

SURAH AS A STORY



Surah Al-Baqarah

The Cow

The complete journey — the longest surah, from the first guidance to the last du'a —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 2 • 286 Ayahs • Medinan

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The Surah at a Glance

*Zaalikal-Kitaabu laa rayba feeh;
hudal-lilmuttaqeen*

2. This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah.

Wasta'eenoo bissabri was-Salaah

45. And seek help through patience and prayer.

*Rabbanaa taqabbal minnaa; innaka
Antas-Samee'ul-'Aleem*

127. Our Lord, accept this from us. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing.

Wa iza sa'alaka 'ibaadee 'annee fa-innee qareeb

186. And when My servants ask you concerning Me — indeed I am near.

Allaahu laaa ilaaha illaa Huwal-Hayyul-Qayyoom

255. Allah — there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of existence.

Laa yukalliful-laahu nafsan illaa wus'ahaa

286. Allah does not charge a soul except with that within its capacity.



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A Book With No Doubt In It

Beta, we have arrived at the longest surah in the Quran, and one of the greatest. It is so long that we will take it in two parts, because it deserves to be read slowly.

Before we begin, know what the Prophet ﷺ said about it: do not make your houses graveyards — shaytan flees from a house in which Surah al-Baqarah is recited. And he said that Surah al-Baqarah and Surah Al-Imran will come on the Day of Resurrection like two clouds, arguing on behalf of the one who recited them.

'ALIF LAM MEEM. ZALIKAL-KITABU LA RAYBA FEEH
— THIS IS THE BOOK ABOUT WHICH THERE IS NO
DOUBT — HUDAN LIL-MUTTAQEEEN — A GUIDANCE
FOR THOSE CONSCIOUS OF ALLAH.'

Beta, notice something that puzzles people at first. The Book is guidance for the 'muttaqeen' — those who already have taqwa. But is the Book not supposed to



CREATE taqwa?

The scholars explained: guidance has two levels. There is the guidance of SHOWING the way, which is offered to everyone. And there is the guidance of being CARRIED along it, which belongs to those who accept the first.

Beta, so this Book will show anyone the road. But it only walks with the person who is willing.

And then the muttaqeen are described in five things: 'ALLAZINA YU'MINOONA BIL-GHAYB — those who believe in the UNSEEN — WA YUQEEMOONAS-SALAT — and establish prayer — WA MIMMA RAZAQNAHUM YUNFIQOON — and spend out of what We have provided them — WAL-LAZINA YU'MINOONA BIMA UNZILA ILAYKA WA MA UNZILA MIN QABLIK — and who believe in what was revealed to you and what was revealed before you — WA BIL-AKHIRATI HUM YOOQINOON — and of the Hereafter they are CERTAIN.'

Beta, note the first one: belief in the GHAYB — what you cannot see. That is where faith begins. Anyone will



believe what is placed in front of his eyes; that requires nothing.

And note the last: 'yooqinoon' — they have YAQEEN, certainty, about the Hereafter. Not hope, not opinion. Certainty.

The surah then describes those who reject, and then — at much greater length — the HYPOCRITES, those who said with their tongues what was not in their hearts. And Allah gives them two parables.

The first: a man who kindled a fire, and when it lit up everything around him, Allah took away their light and left them in darkness, unable to see. Beta, they had the light in their hands and it was removed.

The second: a rainstorm in the dark, with thunder and lightning — 'YAJ'ALOONA ASABI'AHUM FEE AZANIHIM MINAS-SAWA'IQI HAZARAL-MAWT — THEY PUT THEIR FINGERS IN THEIR EARS AGAINST THE THUNDERCLAPS, IN DREAD OF DEATH — KULLAMA ADA'A LAHUM MASHAW FEEHI WA IZA



AZLAMA 'ALAYHIM QAMOO — EVERY TIME IT LIGHTS FOR THEM, THEY WALK IN IT; AND WHEN DARKNESS COMES OVER THEM, THEY STAND STILL.'

Beta, what a portrait: a person who moves when the deen is convenient and freezes the moment it costs him something. Beta, examine yourself against that one honestly.

A Successor on the Earth

The surah then calls all people to worship their Lord — 'YA AYYUHAN-NASU'-BUDOO RABBAKUMUL-LAZI KHALAQAKUM WAL-LAZINA MIN QABLIKUM LA'ALLAKUM TATTAQOON' — and issues the great challenge: if you are in doubt about what We have sent down, produce a single surah like it, and call your witnesses besides Allah, if you are truthful.

And then, beta, the story of your own beginning:

'WA IZ QALA RABBUKA LIL-MALA'IKATI INNI JA'ILUN FIL-ARDI KHALEEFAH — AND WHEN YOUR LORD



SAID TO THE ANGELS: INDEED, I WILL MAKE UPON THE EARTH A SUCCESSIVE AUTHORITY.'

And the angels asked: 'A TAJ'ALU FEEHA MAN YUFSIDU FEEHA WA YASFIKUD-DIMA'A WA NAHNU NUSABBIHU BI-HAMDIKA WA NUQADDISU LAK — WILL YOU PLACE UPON IT ONE WHO CAUSES CORRUPTION THEREIN AND SHEDS BLOOD, WHILE WE GLORIFY YOU WITH PRAISE AND SANCTIFY YOU? — QALA INNI A'LAMU MA LA TA'LAMOON — HE SAID: INDEED, I KNOW THAT WHICH YOU DO NOT KNOW.'

Beta, this was not an objection; it was a question. And the answer was: I know what you do not.

'WA 'ALLAMA ADAMAL-ASMA'A KULLAHA — AND HE TAUGHT ADAM THE NAMES — ALL OF THEM.'

Beta, look at what distinguished the human being: KNOWLEDGE. Not strength, not worship — the angels had worship in abundance. He was given the capacity to know and to name.



And when the angels could not name them, and Adam did, they said: 'SUBHANAKA LA 'ILMA LANA ILLA MA 'ALLAMTANA — EXALTED ARE YOU; WE HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE EXCEPT WHAT YOU HAVE TAUGHT US — INNAKA ANTAL-'ALEEMUL-HAKEEM.'

