

SURAH AS A STORY



Surah Ibrahim

Abraham

The complete journey — a good word, like a good tree —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 14 • 52 Ayahs • Meccan

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The Surah at a Glance

*Kitaabun anzalnaahu ilayka litukhrijan-naasa
minaz-zulumaati ilan-noor*

1. A Book which We have revealed to you that you might bring people out of darknesses into the light.

*La'in shakartum la-azeedannakum wa la'in
kafartum inna 'azaabee lashadeed*

7. If you are grateful, I will surely increase you; but if you deny, indeed My punishment is severe.

*Wa maa lanaaa allaa natawakkala 'alal-laahi wa
qad hadaanaa subulanaa*

12. And why should we not rely upon Allah while He has guided us to our ways?

*Kalimatan tayyibatan kashajaratin tayyibatin
asluhaa saabitunw-wa far'uhaa fis-samaaa'*

24. A good word is like a good tree, whose root is firm and whose branches are in the sky.

*Yusabbitul-laahul-lazeena aamanoo
bil-qawlis-saabiti fil-hayaatid-dunyaa wa
fil-Aakhirah*

27. Allah keeps firm those who believe, with the firm word, in this life and the Hereafter.



*Rabbij-'alnee muqeemas-Salaati wa min
zurriyyatee*

40. My Lord, make me an establisher of prayer, and
from my descendants.

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Out of Darknesses Into the Light

Beta, this surah opens by stating the entire purpose of
revelation in one sentence:

'ALIF LAM RA. KITABUN ANZALNAHU ILAYKA
LI-TUKHRIJAN-NASA MINAZ-ZULUMATI ILAN-NOOR
— A BOOK WHICH WE HAVE REVEALED TO YOU THAT
YOU MIGHT BRING PEOPLE OUT OF DARKNESSES
INTO THE LIGHT — BI-IZNI RABBIHIM ILA
SIRATIL-'AZEEZIL-HAMEED — by permission of their
Lord, to the path of the Almighty, the Praiseworthy.'

Beta, notice something the scholars have long pointed
out about this phrase, which appears several times in
the Quran. 'Az-zulumat' — DARKNESSES — is always



PLURAL. 'An-noor' — THE LIGHT — is always SINGULAR.

Because there are countless ways to be lost, beta, and only one way to be found. Falsehood has a thousand branches, each contradicting the others. The truth is one road.

'WA LAQAD ARSALNA MOOSA BI-AYATINA AN AKHRIJ QAWMAKA MINAZ-ZULUMATI ILAN-NOOR — and We sent Musa with Our signs: BRING OUT YOUR PEOPLE FROM DARKNESSES INTO THE LIGHT — WA ZAKKIRHUM BI-AYYAMILLAH — AND REMIND THEM OF THE DAYS OF ALLAH.'

Beta, 'ayyamillah' — the DAYS OF ALLAH. The scholars explained these as the days on which His favours came and His punishments fell: the day the sea split, the day a tyrant drowned, the day a people were saved.

And beta, take that instruction for yourself: remind yourself of YOUR days of Allah. The time you were rescued from something. The prayer that was answered.



The disaster that passed you by. We forget them so quickly, and each one is evidence.

And then the surah gives its central principle, beta — one of the most quoted promises in the Quran:

'WA IZ TA'AZZANA RABBUKUM — and when your Lord PROCLAIMED — LA'IN SHAKARTUM LA-AZEEDANNAKUM — IF YOU ARE GRATEFUL, I WILL SURELY INCREASE YOU — WA LA'IN KAFARTUM INNA 'AZABI LA-SHADEED — BUT IF YOU DENY, INDEED MY PUNISHMENT IS SEVERE.'

Beta, look carefully at the two halves, because they are not symmetrical, and that asymmetry is mercy.

For gratitude: 'la-AZEEDANNAKUM' — I will SURELY INCREASE YOU. Definite, emphatic, and stated as a personal act: I will do it.

For ingratitude, He does not say 'I will punish you'. He says: 'my punishment is severe' — a statement of fact, held at a distance, without naming you as its target.



Beta, and notice what is NOT specified in the first half: WHAT will be increased. He simply says 'I will increase you'. So gratitude for anything increases you — sometimes in the same thing, sometimes in something better, sometimes in contentment with what you already have.

