

SURAH AS A STORY



Surah Al-Anfal

The Spoils of War

The complete journey — the day of the criterion —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 8 • 75 Ayahs • Medinan

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The Surah at a Glance

*Innamal-mu'minoonal-lazeena izaa zukiral-laahu
wajilat quloobuhum*

2. The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful.

*Wa maa ja'alahul-laahu illaa bushraa wa
litatma'inna bihee quloobukum*

10. And Allah made it not but good tidings, and so your hearts would be assured by it.

*Wa maa ramayta iz ramayta wa laakinnal-laaha
ramaa*

17. And you did not throw when you threw, but it was Allah who threw.

*Wa laa tanaaza'oo fatafshaloo wa tazhaba
reehukum wasbiroo*

46. And do not dispute, lest you fail and your strength depart. And be patient.

*Law anfaqta maa fil-ardi jamee'am-maaa allafta
bayna quloobihim*

63. Had you spent all that is on the earth, you could not have brought their hearts together.



*Wa in janahoo lis-salmi fajnah lahaa wa tawakkal
'alal-laah*

61. And if they incline to peace, then incline to it and rely upon Allah.

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A Question About Spoils

Beta, this surah was revealed after the battle of Badr — the first major encounter, in the second year after the hijrah, when about three hundred and thirteen poorly equipped Muslims faced around a thousand well-armed men.

And notice how the surah opens: not with celebration, but with a DISPUTE among the victors.

'YAS'ALOOKA 'ANIL-ANFAL — THEY ASK YOU ABOUT THE SPOILS OF WAR — QULIL-ANFALU LILLAHI WAR-RASOOL — SAY: THE SPOILS ARE FOR ALLAH AND THE MESSENGER — FATTAQULLAHA WA ASLIHOO ZATA BAYNIKUM — SO FEAR ALLAH AND



SET RIGHT WHAT IS BETWEEN YOU — WA
ATEE'ULLAHA WA RASOOLAHU IN KUNTUM
MU'MINEEN — and obey Allah and His Messenger, if
you are believers.'

Beta, look at that. The victory was extraordinary, and
within hours there was a disagreement over the
distribution. And Allah's answer removes the argument
at its root: it is not yours to argue over. And then:
'aslihoo zata baynikum' — FIX WHAT IS BETWEEN
YOU.

Beta, that phrase is worth keeping. In any dispute over
property, inheritance, or business between believers, the
first instruction is not 'establish who is right' — it is
repair the relationship.

And then, beta, comes a definition of a believer in four
qualities:

'INNAMAL-MU'MINOONAL-LAZINA IZA
ZUKIRALLAHU WAJILAT QULOBUHUM — THE
BELIEVERS ARE ONLY THOSE WHO, WHEN ALLAH IS



MENTIONED, THEIR HEARTS TREMBLE — WA IZA TULIYAT 'ALAYHIM AYATUHU ZADAT-HUM IMANA — AND WHEN HIS VERSES ARE RECITED TO THEM, IT INCREASES THEM IN FAITH — WA 'ALA RABBIHIM YATAWAKKALON — AND UPON THEIR LORD THEY RELY — ALLAZINA YUQEEMOONAS-SALATA WA MIMMA RAZAQNAHUM YUNFIQOON — those who establish prayer and spend from what We have provided them.'

Beta, note the first sign: the heart MOVES when Allah's name is mentioned. Not the tongue — the heart.

And the second: the Quran INCREASES their faith. Beta, that is a test you can apply to yourself. After a session with this Book, is anything in you higher than before?

'ULA'IKA HUMUL-MU'MINOONA HAQQA — THOSE ARE THE BELIEVERS, TRULY — LAHUM DARAJATUN 'INDA RABBIHIM WA MAGHFIRATUN WA RIZQUN KAREEM — for them are ranks with their Lord, and forgiveness and noble provision.'



As Though They Were Being Driven to Death

The surah then recalls how the battle actually began, beta — and it is honest about how the believers felt.