Beta, learn that sentence and use it. It is the most honest thing anyone can say about what he knows.

Then the command to prostrate, and Iblees's refusal out of arrogance. And then Adam and his wife in the Garden, and the slip, and the words that saved them:

'FA-TALAQQA ADAMU MIN RABBIHI KALIMATIN FA-TABA 'ALAYH — THEN ADAM RECEIVED FROM HIS LORD SOME WORDS, AND HE ACCEPTED HIS REPENTANCE — INNAHU HUWAT-TAWWABUR-RAHEEM.'

Beta, look at that: Allah TAUGHT him how to repent. The words of return were themselves a gift from the One being returned to.



'FA-IMMA YA'TIYANNAKUM MINNEE HUDAN
FA-MAN TABI'A HUDAYA FA-LA KHAWFUN 'ALAYHIM
WA LA HUM YAHZANOON — and when guidance
comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance —
there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they
grieve.'

Beta, that promise was made at the very beginning of
human life on earth, and it has never been withdrawn.

Do Not Dress Truth in Falsehood

Beta, a long section of this surah now addresses the
Children of Israel — and I want you to read it correctly.
It is not written so that we may feel superior. It is
written so that we do not repeat it. Every criticism in it
is a mirror held up to any community that receives a
scripture.

'YA BANEE ISRA'EELAZ-KUROO NI'MATIYAL-LATI
AN'AMTU 'ALAYKUM WA AWFOO BI-'AHDEE OOFI
BI-'AHDIKUM — O CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, REMEMBER
MY FAVOUR WHICH I BESTOWED UPON YOU, AND



FULFIL MY COVENANT, AND I WILL FULFIL YOURS.'

'WA LA TALBISUL-HAQQA BIL-BATILI WA
TAKTUMUL-HAQQA WA ANTUM TA'LAMOON — AND
DO NOT MIX THE TRUTH WITH FALSEHOOD, NOR
CONCEAL THE TRUTH WHILE YOU KNOW IT.'

Beta, 'la talbisoo' — do not CLOTHE the truth in
falsehood, do not dress it up. Two separate sins are
named: mixing truth with lies, and hiding truth you
know.

Beta, the second one is the sin of the silent expert — the
person who knows the correct answer and keeps quiet
because speaking would cost him something.

'A TA'MUROONAN-NASA BIL-BIRRI WA TANSAWNA
ANFUSAKUM WA ANTUM TATLOONAL-KITAB — DO
YOU ORDER RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE PEOPLE AND
FORGET YOURSELVES, WHILE YOU RECITE THE
SCRIPTURE? — AFALA TA'QILOON — THEN WILL YOU
NOT USE REASON?'



Beta, that ayah has kept many a preacher awake at night, and it should.

And then, beta, the great instruction for every difficulty:

'WASTA'EENOO BIS-SABRI WAS-SALAH — AND SEEK
HELP THROUGH PATIENCE AND PRAYER — WA
INNAHA LA-KABEERATUN ILLA 'ALAL-KHASHI'EEN
— AND INDEED, IT IS DIFFICULT EXCEPT FOR THE
HUMBLY SUBMISSIVE.'

Beta, two tools, and no third. Sabr — holding on. And
salah — going to Him.

And note the honesty of the second half: it IS heavy.
Allah does not pretend that standing in prayer when
your heart is crushed is easy. He says it is difficult —
except for those with khushoo'.

'ALLAZINA YAZUNNOONA ANNAHUM MULAQOO
RABBIHIM WA ANNAHUM ILAYHI RAJI'OON —
THOSE WHO ARE CERTAIN THAT THEY WILL MEET
THEIR LORD AND THAT THEY WILL RETURN TO HIM.'



Beta, that is what makes prayer light: the certainty of the meeting.

Favours, and Forgetting

The surah then lists what that nation was given, beta — and the list is staggering.

They were saved from Firaun, who was slaughtering their sons. The sea was split for them. They were shaded by clouds in the desert. Manna and quails were sent down to them — food from the sky, requiring no labour. Water burst from a rock when Musa struck it, twelve springs, each tribe knowing its own drinking place.

And what did they say? 'YA MOOSA LAN NASBIRA 'ALA TA'AMIN WAHIDIN — O MUSA, WE CAN NEVER ENDURE ONE KIND OF FOOD — FAD'U LANA RABBAKA YUKHRIJ LANA MIMMA TUNBITUL-ARDU MIN BAQLIHA WA QITHTHA'IHA WA FOOMIHA WA 'ADASIHA WA BASALIHA — SO CALL UPON YOUR LORD TO BRING FORTH FOR US FROM THE EARTH ITS GREEN HERBS, ITS CUCUMBERS, ITS GARLIC, ITS



LENTILS AND ITS ONIONS.'

And the reply: 'A TASTABDILOONAL-LAZI HUWA ADNA BIL-LAZI HUWA KHAYR — WOULD YOU EXCHANGE WHAT IS BETTER FOR WHAT IS LESSER?'

Beta, that question is the diagnosis of a great many human choices. Given something from the sky, they asked for onions.

Beta, and do not be quick to laugh at them. Ask what you have exchanged: the peace of a night prayer for another hour of scrolling; the barakah of honest income for a slightly larger dishonest one.

And they were told to enter the town saying 'HITTAH' — relieve us of our burdens — and to enter humbly. And they changed the word and entered differently.

Beta, note how small that disobedience looks and how seriously it is treated. They were asked for one word and a posture. The instruction was easy — and it was altered anyway. Some disobedience is not about difficulty; it is



about not wanting to be told.

The Cow

And now, beta, the incident that gives this longest surah its name — and the lesson in it is not what most people expect.

A man had been killed and the killer was unknown.

Musa (alaihis salam) told them: 'INNALLAHA YA'MURUKUM AN TAZBAHOO BAQARAH — ALLAH COMMANDS YOU TO SLAUGHTER A COW.'

And their first response: 'A TATTAKHIZUNA HUZUWA — ARE YOU TAKING US IN RIDICULE?' And he said: 'A'OOZU BILLAHI AN AKOONA MINAL-JAHILEEN — I seek refuge in Allah from being among the ignorant.'