And then, beta, the ayah that ends every calculation: 'IN TAKFUROO ANTUM WA MAN FIL-ARDI JAMEE'AN — IF YOU DISBELIEVE — YOU AND WHOEVER IS ON THE EARTH, ALL TOGETHER — FA-INNALLAHA LA-GHANIYYUN HAMEED — THEN INDEED, ALLAH IS FREE OF NEED AND PRAISEWORTHY.'

Beta, if every human being who ever lived refused Him at the same moment, it would take nothing from Him. He would still be praised — by the angels, by the mountains, by everything else in existence. Our worship was never for His benefit.

Why Should We Not Rely on Him?



The surah then recounts how the messengers were met, beta, and it is the same everywhere: 'FA-RADDOO AYDIYAHUM FEE AFWAHIHIM — they returned their hands to their mouths' — a gesture of anger, or of silencing — 'WA QALOO INNA KAFARNA BIMA URSILTUM BIHI — and said: WE DISBELIEVE IN THAT WITH WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN SENT.'

And the messengers answered with words worth memorising: 'A FILLAHI SHAKKUN FATIRIS-SAMAWATI WAL-ARD — CAN THERE BE DOUBT ABOUT ALLAH, ORIGINATOR OF THE HEAVENS AND EARTH? YAD'OOKUM LI-YAGHFIRA LAKUM MIN ZUNOObIKUM — HE INVITES YOU IN ORDER TO FORGIVE YOU YOUR SINS.'

Beta, look at that description of the invitation. Allah calls people not to burden them, but IN ORDER TO FORGIVE THEM. That is the purpose of the call.

Their opponents threatened to expel them or force them back to their old ways. And the messengers replied:



'WA MA LANA ALLA NATAWAKKALA 'ALALLAHI WA QAD HADANA SUBULANA — AND WHY SHOULD WE NOT RELY UPON ALLAH WHILE HE HAS GUIDED US TO OUR WAYS? WA LA-NASBIRANNA 'ALA MA AZAYTUMOONA — AND WE WILL SURELY BE PATIENT OVER HOW YOU HARM US — WA 'ALALLAHI FALYATAWAKKALIL-MUTAWAKKILOON — AND UPON ALLAH LET THOSE WHO WOULD RELY, RELY.'

Beta, feel the logic of that first line. He has already guided us — He has already done the greatest thing for us — so how could we not trust Him with the smaller things?

Beta, apply that to your own worries. He guided you to Islam. He put faith in your heart when millions never received it. If He handled THAT for you, is your provision really beyond Him? Is your difficulty?

And notice the two things joined: TAWAKKUL and SABR. Reliance on Allah, and patience with the harm that comes anyway. Trust does not mean the harm



stops. It means you can stand while it happens.

Shaytan's Speech

The surah then describes a scene from the Day of Judgement, beta — and it is one of the most chilling passages in the Quran, because in it shaytan himself stands up and speaks.

'WA QALASH-SHAYTANU LAMMA QUDİYAL-AMR — AND SHAYTAN WILL SAY, WHEN THE MATTER HAS BEEN CONCLUDED:'

'INNALLAHA WA'ADAKUM WA'DAL-HAQQI WA WA'ADTUKUM FA-AKHLAFTUKUM — INDEED, ALLAH PROMISED YOU THE PROMISE OF TRUTH. AND I PROMISED YOU — AND I BETRAYED YOU.'

'WA MA KANA LIYA 'ALAYKUM MIN SULTANIN — AND I HAD NO AUTHORITY OVER YOU — ILLA AN DA'AWTUKUM FASTAJABTUM LEE — EXCEPT THAT I INVITED YOU AND YOU RESPONDED TO ME.'



'FA-LA TALOOMOONEE WA LOOMOO ANFUSAKUM —
SO DO NOT BLAME ME; BLAME YOURSELVES.'

'MA ANA BI-MUSRIKHIKUM WA MA ANTUM
BI-MUSRIKHIYY — I CANNOT BE CALLED TO YOUR
AID, NOR CAN YOU BE CALLED TO MINE — INNI
KAFARTU BIMA ASHRAKTUMOONI MIN QABL —
INDEED, I DENY YOUR HAVING ASSOCIATED ME WITH
ALLAH BEFORE.'

Beta, read that speech again slowly, because there is
nothing else like it.

The enemy of mankind stands before everyone and
admits, under no compulsion: I had NO POWER over
you. All I did was CALL, and you CAME. Do not blame me
— blame yourselves.