'KAMA AKHRAJAKA RABBUKA MIN BAYTIKA
 BIL-HAQQI WA INNA FAREEQAN
 MINAL-MU'MINEENA LA-KARIHOON — as your Lord
 brought you out of your home in truth, WHILE INDEED
 A PARTY AMONG THE BELIEVERS WERE UNWILLING
 — YUJADILOONAKA FIL-HAQQI BA'DAMA
 TABAYYANA — disputing with you concerning the
 truth after it had become clear — KA-ANNAMA
 YUSAQOONA ILAL-MAWTI WA HUM YANZUROON —
 AS IF THEY WERE BEING DRIVEN TOWARD DEATH
 WHILE THEY LOOKED ON.'

Beta, the Quran does not hide this. They had left Madinah expecting to intercept a trade caravan, and instead found an army. And some of them were deeply reluctant, and argued about it, and felt as though they



were walking into their own deaths.

Beta, take comfort from that honesty. These were the companions — the best generation — and they felt fear and reluctance. Faith is not the absence of those feelings; it is what you do while feeling them.

'WA IZ YA'IDUKUMULLAHU IHDAT-TA'IFATAYNI ANNAHA LAKUM WA TAWADDOONA ANNA GHAYRA ZATISH-SHAWKATI TAKOONU LAKUM — and when Allah promised you one of the two groups, that it would be yours, AND YOU WISHED THAT THE ONE WITHOUT ARMS WOULD BE YOURS — WA YUREEDULLAHU AN YUHIQQAL-HAQQA BI-KALIMATIH — BUT ALLAH INTENDED TO ESTABLISH THE TRUTH BY HIS WORDS.'

Beta, look at this closely, because it is a lesson about du'a and desire. They wanted the EASY option — the unarmed caravan, the profit without the fight. And Allah gave them the harder one, because the harder one is what established the truth and changed history.



Beta, the thing you are hoping to avoid may be exactly the thing that makes you.

And then the help came. First, sleep: 'IZ YUGHASHSHEEKUMUN-NU'ASA AMANATAN MINH — when He covered you with drowsiness as SECURITY from Him.' Beta, on the night before a battle they could not win, Allah put them to sleep. What a mercy — rest, given at the moment fear should have kept everyone awake.

'WA YUNAZZILU 'ALAYKUM MINAS-SAMA'I MA'AN LI-YUTAHHIRAKUM BIHI WA YUZ-HIBA 'ANKUM RIJZASH-SHAYTANI WA LI-YARBITA 'ALA QULOBIKUM WA YUTHABBITA BIHIL-AQDAM — and He sent down rain upon you from the sky to PURIFY you, and to remove from you the whispering of shaytan, AND TO BIND YOUR HEARTS, AND TO MAKE FIRM YOUR FEET.'

Beta, look at how many things one rainfall did: water to drink and wash, sand firmed under their feet, dust



settled, hearts tied, and the enemy's ground turned to mud. One decree, many purposes at once. Beta, that is how His help usually arrives — through something ordinary that does several things at the same time.

And the angels were sent — 'ANNI MUMIDDUKUM BI-ALFIN MINAL-MALA'IKATI MURDIFEEN — I will reinforce you with a thousand angels, following one another.'

'WA MA JA'ALAHULLAHU ILLA BUSHRA WA LI-TATMA'INNA BIHI QULOObUKUM — AND ALLAH MADE IT NOT BUT GOOD TIDINGS, AND SO THAT YOUR HEARTS WOULD BE ASSURED BY IT — WA MAN-NASRU ILLA MIN 'INDILLAH — AND VICTORY IS NOT BUT FROM ALLAH.'

Beta, that last line is the key to the whole surah: even the angels were not the cause. They were a comfort. The victory came from Allah alone.

You Did Not Throw



And now, beta, the ayah that is the heart of this surah — and one of the most instructive ayahs in the Quran about how to think about your own achievements.