Beta, the command was simple: slaughter a cow. Any cow. If they had gone out and slaughtered the first one they found, the matter would have ended there.

Instead: 'QALUD-'U LANA RABBAKA YUBAYYIN LANA MA HIYA — CALL UPON YOUR LORD TO MAKE CLEAR



TO US WHAT IT IS.' And the answer came: a cow neither old nor young, middle-aged.

'QALUD-'U LANA RABBAKA YUBAYYIN LANA MA LAWNUHA — WHAT IS ITS COLOUR?' A yellow cow, bright in colour, pleasing to the observers.

'QALUD-'U LANA RABBAKA YUBAYYIN LANA MA HIYA INNAL-BAQARA TASHABAHA 'ALAYNA — the cows look alike to us.' And the answer came with still more conditions: a cow not trained to plough or water the field, sound, with no blemish.

'QALUL-ANA JI'TA BIL-HAQQ — NOW YOU HAVE COME WITH THE TRUTH — FA-ZABAHOOHA WA MA KADOO YAF'ALOON — SO THEY SLAUGHTERED IT, AND THEY ALMOST DID NOT DO IT.'

Beta, take the lesson. Every question they asked made the command HARDER. The specification narrowed with each demand until only one animal in the land could satisfy it, and the reports say they had to buy it at enormous cost.



Beta, this is what happens with excessive questioning of what Allah has commanded. 'But why?' 'But which one?' 'But under what conditions?' — when the door was wide open and you were free to walk through it.

And note the closing phrase: 'wa ma kadoo yaf'aloona' — and they ALMOST did not do it. Even after all that, obedience barely happened.

The Prophet ﷺ said: leave me as I have left you; those before you were destroyed by their excessive questioning and their disagreement with their prophets. And he said: when I command you with something, do of it what you are able.

Beta, so when you learn a command of Allah, the first response should be to DO it, not to interrogate it.

And the surah then describes what hardness of heart looks like: 'THUMMA QASAT QULOObUKUM MIN BA'DI ZALIKa FA-HIYa KAL-HIJARaTI AW ASHaDDU QASWaH — THEN YOUR HEARTS BECAME HARDENED AFTER THAT, BEING LIKE STONES OR



EVEN HARDER.'

And then, beta, an extraordinary comparison: 'WA INNA MINAL-HIJARATI LAMA YATAFAJJARU MINHUL-ANHAR — AND INDEED, THERE ARE STONES FROM WHICH RIVERS BURST FORTH — WA INNA MINHA LAMA YASHSHAQQAQU FA-YAKHRUJU MINHUL-MA' — AND THERE ARE SOME THAT SPLIT OPEN AND WATER COMES OUT — WA INNA MINHA LAMA YAHBITU MIN KHASHYATILLAH — AND THERE ARE SOME THAT FALL DOWN FROM FEAR OF ALLAH.'

Beta, a rock can crack and give water. A rock can fall in awe of its Creator. And a human heart can become harder than that.

Ibrahim Raises the Foundations

Beta, the surah then turns to Ibrahim (alaihi salam), and it settles a great question: who has the right to claim him?



'WA IZIB-TALA IBRAHEEMA RABBUHU
BI-KALIMATIN FA-ATAMMAHUNN — AND WHEN
IBRAHIM WAS TRIED BY HIS LORD WITH
COMMANDS, AND HE FULFILLED THEM — QALA INNI
JA'ILUKA LIN-NASI IMAMA — HE SAID: INDEED, I
WILL MAKE YOU A LEADER FOR THE PEOPLE.'

'QALA WA MIN ZURRIYYATEE — HE SAID: AND OF MY
DESCENDANTS? — QALA LA YANALU
'AHDIZ-ZALIMEEN — HE SAID: MY COVENANT DOES
NOT INCLUDE THE WRONGDOERS.'

Beta, note that answer. Leadership in the deen is not
inherited. A righteous father does not transmit his rank
to an unrighteous son.

And then the House: 'WA IZ JA'ALNAL-BAYTA
MATHABATAN LIN-NASI WA AMNA — AND WE
MADE THE HOUSE A PLACE OF RETURN FOR THE
PEOPLE AND A PLACE OF SECURITY — WATTAKHIZOO
MIN MAQAMI IBRAHEEMA MUSALLA — and take the
standing place of Ibrahim as a place of prayer.'



Beta, 'mathabatan lin-nas' — a place people RETURN to, again and again. Anyone who has been to Makkah knows that pull.

And Ibrahim's du'a for the city, beta: 'RABBIJ-'AL HAZA
BALADAN AMINAN WARZUQ AHLAHU
MINATH-THAMARATI MAN AMANA MINHUM
BILLAHI WAL-YAWMIL-AKHIR — my Lord, make this a
secure city and provide its people with fruits — whoever
among them believes in Allah and the Last Day.'

And Allah's answer: 'WA MAN KAFARA
FA-UMATTI'UHU QALEELAN — AND WHOEVER
DISBELIEVES — I WILL GRANT HIM ENJOYMENT FOR
A LITTLE.'

Beta, look at this carefully. Ibrahim asked for provision only for the believers. And Allah said: no — the provision of this world goes to the denier too, for a while.

Beta, that is a crucial correction of a common assumption. Worldly provision is not a sign of Allah's



approval. He feeds those who reject Him. What is withheld from them is the Hereafter.

And then, beta, the most beautiful scene in the surah:

'WA IZ YARFA'U IBRAHEEMUL-QAWA'IDA
MINAL-BAYTI WA ISMA'EEL — AND WHEN IBRAHIM
WAS RAISING THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE HOUSE,
WITH ISMA'IL, (saying): RABBANA TAQABBAL MINNA
— OUR LORD, ACCEPT THIS FROM US — INNAKA
ANTAS-SAMEE'UL-'ALEEM — indeed, You are the
Hearing, the Knowing.'

Beta, picture it. A father and son, building the House of Allah with their own hands, in the heat, stone by stone — the most honoured construction project in human history.

And what are they saying while they work? Not 'look what we have built'. They are ASKING ALLAH TO ACCEPT IT. Working, and afraid it might not be good enough.



