

SURAH AS A STORY



# Surah Ar-Ra'd

*The Thunder*

The complete journey — hearts that find rest —  
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 13 • 43 Ayahs • Medinan

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## The Surah at a Glance

*Allaahul-lazee rafa'as-samaawaati bighayri  
'amadin tarawnahaa*

2. Allah is He who raised the heavens without pillars  
that you see.

*Innal-laaha laa yughayyiru maa biqawmin hattaa  
yughayyiroo maa bi-anfusihim*

11. Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a  
people until they change what is in themselves.

*Wa yusabbihur-ra'du bihamdihee  
wal-malaaa'ikatu min kheefatih*

13. And the thunder exalts Him with praise, and the  
angels too, out of fear of Him.

*Allazeena aamanoo wa tatma'innu quloobuhum  
bizikril-laah*

28. Those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the  
remembrance of Allah.

*Alaa bizikril-laahi tatma'innul-quloob*

28. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts  
find rest.

*Yamhul-laahu maa yashaaa'u wa yusbit; wa  
'indahooo Ummul-Kitaab*



39. Allah erases what He wills and confirms, and with  
Him is the Mother of the Book.

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## Raised Without Pillars

Beta, this surah opens by directing your eyes upward:

'ALLAHUL-LAZI RAFA'AS-SAMAWATI BI-GHAYRI  
'AMADIN TARAWNAHA — ALLAH IS HE WHO RAISED  
THE HEAVENS WITHOUT PILLARS THAT YOU SEE —  
THUMMAS-TAWA 'ALAL-'ARSH — then He rose above  
the Throne — WA SAKHKHARASH-SHAMSA  
WAL-QAMARA KULLUN YAJREE LI-AJALIN  
MUSAMMA — and subjected the sun and the moon,  
EACH RUNNING FOR A SPECIFIED TERM —  
YUDABBIRUL-AMRA — HE ARRANGES THE MATTER.'

Beta, 'bi-ghayri 'amadin tarawnaha' — without pillars  
THAT YOU SEE. Look up at the sky. It is not resting on  
anything. Nothing is holding it, and it does not fall.



'WA HUWAL-LAZI MADDAL-ARDA WA JA'ALA FEEHA  
 RAWASIYA WA ANHARA — and it is He who spread the  
 earth and placed in it firm mountains and rivers — WA  
 MIN KULLITH-THAMARATI JA'ALA FEEHA  
 ZAWJAYNITH-NAYN — and from all the fruits He made  
 therein PAIRS, TWO OF EACH —  
 YUGHSHIL-LAYLAN-NAHAR — He covers the night  
 with the day.'

And then, beta, an ayah that observes something so  
 ordinary that we walk past it every day — and it is a  
 lesson about people:

'WA FIL-ARDI QITA'UN MUTAJAWIRATUN — AND  
 WITHIN THE LAND ARE NEIGHBOURING PLOTS — WA  
 JANNATUN MIN A'NABIN WA ZAR'UN WA  
 NAKHEELUN SINWANUN WA GHAYRU SINWANIN —  
 and gardens of grapevines and crops and palm trees,  
 some growing from a single root and others not —  
 YUSQA BI-MA'IN WAHIDIN — WATERED WITH ONE  
 WATER — WA NUFADDILU BA'DAHA 'ALA BA'DIN  
 FIL-UKUL — BUT WE MAKE SOME OF THEM EXCEED



OTHERS IN TASTE — INNA FEE ZALIKA LA-AYATIN  
LI-QAWMIN YA'QILOON — indeed in that are signs for  
a people who use reason.'

Beta, sit with this. Two plots of land side by side. The  
same soil, the same sun, the same rain — one water.  
And what grows out of them differs completely: one  
sweet, one sour, one abundant, one poor.

Beta, the scholars applied this to people. Two brothers in  
one house. Two students of one teacher. Two people  
hearing the same khutbah, reading the same ayah, given  
the same upbringing. Same water — completely  
different fruit.

Because the difference was never in the water. It was in  
the ground receiving it.

Beta, so before you complain that a reminder did not  
benefit you, ask about your soil.

## **Until They Change Themselves**



The surah then makes an important statement about what Allah knows: 'ALLAHU YA'LAMU MA TAHMILU KULLU UNTHA WA MA TAGHEEDUL-ARHAMU WA MA TAZDAD — Allah knows what every female carries, and what the wombs lose and what they exceed — WA KULLU SHAY'IN 'INDAHU BI-MIQDAR — AND EVERYTHING WITH HIM IS BY DUE MEASURE.'