Beta, and understand why Allah recorded this in
advance. It is so that we hear it NOW, while there is still
time to act on it. Every excuse we plan to use — 'I was
led astray', 'I was influenced', 'it was the environment',
'I could not help it' — is demolished by the very being



we intended to blame.

And notice the words: 'da'awtukum fastajabtum lee' — I INVITED and you RESPONDED. The invitation was his; the response was yours. Beta, that is the whole mechanism of sin in seven words.

And then his final, cold statement: 'ma ana bi-musrikhikum' — I cannot help you now, and you cannot help me. The friendship of falsehood lasts exactly as long as it is useful.

A Good Word Like a Good Tree

And now, beta, the parable that gives this surah its beauty:

'A LAM TARA KAYFA DARABALLAHU MATHALAN KALIMATAN TAYYIBATAN KA-SHAJARATIN TAYYIBAH — HAVE YOU NOT CONSIDERED HOW ALLAH PRESENTS AN EXAMPLE: A GOOD WORD IS LIKE A GOOD TREE — ASLUHA THABITUN WA FAR'UHA FIS-SAMA' — WHOSE ROOT IS FIRMLY



FIXED AND WHOSE BRANCHES ARE IN THE SKY —
TU'TEE UKULAHA KULLA HEENIN BI-IZNI RABBIHA
— IT PRODUCES ITS FRUIT AT ALL TIMES, BY
PERMISSION OF ITS LORD.'

Beta, the scholars — and many of the salaf — explained 'the good word' as the word of tawheed: 'La ilaha illallah'. And the tree is the believer himself, and the faith planted in him.

Now look at the three qualities of this tree, because each one describes what real faith does in a person.

ONE — 'ASLUHA THABIT': its root is FIRM.

Underground, unseen, holding. Beta, the root is the part nobody photographs and nobody praises. That is your private worship, your sincerity, the prayers no one knows about, your relationship with Allah when the door is closed. A tree with a weak root falls in the first serious wind, however impressive it looks above ground.

TWO — 'WA FAR'UHA FIS-SAMA': its branches are IN THE SKY. Beta, notice the balance: the deeper the root



goes down, the higher the branches reach up. A person firmly rooted in sincerity rises in Allah's sight, and his deeds ascend.

THREE — 'TU'TEE UKULAHA KULLA HEEN': it gives its fruit AT ALL TIMES. Not seasonally. Not when it is convenient. Beta, this is the mark of a real believer: he is useful in every season of his life. In poverty and in wealth, in youth and in old age, in good times and in grief — something beneficial keeps coming out of him.

Beta, ask yourself honestly: is anyone eating from your tree? A word of encouragement, a du'a, help with a task, knowledge passed on, a burden lifted — what fruit falls from you?

And then the opposite: 'WA MATHALU KALIMATIN KHABEETHATIN KA-SHAJARATIN KHABEETHATINIJ-TUTHTHAT MIN FAWQIL-ARDI MA LAHA MIN QARAR — AND THE EXAMPLE OF A BAD WORD IS LIKE A BAD TREE, UPROOTED FROM THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH, HAVING NO STABILITY.'



Beta, 'ijtuththat' — torn out. It has no depth at all; the smallest pull removes it. That is falsehood: it can grow fast and look green for a while, but it has nothing holding it down.

And then, beta, comes the promise attached to this parable — and it is one of the great comforts of the Quran:

'YUTHABBITULLAHUL-LAZINA AMANOO
BIL-QAWLITH-THABITI FIL-HAYATID-DUNYA WA
FIL-AKHIRAH — ALLAH KEEPS FIRM THOSE WHO
BELIEVE, WITH THE FIRM WORD, IN WORLDLY LIFE
AND IN THE HEREAFTER.'

Beta, 'yuthabbitu' — He makes them FIRM, He steadies them, He anchors them.

In THIS life: when the ground shakes under a person — a loss, a betrayal, a fear — the believer does not blow away, because something is holding him.



And in the HEREAFTER: the Prophet ﷺ explained that this ayah refers to the questioning in the grave, when a person is asked who his Lord is, what his religion is, and about the man sent to him. The believer answers, and Allah is the one who makes him firm at that moment.

Beta, think about that. The answers you will give in the grave are not something you can memorise in advance and recite. They are given to you by Allah, on the strength of how you lived. The firm word steadies you at the moment nothing else can reach you.