Beta, that is the standard. If the builders of the Ka'bah worried about acceptance, then no deed of ours should be performed with self-congratulation.

'RABBANA WAJ'ALNA MUSLIMAYNI LAKA WA MIN ZURRIYYATINA UMMATAN MUSLIMATAN LAK — our Lord, make us Muslims in submission to You, and from our descendants a Muslim nation — WA ARINA MANASIKANA WA TUB 'ALAYNA — and show us our rites and accept our repentance.'

And then, beta, the du'a that was answered six centuries later: 'RABBANA WAB'ATH FEEHIM RASOOLAN MINHUM YATLOO 'ALAYHIM AYATIKA WA YU'ALLIMUHUMUL-KITABA WAL-HIKMATA WA YUZAKKEEHIM — OUR LORD, SEND AMONG THEM A MESSENGER FROM THEMSELVES WHO WILL RECITE TO THEM YOUR VERSES AND TEACH THEM THE BOOK AND WISDOM AND PURIFY THEM — INNAKA ANTAL-'AZEEZUL-HAKEEM.'



Beta, the Prophet ﷺ said: I am the du'a of my father Ibrahim.

Beta, think about that. A man standing in an empty valley, laying stones, made a du'a for a messenger — and the answer came after more than two thousand years, and it reached YOU, in your language, in your home, today.

Never think a du'a has gone unanswered because you did not see it land in your lifetime.

'WA MAN YARGHABU 'AN MILLATI IBRAHEEMA ILLA MAN SAFIHA NAFSAH — AND WHO WOULD TURN AWAY FROM THE RELIGION OF IBRAHIM EXCEPT ONE WHO MAKES A FOOL OF HIMSELF? — IZ QALA LAHU RABBUHU ASLIM QALA ASLAMTU LI-RABBIL-'ALAMEEN — WHEN HIS LORD SAID TO HIM: SUBMIT — HE SAID: I HAVE SUBMITTED TO THE LORD OF THE WORLDS.'

Beta, one word of command and one word of answer. That is the whole of Islam, in the exchange between



Allah and Ibrahim.

And the section closes: 'TILKA UMMATUN QAD KHALAT LAHA MA KASABAT WA LAKUM MA KASABTUM — THAT WAS A NATION WHICH HAS PASSED ON. IT WILL HAVE WHAT IT EARNED, AND YOU WILL HAVE WHAT YOU HAVE EARNED — WA LA TUS'ALOONA 'AMMA KANOO YA'MALOON — AND YOU WILL NOT BE ASKED ABOUT WHAT THEY USED TO DO.'

Beta, that ayah is repeated twice in this surah, and it ends every argument about ancestry. Nobody will be asked about his forefathers' deeds. You will be asked about yours.

The Turning of the Face

Beta, for about sixteen months after the hijrah, the Muslims prayed facing Jerusalem. And the Prophet ﷺ used to turn his face toward the sky, longing for the House of Ibrahim.



'QAD NARA TAQALLUBA WAJHIKA FIS-SAMA' — WE HAVE CERTAINLY SEEN THE TURNING OF YOUR FACE TOWARD THE HEAVEN — FA-LA-NUWALLIYANNAKA QIBLATAN TARDAHA — SO WE WILL SURELY TURN YOU TO A QIBLAH WITH WHICH YOU WILL BE PLEASED — FA-WALLI WAJHAKA SHATRAL-MASJIDIL-HARAM — SO TURN YOUR FACE TOWARD AL-MASJID AL-HARAM.'

Beta, notice the tenderness in that. He did not ask. He looked up at the sky, and Allah answered the LOOK.

And the objectors immediately said: what has turned them away from the qiblah they used to face? And Allah's answer: 'QUL LILLAHIL-MASHRIQU WAL-MAGHRIB — SAY: TO ALLAH BELONGS THE EAST AND THE WEST.'

Beta, direction was never the point. Obedience was. The same people who faced Jerusalem on command now faced Makkah on command — and both times the act of worship was the SUBMISSION, not the geography.



'WA KAZALIKA JA'ALNAKUM UMMATAN WASATAN LI-TAKOONOO SHUHADA'A 'ALAN-NASI WA YAKOONAR-RASOOLU 'ALAYKUM SHAHEEDA — AND THUS WE HAVE MADE YOU A JUSTLY BALANCED COMMUNITY, THAT YOU WILL BE WITNESSES OVER THE PEOPLE, AND THE MESSENGER WILL BE A WITNESS OVER YOU.'

Beta, 'ummatan wasata' — the middle, balanced nation. Not extreme in either direction: not denying the body like the monks, not drowning in it like those who recognise nothing else. Between excess and neglect, in worship, in spending, in anger, in everything.

'WA MA JA'ALNAL-QIBLATAL-LATI KUNTA 'ALAYHA ILLA LI-NA'LAMA MAN YATTABI'UR-RASOOLA MIMMAN YANQALIBU 'ALA 'AQIBAYH — and We did not appoint the qiblah you used to face except to make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels.'



Beta, the change itself was a test. Some people cannot handle a change in what they are used to, even when it comes by revelation.

And then, beta, an ayah for everyone who has lost someone in a good cause: 'WA LA TAQOOLOO LI-MAN YUQTALU FEE SABEELILLAHI AMWATUN BAL AHYA'UN WA LAKIN LA TASH'UROON — AND DO NOT SAY ABOUT THOSE WHO ARE KILLED IN THE WAY OF ALLAH: THEY ARE DEAD. RATHER, THEY ARE ALIVE — BUT YOU PERCEIVE IT NOT.'

And then the great ayah of trial, beta:

'WA LA-NABLUWANNAKUM BI-SHAY'IN MINAL-KHAWFI WAL-JOO'I WA NAQSIN MINAL-AMWALI WAL-ANFUSI WATH-THAMARAT — AND WE WILL SURELY TEST YOU WITH SOMETHING OF FEAR AND HUNGER, AND A LOSS OF WEALTH AND LIVES AND FRUITS — WA BASHSHIRIS-SABIREEN — BUT GIVE GOOD TIDINGS TO THE PATIENT.'