'SAWA'UN MINKUM MAN ASARRAL-QAWLA WA MAN JAHARA BIHI WA MAN HUWA MUSTAKHFIN BIL-LAYLI WA SARIBUN BIN-NAHAR — IT IS THE SAME (to Him) whether one of you conceals his speech or declares it, and whether one HIDES BY NIGHT OR WALKS OPENLY BY DAY.'

Beta, the whispered word and the shouted word arrive equally. The night and the daylight are the same to Him.

'LAHU MU'AQQIBATUN MIN BAYNI YADAYHI WA MIN KHALFIHI YAHFAZONAHU MIN AMRILLAH — FOR HIM ARE ANGELS IN SUCCESSION, BEFORE AND BEHIND HIM, PROTECTING HIM BY THE DECREE OF



ALLAH.'

Beta, 'mu'aqqibat' — those who follow one another in shifts. Angels assigned to you, taking turns, in front and behind. Beta, you have never been unguarded for a single moment of your life.

And then, beta, one of the most quoted ayahs in the Quran — and one of the most misused:

'INNALLAHA LA YUGHAYYIRU MA BI-QAWMIN  
HATTA YUGHAYYIROO MA BI-ANFUSIHIM — INDEED,  
ALLAH WILL NOT CHANGE THE CONDITION OF A  
PEOPLE UNTIL THEY CHANGE WHAT IS IN  
THEMSELVES.'

Beta, look precisely at the wording, because this is where people misread it. It does not say 'until they change their circumstances'. It says 'MA BI-ANFUSIHIM' — WHAT IS IN THEMSELVES.

So the change Allah waits for is INTERNAL: what is in the hearts, the intentions, the character, the honesty, the



discipline, the sincerity of a people.

Beta, this is why external solutions keep failing. A community can change its leaders, its systems, its slogans, its funding — and if what is inside the people has not changed, the same result reappears in a new shape.

And beta, apply it personally too. You want your situation to change. This ayah tells you where the lever is: not out there. In here.

And note the reverse is also implied and is even more sobering: a people in a GOOD condition do not lose it until something changes inside them first. Blessings do not usually leave suddenly; something rotted quietly before the loss appeared.

'WA IZA ARADALLAHU BI-QAWMIN SOO'AN FA-LA MARADDA LAH — and when Allah intends for a people ill, there is no repelling it — WA MA LAHUM MIN DOONIHI MIN WAL — and they have not besides Him any patron.'





## The Thunder Glorifies Him

And now, beta, the ayah that gives this surah its name:

'HUWAL-LAZI YUREEKUMUL-BARQA KHAWFAN WA  
TAMA'AN — IT IS HE WHO SHOWS YOU LIGHTNING,  
CAUSING FEAR AND HOPE — WA  
YUNSHI'US-SAHABATH-THIQAL — AND FORMS THE  
HEAVY CLOUDS.'

Beta, note: 'khawfan wa tama'an' — the same flash produces FEAR (of the storm, the flood, the strike) and HOPE (of the rain, the crops, the relief). One event, two feelings — which is exactly how a believer holds his life.

'WA YUSABBIHUR-RA'DU BI-HAMDIHI  
WAL-MALA'IKATU MIN KHEEFATIH — AND THE  
THUNDER EXALTS HIM WITH PRAISE — AND THE  
ANGELS TOO, OUT OF AWE OF HIM — WA  
YURSILUS-SAWA'IQA FA-YUSEEBU BIHA MAN  
YASHA'U WA HUM YUJADILONA FILLAH — and He  
sends the thunderbolts and strikes with them whom He  
wills — WHILE THEY DISPUTE ABOUT ALLAH — WA



HUWA SHADEEDUL-MIHAL — and He is severe in assault.'

Beta, feel the picture. The sky above them is glorifying Allah — the thunder itself is tasbeeh — and the angels are trembling in awe. And down below, small human beings stand and ARGUE about whether He exists.

Beta, that is the contrast the ayah draws. Creation is worshipping; man is debating.

And it is reported that when the Prophet ﷺ heard thunder, he would say: 'Subhanal-lazi yusabbihur-ra'du bi-hamdihi wal-mala'ikatu min kheefatih.' Beta, learn that and say it the next time you hear thunder — instead of complaining about the weather.