Those Who Exchanged the Favour

The surah then describes people who received Allah's blessing and returned it as denial:

'A LAM TARA ILAL-LAZINA BADDALOO
NI'MATALLAHI KUFRAN WA AHALLOO QAWMAHUM
DARAL-BAWAR — have you not considered those who
EXCHANGED THE FAVOUR OF ALLAH FOR DISBELIEF
and settled their people in the home of ruin?'



Beta, 'baddaloo ni'matallahi kufra' — they traded a blessing for ingratitude. And note the second half: they took their PEOPLE down with them. Leaders who go wrong do not fall alone.

Then Allah gives His Messenger ﷺ an instruction about how to treat the believers: 'QUL LI-'IBADIYAL-LAZINA AMANOO YUQEEMUS-SALATA WA YUNFIQOO MIMMA RAZAQNAHUM SIRRAN WA 'ALANIYATAN MIN QABLI AN YA'TIYA YAWMUN LA BAY'UN FEEHI WA LA KHILAL — tell My believing servants to establish prayer and spend from what We have provided them, SECRETLY AND PUBLICLY, before a Day comes IN WHICH THERE IS NO EXCHANGE AND NO FRIENDSHIP.'

Beta, 'la bay'un feehee wa la khilal' — no BUYING and no FRIENDSHIP. On that Day you cannot purchase your way out, and no connection will help you. Both of the things we rely on here — money and contacts — are named and cancelled.



And then the surah lists blessings again — the heavens and earth, the rain, the fruits, the ships sailing by His command, the rivers, the sun and moon 'DA'IBAYN' — constantly moving, never taking a rest — and the night and day.

'WA ATAKUM MIN KULLI MA SA'ALTUMOOH — AND HE GAVE YOU FROM ALL YOU ASKED OF HIM — WA IN TA'UDDOO NI'MATALLAHI LA TUHOOHA — and if you should count the favour of Allah, you could not enumerate it — INNAL-INSANA LA-ZALOOMUN KAFFAR — INDEED, MANKIND IS MOST UNJUST AND UNGRATEFUL.'

Beta, that closing line is severe, and it is honest. We are surrounded by favours we cannot count, and our default state is to notice the one thing missing.

The Du'a of Ibrahim

And now, beta, the passage that gives this surah its name — the du'a of Ibrahim (alaihi salam), made standing in an empty valley.



'WA IZ QALA IBRAHEEMU RABBIJ-'AL HAZAL-BALADA AMINAN — AND WHEN IBRAHIM SAID: MY LORD, MAKE THIS CITY SECURE — WAJNUBNEE WA BANIYYA AN NA'BUDAL-ASNAM — AND KEEP ME AND MY SONS AWAY FROM WORSHIPPING IDOLS.'

Beta, stop at that second request. This is IBRAHIM — the man who smashed the idols with his own hands, who was thrown into a fire rather than bow to one. And he is asking Allah to keep him away from idols.

Beta, that is what real faith looks like. He did not consider himself safe. The scholars said: if Ibrahim feared shirk for himself, who are we to feel secure?

'RABBI INNAHUNNA ADLALNA KATHEERAN MINAN-NAS — my Lord, indeed they have led astray many among the people.'

And then, beta, comes the du'a that explains why Makkah exists as it does:



'RABBANA INNI ASKANTU MIN ZURRIYYATI
BI-WADIN GHAYRI ZI ZAR'IN 'INDA
BAYTIKAL-MUHARRAM — OUR LORD, I HAVE
SETTLED SOME OF MY DESCENDANTS IN AN
UNCULTIVATED VALLEY NEAR YOUR SACRED HOUSE
— RABBANA LI-YUQEEMUS-SALAH — OUR LORD,
THAT THEY MAY ESTABLISH PRAYER.'

Beta, note the reason he gives for leaving his wife and infant son in a barren valley: 'li-yuqeemus-salah' — so that prayer would be established there. That was the whole purpose.

'FAJ'AL AF'IDATAN MINAN-NASI TAHWEE ILAYHIM
— SO MAKE HEARTS AMONG THE PEOPLE INCLINE
TOWARD THEM — WARZUQHUM
MINATH-THAMARATI LA'ALLAHUM YASHKUROON
— and provide for them from the fruits, that they might be grateful.'

Beta, look at what he asked for and then look at Makkah today. 'Make HEARTS incline toward them' — and for



fourteen centuries, millions of hearts have pulled toward that valley from every corner of the earth. People weep at the mere sight of it. That is one man's du'a still being answered.