'ALLAZINA IZA ASABAT-HUM MUSEEBATUN QALOO INNA LILLAH WA INNA ILAYHI RAJI'OON — WHO, WHEN DISASTER STRIKES THEM, SAY: INDEED WE BELONG TO ALLAH, AND INDEED TO HIM WE WILL RETURN.'

Beta, look at the two halves of that sentence, because they are the entire cure for grief.

'INNA LILLAH' — we BELONG to Allah. So what was taken was never ours in the first place. The one you lost was a trust, lent to you, and the Owner took back His property.

'WA INNA ILAYHI RAJI'OON' — and we are RETURNING to Him. So the separation is temporary, and you are travelling in the same direction.

'ULA'IKA 'ALAYHIM SALAWATUN MIN RABBIHIM WA RAHMAH — THOSE ARE THE ONES UPON WHOM ARE BLESSINGS FROM THEIR LORD AND MERCY — WA ULA'IKA HUMUL-MUHTADOON — AND IT IS THOSE WHO ARE THE GUIDED.'



Beta, note the word 'shay'in' in the ayah of testing — 'SOMETHING of fear, SOMETHING of hunger'. Not all of it. A portion. Even in the test, the measure is limited.

Fasting, and the Nearness

The surah then gives the great ayahs of law, beta — and among them, the fast:

'YA AYYUHAL-LAZINA AMANOO KUTIBA
'ALAYKUMUS-SIYAMU KAMA KUTIBA 'ALAL-LAZINA
MIN QABLIKUM LA'ALLAKUM TATTAQOON — O YOU
WHO HAVE BELIEVED, FASTING HAS BEEN
PRESCRIBED FOR YOU AS IT WAS PRESCRIBED FOR
THOSE BEFORE YOU, THAT YOU MAY BECOME
RIGHTEOUS.'

Beta, note the stated purpose: 'la'allakum tattaqoon' — SO THAT YOU MAY ATTAIN TAQWA. The fast is not an endurance test and it is not about the food. It is training in doing without something permitted, for His sake, so that leaving what is forbidden becomes easier.



'SHAHRU RAMADANAL-LAZI UNZILA
FEEHIL-QUR'ANU HUDAN LIN-NASI WA BAYYINATIN
MINAL-HUDA WAL-FURQAN — THE MONTH OF
RAMADAN, IN WHICH WAS REVEALED THE QURAN, A
GUIDANCE FOR THE PEOPLE AND CLEAR PROOFS OF
GUIDANCE AND CRITERION.'

'YUREEDULLAHU BIKUMUL-YUSRA WA LA YUREEDU
BIKUMUL-'USR — ALLAH INTENDS FOR YOU EASE
AND DOES NOT INTEND FOR YOU HARDSHIP.'

Beta, that sentence should be written on the wall of
every person who thinks piety means making things
difficult.

And then, beta, in the very middle of the ayahs about
fasting — a jewel:

'WA IZA SA'ALAKA 'IBADEE 'ANNI FA-INNI QAREEB —
AND WHEN MY SERVANTS ASK YOU CONCERNING ME
— INDEED I AM NEAR — UJEEBU DA'WATAD-DA'I IZA
DA'AN — I RESPOND TO THE CALL OF THE CALLER
WHEN HE CALLS UPON ME — FALYASTAJEEBOO LEE



WALYU'MINOO BEE LA'ALLAHUM YARSHUDOON —
so let them respond to Me and believe in Me, that they
may be guided.'

Beta, this ayah is unique. Elsewhere in the Quran, when
people ask about something, the answer begins 'QUL' —
SAY. Here, Allah removes the intermediary entirely. He
does not say 'tell them I am near'. He says: I AM NEAR.

Beta, look at how many times He speaks in the first
person in one line: I am near, I respond, when he calls
upon ME, respond to ME, believe in ME.

And it is placed among the ayahs of fasting — because
that is when the door is most open.

The surah then gives rulings on many matters — the
pilgrimage, fighting only against those who fight you
and not transgressing, marriage and divorce, the
treatment of orphans, the rights of women in separation
— and each of them is wrapped in the fear of Allah.



And on charity, beta, an instruction about giving: 'YA AYYUHAL-LAZINA AMANOO ANFIQOO MIMMA RAZAQNAKUM' — spend from what We have provided you — and then a warning: 'WA LA TAYAMMAMUL-KHABEETHA MINHU TUNFIQOON — AND DO NOT AIM TOWARD THE DEFECTIVE OF IT, SPENDING FROM THAT — WA LASTUM BI-AKHIZEEHI ILLA AN TUGHMIDOO FEEH — WHEN YOU WOULD NOT TAKE IT YOURSELVES EXCEPT WITH CLOSED EYES.'

Beta, what a description of a certain kind of charity: giving away exactly what you would refuse to accept.

Talut, and the Small Company

The surah then tells of a people who asked their prophet to appoint a king so they could fight, beta — and then, when fighting was prescribed, most of them turned away.

And when Talut was appointed, they objected: how can he have kingship over us when we are more worthy, and



he has not been given abundance of wealth?

And the answer: 'INNALLAHAS-TAFAHU 'ALAYKUM
WA ZADAHU BASTATAN FIL-'ILMI WAL-JISM —
INDEED, ALLAH HAS CHOSEN HIM OVER YOU AND
HAS INCREASED HIM IN KNOWLEDGE AND STATURE
— WALLAHU YU'TEE MULKAHU MAN YASHA' — AND
ALLAH GIVES HIS SOVEREIGNTY TO WHOM HE WILLS.'

Beta, note the qualifications named: KNOWLEDGE and
physical capability. Not wealth, and not lineage.

And then the river, beta — one of the most instructive
tests in the Quran. Talut told his army: Allah will test
you with a river; whoever drinks from it is not of me,
except one who takes a sip from the hollow of his hand.

'FA-SHARIBOO MINHU ILLA QALEELAN MINHUM —
BUT THEY DRANK FROM IT, EXCEPT A FEW OF THEM.'

Beta, an army that had demanded to fight failed at a
river.