'LAHU DA'WATUL-HAQQ — TO HIM IS THE CALL OF TRUTH — WAL-LAZINA YAD'OONA MIN DOONIHILAHU YASTAJEEBOONA LAHUM BISHAY'IN ILLA KABA-SITI KAFFAYHI ILAL-MA'I LI-YABLUGHU FAHU WA MA HUWA BILALIGHI — and those they invoke besides Him do not respond to them with a thing, EXCEPT AS



ONE WHO STRETCHES HIS PALMS TOWARD WATER,  
HOPING IT WILL REACH HIS MOUTH — BUT IT WILL  
NEVER REACH IT.'

Beta, what an image of futility. A thirsty man kneeling at the edge of a well, reaching out with open hands toward water he cannot touch — and the water never rises. That is every prayer directed to something other than Allah.

## **The Flood and the Froth**

And now, beta, one of the most powerful parables in the Quran — and it explains the whole history of truth and falsehood.

'ANZALA MINAS-SAMA'I MA'AN FA-SALAT  
AWDIYATUN BI-QADARIHA — He sends down rain  
from the sky, and VALLEYS FLOW ACCORDING TO  
THEIR CAPACITY — FAHTAMALAS-SAYLU ZABADAN  
RABIYA — AND THE TORRENT CARRIES A RISING  
FOAM.'



Beta, note the first half: each valley takes 'bi-qadariha' — according to its own capacity. The same rain falls on all of them; a wide valley carries a river, a small one carries a stream. Beta, that is knowledge and guidance too: the same Quran is recited to everyone, and each person carries away what his vessel can hold.

'WA MIMMA YOOQIDOONA 'ALAYHI  
FIN-NARIB-TIGHA'A HILYATIN AW MATA'IN  
ZABADUN MITHLUH — and from what they heat in the  
fire, desiring ornaments or utensils, there is a similar  
FOAM (of scum).'

Beta, the second image: metal being melted to make jewellery or tools, and the impurities rising to the top as scum.

'KAZALIKA YADRIBULLAHUL-HAQQA WAL-BATIL —  
THUS DOES ALLAH PRESENT THE EXAMPLE OF  
TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD.'

'FA-AMMAZ-ZABADU FA-YAZ-HABU JUFA'A — AS FOR  
THE FOAM, IT VANISHES, CAST OFF — WA AMMA MA



YANFA'UN-NASA FA-YAMKUTHU FIL-ARD — BUT AS  
FOR THAT WHICH BENEFITS THE PEOPLE, IT  
REMAINS IN THE GROUND — KAZALIKA  
YADTRIBULLAHUL-AMTHAL — thus does Allah present  
examples.'

Beta, take this apart, because it is a description of the  
age you live in.

Look at a flood. The foam sits ON TOP. It is white, it  
catches the light, it is the first thing your eye lands on,  
and it makes the most noise. The water — the thing  
everyone actually needs — is underneath, quiet, doing  
nothing dramatic.

And then the flood passes. And the foam? 'Jufa'an' —  
thrown aside, dried on the banks, gone. And the water  
has sunk into the earth, where it will feed crops for  
years.

Beta, that is falsehood and truth exactly. Falsehood is  
loud, visible, and always on the surface. It trends. It gets  
attention. It looks like the main event.



And truth is often quiet, and looks like it is losing — right up until the flood passes.

Beta, so do not measure truth by volume, and do not be discouraged when something false is everywhere and something right is barely noticed. Ask one question about anything: 'ma yanfa'un-nas' — does it BENEFIT PEOPLE? Whatever benefits people stays. Everything else is foam waiting to dry.

## Hearts That Find Rest

The surah then describes those who understand — 'ULUL-ALBAB' — and lists their qualities, beta: they fulfil the covenant of Allah and do not break it; they join what Allah has ordered to be joined; they fear their Lord and fear a terrible reckoning; they are patient seeking their Lord's face; they establish prayer; they spend secretly and publicly from what He gave them; and 'YADRA'OONA BIL-HASANATIS-SAYYI'AH — THEY REPEL EVIL WITH GOOD.'



Beta, note that one especially: they answer bad treatment with good treatment. Not merely refraining from revenge — actively responding with good.