During the battle, the Prophet ﷺ took a handful of dust and pebbles and threw it toward the enemy, saying words the reports preserve. And Allah revealed:

'FA-LAM TAQTULOOHUM WA LAKINNALLAHA QATALAHUM — SO YOU DID NOT KILL THEM, BUT IT WAS ALLAH WHO KILLED THEM — WA MA RAMAYTA IZ RAMAYTA WA LAKINNALLAHA RAMA — AND YOU DID NOT THROW WHEN YOU THREW, BUT IT WAS ALLAH WHO THREW — WA LI-YUBLIYAL-MU'MINEENA MINHU BALA'AN HASANA — and so that He might test the believers with a good trial.'

Beta, read that middle phrase slowly: 'WA MA RAMAYTA IZ RAMAYTA' — YOU DID NOT THROW WHEN YOU THREW.



Beta, the Arabic affirms both things at once. He DID throw — the ayah says 'when you threw'. His arm moved, his hand opened, the dust left his fingers. The action was real and it was his.

And at the same time: he did not throw. Because what a handful of sand actually DID — reaching every eye in an army — was not from him at all.

Beta, this is the most precise statement in the Quran about effort and reliance. You must act. The action must be genuine and your own. And the RESULT was never yours.

Apply it to your life, beta. You studied — but the understanding was granted. You worked — but the provision was decreed. You spoke to someone about the deen — but the softening of that heart was not from your words. You raised your children well — but their guidance is not in your hands.

'Wa ma ramayta iz ramayta.' Throw the handful. And know Who carries it.



Do Not Dispute, or Your Wind Will Go

The surah then gives instructions for the believers when they face any confrontation, beta, and these apply far beyond a battlefield:

'YA AYYUHAL-LAZINA AMANOO IZA LAQEETUM
FI'ATAN FATHBUTOO WAZKURULLAHA KATHEERAN
LA'ALLAKUM TUFLIHOON — O YOU WHO HAVE
BELIEVED, WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER A GROUP, STAND
FIRM AND REMEMBER ALLAH MUCH, THAT YOU
MAY BE SUCCESSFUL.'

Beta, note the two instructions given for a moment of crisis: STAND FIRM, and REMEMBER ALLAH ABUNDANTLY. Dhikr in the middle of the hardest moment — not afterwards.

And then, beta, the ayah that explains why communities fail:

'WA ATEE'ULLAHA WA RASOOLAHU WA LA
TANAZA'OO FA-TAFSHALOO WA TAZ-HABA



REEHUKUM — AND OBEY ALLAH AND HIS MESSENGER, AND DO NOT DISPUTE (with one another), LEST YOU LOSE COURAGE AND YOUR STRENGTH DEPART — WASBIROO INNALLAHA MA'AS-SABIREEN — AND BE PATIENT; INDEED, ALLAH IS WITH THE PATIENT.'

Beta, 'wa taz-haba REEHUKUM' — literally, YOUR WIND WOULD GO. What a phrase. The Arabs used 'reeh' for the force and momentum that carries a group forward, like wind in a sail.

So the ayah says: internal disputes do not merely cause disagreement — they take the WIND out of you. A community can have numbers, resources and a just cause, and still be becalmed, going nowhere, because its people are arguing with each other.

Beta, look at the ummah today and look at this ayah. It was diagnosed fourteen centuries ago.

And then a warning about arrogance: 'WA LA TAKOONOO KAL-LAZINA KHARAJOO MIN DIYARIHIM



BATARAN WA RI'A'AN-NASI — and do not be like those who came forth from their homes BOASTFULLY and to be SEEN BY PEOPLE.'

Beta, the Makkan army marched out with musicians and displays. And the ayah warns the believers not to become that.

And it warns of the moment shaytan abandons those he encouraged: 'FA-LAMMA TARA'ATIL-FI'ATANI NAKASA 'ALA 'AQIBAYHI WA QALA INNI BAREE'UN MINKUM — and when the two armies SIGHTED EACH OTHER, he turned on his heels and said: I AM FREE OF YOU — INNI ARA MA LA TARAWN — INDEED, I SEE WHAT YOU DO NOT SEE.'

Beta, that is the pattern of every bad companion: loud encouragement until the consequences appear, and then absence.