And then those who crossed said: we have no power today against Jalut and his soldiers. 'QALAL-LAZINA YAZUNNOONA ANNAHUM MULAQULLAHI KAM MIN FI'ATIN QALEELATIN GHALABAT FI'ATAN KATHEERATAN BI-IZNILLAH — THOSE WHO WERE CERTAIN THEY WOULD MEET ALLAH SAID: HOW MANY A SMALL COMPANY HAS OVERCOME A LARGE COMPANY BY PERMISSION OF ALLAH — WALLAHU MA'AS-SABIREEN.'

And their du'a, beta, is one to memorise for any overwhelming situation: 'RABBANA AFRIGH 'ALAYNA SABRAN WA THABBIT AQDAMANA WANSURNA 'ALAL-QAWMIL-KAFIREEN — OUR LORD, POUR UPON US PATIENCE, AND PLANT FIRMLY OUR FEET, AND GIVE US VICTORY.'

Beta, 'afrigh 'alayna sabra' — POUR patience over us, the way water is poured from a vessel until it covers everything. Not 'give us some patience'. Pour it.



And Dawud (alaihis salam), a young man in that small company, killed Jalut. 'WA LAWLA DAF'ULLAHIN-NASA BA'DAHUM BI-BA'DIN LA-FASADATIL-ARD — AND IF IT WERE NOT FOR ALLAH CHECKING PEOPLE, SOME BY MEANS OF OTHERS, THE EARTH WOULD HAVE BEEN CORRUPTED.'

The Greatest Ayah

And now, beta, we come to the ayah that the Prophet ﷺ identified as the greatest in the Book of Allah. He asked Ubayy ibn Ka'b (radiyallahu anhu) which ayah of the Book of Allah he considered greatest, and when he answered 'Allahu la ilaha illa Huwal-Hayyul-Qayyoom', the Prophet ﷺ struck him on the chest and said: may knowledge be pleasant for you, Abul-Mundhir.

And he ﷺ said that whoever recites it after every obligatory prayer, nothing prevents him from entering Paradise except death. And in the report of Abu Hurayrah (radiyallahu anhu) about the thief who came at night to the charity of Ramadan, he was told that if he



recites this ayah when he goes to his bed, a guardian from Allah will remain with him and no devil will come near him until morning — and the Prophet ﷺ confirmed that the liar had told him the truth.

'ALLAHU LA ILAHA ILLA HUWAL-HAYYUL-QAYYOOM — ALLAH — THERE IS NO DEITY EXCEPT HIM, THE EVER-LIVING, THE SUSTAINER OF ALL EXISTENCE.'

Beta, 'Al-Hayy' — the Living, whose life had no beginning and has no end. 'Al-Qayyoom' — the One who stands by Himself and by whom everything else stands. Nothing in existence holds itself up.

'LA TA'KHUZUHU SINATUN WA LA NAWM — NEITHER DROWSINESS OVERTAKES HIM NOR SLEEP.'

Beta, 'sinah' is that first heaviness of the eyes before sleep. Not even that. Because if the One holding the universe together were to look away for an instant, it would end.



'LAHU MA FIS-SAMAWATI WA MA FIL-ARD — TO HIM BELONGS WHATEVER IS IN THE HEAVENS AND WHATEVER IS ON THE EARTH.'

'MAN ZAL-LAZI YASHFA'U 'INDAHU ILLA BI-IZNIH — WHO IS IT THAT CAN INTERCEDE WITH HIM EXCEPT BY HIS PERMISSION?'

Beta, that clause closes the door on every intermediary. Nobody speaks up before Him without His leave.

'YA'LAMU MA BAYNA AYDEEHIM WA MA KHALFAHUM — HE KNOWS WHAT IS BEFORE THEM AND WHAT IS BEHIND THEM — WA LA YUHEETOONA BI-SHAY'IN MIN 'ILMIHI ILLA BIMA SHA' — AND THEY ENCOMPASS NOTHING OF HIS KNOWLEDGE EXCEPT WHAT HE WILLS.'

Beta, everything any human being has ever known — every science, every discovery, every book ever written — is a portion He allowed us to reach.



'WASI'A KURSIYYUHU-SAMAWATI WAL-ARD — HIS KURSI EXTENDS OVER THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH — WA LA YA'OODUHU HIFZUHUMA — AND THEIR PRESERVATION TIRES HIM NOT — WA HUWAL-'ALIYYUL-'AZEEM — AND HE IS THE MOST HIGH, THE MOST GREAT.'

Beta, 'la ya'ooduhu hifzuhuma' — sustaining the heavens and the earth does not burden Him at all. Every atom, every heartbeat, every falling leaf, every orbit — held, without effort.

Beta, learn this ayah, teach it to your children, and say it after every prayer and before you sleep.

And immediately after it, beta: 'LA IKRAHA FID-DEEN QAD TABAYYANAR-RUSHDU MINAL-GHAYY — THERE IS NO COMPULSION IN RELIGION; THE RIGHT COURSE HAS BECOME DISTINCT FROM THE WRONG.'

Beta, notice the placement. Immediately after describing Allah's absolute power — the power to compel anything — comes the statement that there is no compulsion in



this religion. He who COULD force everyone chose not to.

'FA-MAN YAKFUR BIT-TAGHOOTI WA YU'MIN
BILLAHI FA-QADIS-TAMSAKA
BIL-'URWATIL-WUTHQA LANFISAMA LAHA — so
whoever rejects false gods and believes in Allah HAS
GRASPED THE MOST TRUSTWORTHY HANDHOLD,
WITH NO BREAK IN IT.'

'ALLAHU WALIYYUL-LAZINA AMANOO
YUKHRIJUHUM MINAZ-ZULUMATI ILAN-NOOR —
ALLAH IS THE ALLY OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE; HE
BRINGS THEM OUT FROM DARKNESSES INTO THE
LIGHT.'

Seven Hundred Grains

The surah then gives a long and beautiful section on spending, *beta* — and it is the most detailed treatment of charity in the Quran.