And of them Allah says: 'ULA'IKA LAHUM 'UQBAD-DAR — for them is the final home — JANNATU 'ADNIN YADKHULOONAH WA MAN SALAHA MIN ABA'IHIM WA AZWAJIHIM WA ZURRIYYATIHI — Gardens of perpetual residence, which they will enter WITH WHOEVER WAS RIGHTEOUS AMONG THEIR FATHERS, THEIR SPOUSES AND THEIR DESCENDANTS — WAL-MALA'IKATU YADKHULOONA 'ALAYHIM MIN KULLI BAB — and the angels will enter upon them from every gate — SALAMUN 'ALAYKUM BIMA SABARTUM — PEACE BE UPON YOU FOR WHAT YOU PATIENTLY ENDURED.'

Beta, look at the reunion promised there: the righteous of your parents, your spouse, your children — together. Beta, that is worth working for, and worth making du'a for on their behalf.



And then, beta, the ayah at the very centre of this surah — and one of the most healing ayahs in the entire Quran:

'ALLAZINA AMANOO WA TATMA'INNU  
QULOBUHUM BI-ZIKRILLAH — THOSE WHO HAVE  
BELIEVED AND WHOSE HEARTS FIND REST IN THE  
REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH — ALA BI-ZIKRILLAH  
TATMA'INNUL-QULOOB — UNQUESTIONABLY, BY  
THE REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH DO HEARTS FIND  
REST.'

Beta, take the word 'TATMA'INN'. It comes from 'itmi'nan' — to settle, to become still, to stop trembling. It is used for a bird that finally lands after circling, and for ground that is level and firm.

So the ayah is saying: the heart is a restless thing, and it goes on circling until it lands on the remembrance of Allah.

Beta, and think about how much of a modern life is spent trying to make the heart settle. We try





entertainment, food, shopping, scrolling, company, achievement, plans — and each one holds the restlessness down for an hour and then it returns, sometimes worse.

And the ayah begins with 'ALA' — UNQUESTIONABLY, a word of attention that means: listen carefully, there is no doubt about this. Hearts settle by ONE thing.

Beta, and notice that dhikr is available in every condition. You do not need a place, a time, wudu, silence, money or company. In a hospital corridor, in traffic, in the middle of a sleepless night — 'SubhanAllah, alhamdulillah, la ilaha illallah, Allahu akbar.' The medicine is always in your pocket.

'ALLAZINA AMANOO WA 'AMILUS-SALIHATI TOOBA LAHUM WA HUSNU MA'AB — those who believe and do righteous deeds — TOOBA FOR THEM, and a GOOD RETURN.'

Beta, 'tooba' has been explained as goodness, blessedness, joy, delight — and it is also reported as the



name of a tree in Paradise so vast that a rider would travel in its shade for a hundred years without crossing it.

## He Erases and Confirms

The surah then addresses those who demanded miracles, beta, and answers with a stunning statement:

'WA LAW ANNA QUR'ANAN SUYYIRAT BIHIL-JIBALU  
AW QUTTI'AT BIHIL-ARDU AW KULLIMA  
BIHIL-MAWTA — AND IF THERE WAS ANY QURAN BY  
WHICH THE MOUNTAINS WOULD BE MOVED, OR THE  
EARTH TORN APART, OR THE DEAD SPOKEN TO — (it  
would be this one) — BAL LILLAHIL-AMRU JAMEE'A  
— but to Allah belongs the affair entirely.'

And then: 'A FA-LAM YAY'ASIL-LAZINA AMANOO AN  
LAW YASHA'ULLAHU LA-HADAN-NASA JAMEE'A —  
HAVE THOSE WHO BELIEVED NOT ACCEPTED THAT  
HAD ALLAH WILLED, HE WOULD HAVE GUIDED ALL  
PEOPLE?'



Beta, that is a relief for anyone exhausted by trying to guide others. If Allah had wanted every human being guided, it would have been done instantly. He chose to make it a matter of choice.

'WA LAQADIS-TUHZI'A BI-RUSULIN MIN QABLIKA  
FA-AMLAYTU LILLAZINA KAFAROO THUMMA  
AKHAZTUHUM — and messengers before you were  
certainly mocked, so I GRANTED RESPITE to those who  
disbelieved, then I SEIZED THEM — FA-KAYFA KANA  
'IQAB — AND HOW (terrible) WAS MY PENALTY.'

Beta, note 'amlaytu' — I gave them rope, I let them run.  
The delay was never approval.

'A FA-MAN HUWA QA'IMUN 'ALA KULLI NAFSIN  
BIMA KASABAT — is He then, who is a MAINTAINER  
OF EVERY SOUL, KNOWING WHAT IT HAS EARNED,  
(like anyone else)?'