Blessings Do Not Leave for No Reason



The surah then states a law of history, beta — and it is the companion to the ayah we read in Surah Ar-Ra'd:

'ZALIKA BI-ANNALLAHA LAM YAKU MUGHAYYIRAN
NI'MATAN AN'AMAHA 'ALA QAWMIN HATTA
YUGHAYYIROO MA BI-ANFUSIHIM — THAT IS
BECAUSE ALLAH WOULD NOT CHANGE A FAVOUR
WHICH HE HAD BESTOWED UPON A PEOPLE UNTIL
THEY CHANGE WHAT IS WITHIN THEMSELVES.'

Beta, notice the direction here: this ayah is specifically about a blessing being REMOVED. And the condition is the same — something inside changed first.

Beta, so when a family loses its harmony, or a community loses its standing, or a person loses a blessing he had for years — the question this ayah asks is not 'what went wrong out there?' It is: what changed in here, before that?

And then, beta, two protections from punishment that every Muslim should know:



'WA MA KANALLAHU LI-YU'AZZIBAHUM WA ANTA FEEHIM — AND ALLAH WOULD NOT PUNISH THEM WHILE YOU ARE AMONG THEM — WA MA KANALLAHU MU'AZZIBAHUM WA HUM YASTAGHFIROON — AND ALLAH WOULD NOT PUNISH THEM WHILE THEY SEEK FORGIVENESS.'

Beta, two shields are named. The first was the presence of the Prophet ﷺ among them — and that one has passed.

The second is still available to us, every single day: ISTIGHFAR.

Beta, understand what this ayah is telling you. A community that keeps saying 'astaghfirullah' is under a protection. Not because the sins are small, but because the seeking of forgiveness itself holds back what would otherwise fall.

Beta, that is a very practical piece of knowledge. When you feel that things are going badly — in your home, your work, your country — this ayah tells you the



response that is always within reach.

If They Incline to Peace

The surah then discusses preparation and treaties, beta, and gives instructions that show the true balance of this deen.

'WA A'IDDOO LAHUM MASTATA'TUM MIN QUWWATIN WA MIN RIBATIL-KHAYLI TURHIBOONA BIHI 'ADUWWALLAHI WA 'ADUWWAKUM — AND PREPARE AGAINST THEM WHATEVER YOU ARE ABLE OF POWER AND OF STEEDS OF WAR, BY WHICH YOU MAY DETER THE ENEMY OF ALLAH AND YOUR ENEMY.'

Beta, note the stated purpose: 'turhiboona' — DETERRENCE. Strength is commanded so that an aggressor thinks twice. A weak community invites attack; a strong one is left alone. That is the wisdom in it.

And then immediately, beta — and this order matters:



'WA IN JANAHOO LIS-SALMI FAJNAH LAHA WA
TAWAKKAL 'ALALLAH — AND IF THEY INCLINE TO
PEACE, THEN INCLINE TO IT ALSO, AND RELY UPON
ALLAH — INNAHU HUWAS-SAMEE'UL-'ALEEM —
indeed, He is the Hearing, the Knowing.'

Beta, look at the sequence: be strong enough to deter —
and the moment the other side leans toward peace,
LEAN WITH THEM. Immediately, without conditions,
without demanding advantage from a position of
strength.

'WA IN YUREEDOO AN YAKHDA'OOKA FA-INNA
HASBAKALLAH — and if they intend to deceive you,
then sufficient for you is Allah.'

Beta, and there is the answer to the obvious worry: what
if their peace offer is a trick? And Allah says: make peace
anyway; I am enough for you.

Beta, this is the deen accused of loving war. The
instruction is: prepare so that nobody attacks you, and
accept peace the instant it is offered — and leave the



risk to Allah.

Hearts You Could Not Have Joined

And now, beta, one of the most beautiful ayahs in the Quran about brotherhood.

'HUWAL-LAZI AYYADAKA BI-NASRIHI WA BIL-MU'MINEEN — IT IS HE WHO SUPPORTED YOU WITH HIS HELP AND WITH THE BELIEVERS — WA ALLAFA BAYNA QULOBIHIM — AND BROUGHT THEIR HEARTS TOGETHER.'