'MATHALUL-LAZINA YUNFIQOONA AMWALAHUM
FEE SABEELILLAHI KA-MATHALI HABBATIN
ANBATAT SAB'A SANABILA FEE KULLI SUNBULATIN
MI'ATU HABBAH — THE EXAMPLE OF THOSE WHO
SPEND THEIR WEALTH IN THE WAY OF ALLAH IS LIKE
A SEED WHICH GROWS SEVEN SPIKES, IN EACH SPIKE
A HUNDRED GRAINS — WALLAHU YUDA'IFU LI-MAN
YASHA' — AND ALLAH MULTIPLIES FOR WHOM HE
WILLS.'

Beta, one seed, seven hundred grains. And 'Allah
multiplies for whom He wills' — meaning even that is
not the ceiling.

But then the conditions, beta: 'ALLAZINA YUNFIQOONA
AMWALAHUM FEE SABEELILLAHI THUMMA LA
YUTBI'OONA MA ANFAQOO MANNAN WA LA AZA —
those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah AND
THEN DO NOT FOLLOW UP WHAT THEY HAVE SPENT
WITH REMINDERS OF THEIR GENEROSITY OR WITH
INJURY.'



Beta, 'mann' — reminding the person of what you gave him. 'Adha' — hurting him, humiliating him, mentioning it in front of others.

'QAWLUN MA'ROOFUN WA MAGHFIRATUN
KHAYRUN MIN SADAQATIN YATBA'UHA AZA — A
KIND WORD AND FORGIVENESS ARE BETTER THAN A
CHARITY FOLLOWED BY INJURY.'

Beta, so a gentle refusal is better than a gift that comes with humiliation attached.

'YA AYYUHAL-LAZINA AMANOO LA TUBTILOO
SADAQATIKUM BIL-MANNI WAL-AZA — DO NOT
INVALIDATE YOUR CHARITIES WITH REMINDERS OR
INJURY' — and then the parable of a smooth stone with
dust on it, struck by heavy rain, leaving it bare.

Beta, a lifetime of giving can be washed off a stone by
the way you spoke about it afterwards.

'ASH-SHAYTANU YA'IDUKUMUL-FAQRA WA
YA'MURUKUM BIL-FAHSHA' — SHAYTAN



THREATENS YOU WITH POVERTY AND ORDERS YOU
TO IMMORALITY — WALLAHU YA'IDUKUM
MAGHFIRATAN MINHU WA FADLA — WHILE ALLAH
PROMISES YOU FORGIVENESS FROM HIM AND
BOUNTY.'

Beta, that is the exact voice you hear when you are about
to give something away: 'you will need it'. The ayah
names its source.

'WA MAN YU'TAL-HIKMATA FA-QAD OOTIYA
KHAYRAN KATHEERA — AND WHOEVER IS GRANTED
WISDOM HAS BEEN GRANTED MUCH GOOD.'

And then a description of the dignified poor, beta —
people you would never identify:

'YAHSAHUHUMUL-JAHILU AGHNIYA'A
MINAT-TA'AFFUFI — THE IGNORANT WOULD THINK
THEM SELF-SUFFICIENT BECAUSE OF THEIR
RESTRAINT — TA'RIFUHUM BI-SEEMAHUM — YOU
RECOGNISE THEM BY THEIR MARK — LA
YAS'ALOONAN-NASA ILHAF — THEY DO NOT ASK



PEOPLE PERSISTENTLY.'

Beta, find those people. They will not come to you.

And then the ayah about the timing of giving:

'ALLAZINA YUNFIQOONA AMWALAHUM BIL-LAYLI
WAN-NAHARI SIRRAN WA 'ALANIYATAN FA-LAHUM
AJRUHUM 'INDA RABBIHIM — those who spend their
wealth by night and by day, secretly and publicly —
they will have their reward with their Lord — WA LA
KHAWFUN 'ALAYHIM WA LA HUM YAHZANOON.'

The War Against Interest

And then, beta, the surah turns to riba — interest —
and the language is unlike anything else in the Quran.

'ALLAZINA YA'KULOONAR-RIBA LA YAQOOMOONA
ILLA KAMA YAQOOMUL-LAZI
YATAKHABBATUHUSH-SHAYTANU MINAL-MASS —
THOSE WHO CONSUME INTEREST CANNOT STAND
EXCEPT AS ONE STANDS WHO IS BEING BEATEN BY
SHAYTAN INTO INSANITY.'



'ZALIKA BI-ANNAHUM QALOO INNAMAL-BAY'U
MITHLUR-RIBA — THAT IS BECAUSE THEY SAY:
TRADE IS JUST LIKE INTEREST — WA
AHALLALLAHUL-BAY'A WA HARRAMAR-RIBA — BUT
ALLAH HAS PERMITTED TRADE AND FORBIDDEN
INTEREST.'

'YAMHAQULLAHUR-RIBA WA YURBIS-SADAQAT —
ALLAH DESTROYS INTEREST AND GIVES INCREASE
FOR CHARITIES.'

Beta, note the reversal of appearances. Interest LOOKS
like growth and Allah calls it 'mahq' — erasure, wiping
out, the word used for the waning of the moon. And
charity LOOKS like loss, and He calls it INCREASE.

'FA-IN LAM TAF'ALOO FA'ZANOO BI-HARBIN
MINALLAHI WA RASOOLIH — AND IF YOU DO NOT,
THEN BE INFORMED OF A WAR FROM ALLAH AND
HIS MESSENGER.'

Beta, there is no other sin in the Quran declared as a
WAR from Allah. Consider what that says about an



economy built on it.

'WA IN KANA ZOO 'USRATIN FA-NAZIRATUN ILA
MAYSARAH — AND IF SOMEONE IS IN HARDSHIP,
THEN LET THERE BE POSTPONEMENT UNTIL A TIME
OF EASE — WA AN TASADDAQOO KHAYRUN LAKUM
IN KUNTUM TA'LAMOON — BUT IF YOU GIVE UP THE
DEBT AS CHARITY, IT IS BETTER FOR YOU, IF YOU
ONLY KNEW.'

Beta, look at the ladder: give him time; and if you can,
forgive the loan entirely.

'WATTAQOO YAWMAN TURJA'OONA FEEHI ILALLAH
— AND FEAR A DAY WHEN YOU WILL BE RETURNED
TO ALLAH — THUMMA TUWAFFA KULLU NAFSIN MA
KASABAT WA HUM LA YUZLAMOON.'