And then, beta, one of the most hope-giving ayahs in the  
Quran about destiny:



'YAMHULLAHU MA YASHA'U WA YUTHBIT — ALLAH ERASES WHAT HE WILLS AND CONFIRMS (what He wills) — WA 'INDAHU UMMUL-KITAB — AND WITH HIM IS THE MOTHER OF THE BOOK.'

Beta, 'yamhu' — He WIPES OUT, erases. 'Yuthbit' — He fixes, confirms, establishes.

The scholars explained this in connection with du'a and righteousness: things can be written and then erased. A hardship that was heading toward you can be wiped away. A du'a can change what was going to happen. Charity given quietly can remove a calamity. And 'Ummul-Kitab', the Mother of the Book — the master record with Allah — never changes.

Beta, and this is why the Prophet ﷺ said that nothing repels the decree except du'a, and that righteousness increases lifespan.

So never conclude that because something is decreed, there is no point in asking. Your asking is itself part of the arrangement — and this ayah tells you that things



get erased.

## Sufficient as a Witness

And the surah closes, beta, with the Prophet ﷺ being reassured in a situation where the whole world seemed against him.

'A WA LAM YARAW ANNA NA'TIL-ARDA NANQUSUHA MIN ATRAFIHA — DO THEY NOT SEE THAT WE SET UPON THE LAND, REDUCING IT FROM ITS OUTLYING BORDERS? WALLAHU YAHKUMU LA MU'AQQIBA LI-HUKMIH — AND ALLAH DECIDES; THERE IS NO ADJUSTER OF HIS DECISION — WA HUWA SAREE'UL-HISAB — and He is swift in account.'

'WA QAD MAKARAL-LAZINA MIN QABLIHIM FA-LILLAHIL-MAKRU JAMEE'A — AND THOSE BEFORE THEM HAD PLOTTED, BUT TO ALLAH BELONGS THE PLAN ENTIRELY — YA'LAMU MA TAKSIBU KULLU NAFS — He knows what every soul earns.'



Beta, 'fa-lillahil-makru jamee'a' — every plan, including the ones being made against you, is ultimately within His plan. People scheme; He arranges. And His arrangement includes their scheming.

And the final ayah of the surah, beta — and it is the answer to every accusation:

'WA YAQOOLUL-LAZINA KAFAROO LASTA MURSALA  
— AND THOSE WHO DISBELIEVE SAY: YOU ARE NOT A  
MESSENGER — QUL KAFA BILLAHI SHAHEEDAN  
BAYNI WA BAYNAKUM WA MAN 'INDAHU  
'ILMUL-KITAB — SAY: SUFFICIENT IS ALLAH AS A  
WITNESS BETWEEN ME AND YOU, AND WHOEVER  
HAS KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCRIPTURE.'

Beta, 'kafa billahi shaheeda' — SUFFICIENT IS ALLAH  
AS A WITNESS.

Learn that phrase. When you have been accused of something you did not do, when your intentions have been twisted, when you have explained yourself and nobody accepted it — there is a point at which a believer



stops defending and says this.

Beta, it is not surrender. It is a transfer. You are handing the case to a Witness who saw everything and cannot be deceived.

And so this surah, beta, which began by pointing at a sky held up without pillars, ends by telling you Who is holding you up.

In between it gave you the essentials: two plots with the same water grow different fruit, so check your soil; nothing changes until what is inside changes; the thunder itself is glorifying Him while people argue; the loud foam dries out and the quiet water sinks in; hearts settle only by His remembrance; and things that were written can still be erased.

## **What This Surah Teaches Us**

1. Same soil, same rain, different fruit — before blaming the reminder, examine the ground receiving it.



- 2.** Allah changes a people's condition when they change what is INSIDE them — not their slogans or systems.
- 3.** Blessings rarely vanish suddenly; something rots quietly first.
- 4.** The thunder is making tasbeeh while men debate His existence — say the du'a when you hear it.
- 5.** Falsehood is the foam: loud, visible, on top — and dried on the bank once the flood passes. Ask only: does it benefit people?
- 6.** Hearts are restless birds; they land on one branch only — 'ala bi-dhikrillahi tatma'innul-quloob'.
- 7.** He erases and He confirms — so never stop asking; and when nobody believes you, say 'kafa billahi shaheeda'.

Ya Allah, settle our hearts with Your remembrance, change what is within us, and be our Witness. 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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