'LAW ANFAQTA MA FIL-ARDI JAMEE'AN MA ALLAFTA BAYNA QULOBIHIM — HAD YOU SPENT ALL THAT IS ON THE EARTH, YOU COULD NOT HAVE BROUGHT THEIR HEARTS TOGETHER — WA LAKINNALLAHA ALLAFA BAYNAHUM — BUT ALLAH BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER — INNAHU 'AZEEZUN HAKEEM — indeed, He is Almighty, Wise.'

Beta, understand what this ayah is about. The Aws and the Khazraj — the two great tribes of Madinah — had



been at war with each other for generations. Blood feuds, revenge killings, wars that had run so long that nobody could remember how they started.

And within a few years, they were sitting shoulder to shoulder in one row, calling each other brother, and giving away their homes and wealth to the Muhajirun.

And Allah says: if you had spent EVERYTHING ON EARTH, you could not have done that.

Beta, sit with this, because it tells you something about hearts. You cannot buy affection. You cannot negotiate it, engineer it, or force it. Money cannot produce it, and neither can argument.

Beta, so if there is coldness in your home, or a broken relationship with a sibling or a friend, this ayah tells you where the solution actually lies. You may do everything right and the heart still does not soften — because 'allafa baynahum' is Allah's act.



So ASK Him for it. Ask Him to join your heart with your spouse's, your parents', your children's. That joining is something He does.

And the surah's closing ayahs describe the bond that resulted: 'INNAL-LAZINA AMANOO WA HAJAROO WA JAHADOO BI-AMWALIHIM WA ANFUSIHIM FEE SABEELILLAHİ WAL-LAZINA AWAW WA NASAROO ULA'İKA BA'DU HUM AWLIYA'U BA'D — those who believed and emigrated and strove with their wealth and lives, AND THOSE WHO GAVE SHELTER AND AIDED — THEY ARE ALLIES OF ONE ANOTHER.'

Beta, note the two groups: those who LEFT everything, and those who OPENED their homes. Both are named, and neither is above the other.

'WAL-LAZINA KAFAROO BA'DU HUM AWLIYA'U BA'D — and those who disbelieve are allies of one another — ILLA TAF'ALOOHU TAKUN FITNATUN FIL-ARDI WA FASADUN KABEER — IF YOU DO NOT DO SO (support one another), THERE WILL BE TURMOIL ON THE



EARTH AND GREAT CORRUPTION.'

Beta, that is a warning to this ummah in every century: if the believers do not stand with each other, the result is 'fitnatun fil-ard' — disorder across the earth. Our disunity is not a private failing; it has consequences for everyone.

And the surah ends: 'WA ULUL-ARHAMI BA'DU HUM AWLA BI-BA'DIN FEE KITABILLAH — AND THOSE OF BLOOD RELATIONSHIP ARE MORE ENTITLED TO ONE ANOTHER IN THE DECREE OF ALLAH — INNALLAHA BI-KULLI SHAY'IN 'ALEEM — indeed, Allah is Knowing of all things.'

Beta, and look where this surah has travelled. It began with people arguing over spoils, and it ends with the ties of kinship and the brotherhood of believers. It began with 'fix what is between you', and it closes with hearts that only Allah could have joined.

That is the real victory of Badr, beta. Not the spoils. The hearts.



What This Surah Teaches Us

1. After the greatest victory came a dispute — and the first command was 'set right what is between you', not 'establish who is right'.
2. A believer's heart moves when Allah is mentioned, and the Quran leaves him higher than it found him.
3. They wanted the easy option; Allah gave them the hard one — and it made them.
4. 'You did not throw when you threw' — the action is genuinely yours, the result never was.
5. Internal disputes take the WIND out of a community — numbers and resources cannot replace it.
6. Istighfar is a standing protection: 'Allah would not punish them while they seek forgiveness.'
7. Be strong enough to deter, and incline to peace the moment it is offered — and ask Allah to join hearts, because all the wealth on earth cannot.



Ya Allah, join our hearts as You joined theirs, keep us from disputing, and let our forgiveness-seeking be our shield. 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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