Beta, the reports mention this was among the last ayahs
revealed.

And then comes the longest ayah in the entire Quran —
the ayah of debt, instructing that loans be written down,



with witnesses, precisely, without tiring of recording it whether small or large.

Beta, think about that. The longest ayah in this Book is not about the details of worship. It is about WRITING DOWN A DEBT.

Because most disputes between decent people begin with 'I thought we agreed...' — and Allah closed that door with a page of instructions.

The Last Two Ayahs

And now, beta, we come to the end of this great surah — two ayahs which the Prophet ﷺ said were given to him from a treasure beneath the Throne, and which no other prophet was given. And he said: whoever recites the last two ayahs of Surah al-Baqarah at night, they will suffice him.

It is reported that they were given on the night of the ascension, above the heavens.



'AMANAR-RASOOLU BIMA UNZILA ILAYHI MIN RABBIHI WAL-MU'MINOON — THE MESSENGER HAS BELIEVED IN WHAT WAS REVEALED TO HIM FROM HIS LORD, AND SO HAVE THE BELIEVERS — KULLUN AMANA BILLAHI WA MALA'IKATIHI WA KUTUBIHI WA RUSULIH — ALL OF THEM HAVE BELIEVED IN ALLAH AND HIS ANGELS AND HIS BOOKS AND HIS MESSENGERS — LA NUFARRIQU BAYNA AHADIN MIN RUSULIH — WE MAKE NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN ANY OF HIS MESSENGERS.'

'WA QALOO SAMI'NA WA ATA'NA — AND THEY SAY: WE HEAR AND WE OBEY — GHUFRANAKA RABBANA WA ILAYKAL-MASEER — GRANT US YOUR FORGIVENESS, OUR LORD, AND TO YOU IS THE FINAL DESTINATION.'

Beta, 'sami'na wa ata'na' — WE HEAR AND WE OBEY. Contrast that with the earlier communities in this same surah, of whom it was said that they heard and DISOBEYED. The whole difference between two nations is in one word.



And then the final ayah, beta — read it slowly, because it is a series of requests, and every one of them was granted:

'LA YUKALLIFULLAHU NAFSAN ILLA WUS'AHA — ALLAH DOES NOT CHARGE A SOUL EXCEPT WITH THAT WITHIN ITS CAPACITY.'

Beta, that is the foundation of the entire law. Whatever you are facing right now, you have the capacity for it — because He does not assign beyond capacity. That is His own statement about His own system.

'LAHA MA KASABAT WA 'ALAYHA MAKTASABAT — IT WILL HAVE WHAT GOOD IT HAS GAINED, AND IT WILL BEAR WHAT EVIL IT HAS EARNED.'

'RABBANA LA TU'AKHIZNA IN NASEENA AW AKHTA'NA — OUR LORD, DO NOT IMPOSE BLAME UPON US IF WE FORGET OR MAKE A MISTAKE.' — And it is reported that Allah said: I have done so.



'RABBANA WA LA TAHMIL 'ALAYNA ISRAN KAMA HAMALTAHU 'ALAL-LAZINA MIN QABLINA — OUR LORD, AND LAY NOT UPON US A BURDEN LIKE THAT WHICH YOU LAID UPON THOSE BEFORE US.' — I have done so.

'RABBANA WA LA TUHAMMILNA MA LA TAQATA LANA BIH — OUR LORD, AND BURDEN US NOT WITH THAT WHICH WE HAVE NO ABILITY TO BEAR.' — I have done so.

'WA'FU 'ANNA WAGHFIR LANA WARHAMNA — AND PARDON US, AND FORGIVE US, AND HAVE MERCY UPON US.'

Beta, notice the three words together, because they are not repetition. 'Afw' is erasure — that the sin be wiped from the record as though it never happened.

'Maghfirah' is covering — that it be concealed and not exposed. 'Rahmah' is mercy — that after all that, He be kind to you.

So: erase it, hide it, and then be good to me anyway.



'ANTA MAWLANA FANSURNA
'ALAL-QAWMIL-KAFIREEN — YOU ARE OUR
PROTECTOR, SO GIVE US VICTORY OVER THE
DISBELIEVING PEOPLE.'

Beta, and that is how the longest surah in the Quran ends: not with a command, but with a du'a — and a du'a that was answered clause by clause, before it was even given to us to say.

Beta, look back at where this surah began. It opened with 'this is the Book, no doubt in it, guidance for the muttaqeen'. And it closes with human beings saying 'we hear and we obey' and asking to be pardoned.

Between those two points, it gave you everything: the creation of man, the fall and the words of return, a nation that was given every favour and asked for onions, a cow that grew harder to find with every question, a father and son building a House and begging for acceptance, a qiblah turned, a fast prescribed, a river that defeated an army, the greatest ayah ever revealed,



seven hundred grains from one seed, a war declared over interest, and a page of instructions about writing down a loan.

Beta, that is Surah al-Baqarah. Read it in your house. Do not let your home become a graveyard.

What This Surah Teaches Us

1. The Book shows the road to anyone, but walks only with the one willing to move — and the hypocrite moves only when it is convenient.
2. Two sins named together: mixing truth with falsehood, and staying SILENT about truth you know.
3. Every question about the cow made the command harder — when you learn a command, DO it.
4. The builders of the Ka'bah worked while begging Allah to accept it — and Ibrahim's du'a for a Messenger was answered two thousand years later, and reached you.



5. 'Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'oon' — it was never yours, and the separation is temporary.
6. 'And when My servants ask you about Me — I am near' — He removed the messenger from the sentence.
7. Interest LOOKS like growth and is called erasure; charity LOOKS like loss and is called increase — and a kind word beats a gift that humiliates.
8. He does not charge a soul beyond its capacity — so whatever you are carrying, you were built for it.

Rabbana la tu'akhizna in naseena aw akhta'na... wa'fu 'anna waghfir lana warhamna, Anta Mawlana. Ameen.

— This is a simplified, faithful retelling for understanding, based on the Quran's translation and established tafseer (Ibn Kathir and others). For deeper study, always read with a qualified teacher. —

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