice; for whoever wills to be advised, however, this is dependent on the Will of Allah.

Surah al-Qiyamah

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 40 ayaat. The subject matter of this surah is the resurrection, which is one of the main pillars of Imaan. It mentions the trials, extremities and torments of that day. It also describes the state of a person at the time of death.

Allah takes an oath by that day and the reproaching self (nafs-e-lawwâmaa: the nafs which distinguishes between good and evil), to prove the coming of the day of gathering. On that day every person will feel regretful, however it is only the fortunate people that listen to this part of their self in this life and act accordingly, that will be successful.

A note worthy point here is the mention that Allah can reconstruct even the fingertips; which are well known as being the basis of identifying each person uniquely.

The surah then mentions some of the events of that day. When the eyes will be stoned, and the moon will lose its light, and the sun and the moon will be joined, on that day man will ask, where is the place of refuge? (Ayat 10).

The next ayat informs us that the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam would strive to preserve and commit the Quran to memory, when the angel Jibraeel would bring the revelation. Allah reassures the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam that He will commit it to his memory and that he will not miss any part of it. In addition He will also teach him the explanation of the revelation. (Ayat 16-19).

The surah tells us that on that day, people will be divided into two groups:

- The blessed people whose faces will be bright and they will be looking towards their Lord.
- The wretched people whose faces will be black and horrid, and they will be certain that they will be thrown into the fire of hell. (Ayat 20-25).

The surah also tells us of the agonies at the time of death. (Ayat 26-30) and also tells us that "We have not created man without purpose", and hence it is not possible that a person would not be accounted for and would not receive the fair recompense. The surah ends by saying that the One who has created us in the first instance is more than capable of resurrecting us.

Surah al-Insaan

This is a Madinan surah consisting of 31 ayaat. However, its subject matter is very similar to the Makkan surahs, as it mentions the blessings of jannah and the torments of the jahannum. According to Sahih Muslim, the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam used to recite this surah in the Fajr of Friday.

The surah starts by praising Allah who created man in stages, and gave him hearing, sight and intellect, so he can obey and worship his creator. However, then, the people divided into two groups: Thankful and ungrateful. Allah has prepared shackles, chains and a blaring fire for the ungrateful people. While he has prepared a special drink which has 'kaafoor' for the thankful and grateful people. Such people have three characteristics:

- They fulfill their vows.
- They fear the last day.
- They feed the needy, orphans and captives, only for the pleasure of Allah.

Due to their good deeds and perseverance they will be gifted with the jannah. (Ayat 1-13).

At the end of the surah, Allah mentions His greatest favour : " Indeed, it is We who have sent down to you, (O Muhammad !), the Quran progressively. So be patient for the decision of your Lord and do not obey from among them a sinner or ungrateful(disbeliever). And mention the name of your Lord (in prayer) morning and evening. And during the night prostrate to Him and exalt Him a long (part of the) night."

This teaches us that the da'ee finds strength through worship and patience, in the face of the enemy. The night prayer thus plays a very pivotal role in strengthening the emaan of the da'ee.

The surah ends by warning the rejecters that if Allah wills He may destroy them and replace them with another people.

Surah al-Mursalaat

This is a Makkan surah which consists of 50 ayaat. The surah starts by taking 5 oaths and then says that the thing that you are being promised i.e. the resurrection is sure to come and that the accountability will definitely take place.

The surah then tells us of some of the signs near the end of time: the stars will lose their light, the skies will be destroyed, the mountains will be turned into powder and start to fly, and the messengers will be brought forward at the specified time. (Ayat 8-11).

The day of judgement has been called 'yawm ul fasl' which means the day when the matters will be decided or distinguished. Then Allah informs the rejecters that this day will be "destruction for the rejecters". This has been repeated 10 times in order to scare and warn the rejecters. In addition the surah mentions the previous nations that were destroyed and asks a searching

question: 'Did We not create you from a very insignificant drop of water and then took you through various stages to create you into a complete being?'

Then the surah reminds us that the One who can create us, and then cause us to return to the soil, and the One who irrigates the soil with sweet water, can surely resurrect us too!

The next ayaat inform of the end result of the two groups: the rejecters will be taken close to the burning fire, while the righteous people will taken to the place of shade and flowing rivers.

The surah ends by informing that rejecters that they may enjoy this life for a while, but the end result will come to pass, from which there is no escape.