And 'warzuqhum minath-thamarat' — provide them with FRUITS, in a valley with no soil and no water. And go to Makkah today and see the produce of the whole world arriving in its markets.

Beta, this is what a du'a can do. He had nothing — no city, no water, no crops, no people. He had words and certainty. And the result is still running.

'RABBANA INNAKA TA'LAMU MA NUKHFEE WA MA NU'LIN — our Lord, indeed You know what we conceal and what we declare — WA MA YAKHFA 'ALALLAHI MIN SHAY'IN FIL-ARDI WA LA FIS-SAMA' — and nothing is hidden from Allah on the earth or in the heaven.'

'AL-HAMDU LILLAHIL-LAZI WAHABA LEE
'ALAL-KIBARI ISMA'EELA WA ISHAQ — PRAISE TO



ALLAH, WHO HAS GRANTED ME IN OLD AGE ISMA'IL
AND ISHAQ — INNA RABBEE LA-SAMEE'UD-DU'A' —
INDEED, MY LORD IS THE HEARER OF SUPPLICATION.'

Beta, and now his final requests — and these are the
ones to make your own:

'RABBIJ-'ALNEE MUQEEMAS-SALATI WA MIN
ZURRIYYATEE — MY LORD, MAKE ME AN
ESTABLISHER OF PRAYER, AND FROM MY
DESCENDANTS (as well) — RABBANA WA TAQABBAL
DU'A' — OUR LORD, AND ACCEPT MY SUPPLICATION.'

Beta, notice what an old man asks for at the end of a life
of extraordinary sacrifice: to be an establisher of prayer.
Not honour, not comfort, not even more children.
SALAH — for himself, and for the generations after him.

'RABBANAGH-FIR LEE WA LI-WALIDAYYA WA
LIL-MU'MINEENA YAWMA YAQOOMUL-HISAB —
OUR LORD, FORGIVE ME AND MY PARENTS AND THE
BELIEVERS ON THE DAY THE ACCOUNT IS
ESTABLISHED.'



Beta, look at how his du'a widens as it ends: himself, his parents, and then ALL the believers. Learn to end your du'as like that — do not stop at yourself and your household.

Do Not Think Allah Is Unaware

And the surah closes, beta, with a warning to anyone who has been wronged, and to anyone who is doing the wronging.

'WA LA TAHSABANNALLAHA GHAFILAN 'AMMA
YA'MALUZ-ZALIMON — AND NEVER THINK THAT
ALLAH IS UNAWARE OF WHAT THE WRONGDOERS DO
— INNAMA YU'AKHKHIRUHUM LI-YAWMIN
TASHKHASU FEEHIL-ABSAR — HE ONLY DELAYS
THEM FOR A DAY WHEN EYES WILL STARE IN
HORROR.'

Beta, this ayah is for every person who has watched injustice go unanswered and wondered whether anyone is keeping account.



The delay is not absence. It is not permission. It is not forgetfulness. It is a scheduled appointment.

'MUHTI'EENA MUQNI'EE RU'OOSIHIM LA YARTADDU
ILAYHIM TARFUHUM WA AF'IDATUHUM HAWA' —
racing ahead, their heads raised, their gaze not
returning to them, AND THEIR HEARTS EMPTY.'

Beta, 'af'idatuhum hawa' — their hearts are AIR,
hollow, empty of everything. A terror so complete that
the heart holds nothing at all.

And then Allah tells His Messenger ﷺ to warn people of a
Day when the wrongdoers will beg: 'RABBANA
AKHKHIRNA ILA AJALIN QAREEBIN NUJIB
DA'WATAKA WA NATTABI'IR-RUSUL — OUR LORD,
DELAY US FOR A SHORT TERM; WE WILL ANSWER
YOUR CALL AND FOLLOW THE MESSENGERS.'

And the reply: 'A WA LAM TAKOONOO AQSAMTUM
MIN QABLU MA LAKUM MIN ZAWAL — HAD YOU
NOT SWORN BEFORE THAT YOU WOULD NEVER
LEAVE (this world)?'



Beta, they had lived as though they would never depart — not by saying it, but by building, planning and accumulating as if there were no end. And Allah calls that an OATH.

And the final ayah of the surah, beta:

'HAZA BALAGHUN LIN-NASI WA LI-YUNZAROO BIHI — THIS IS A DELIVERANCE OF THE MESSAGE FOR THE PEOPLE, THAT THEY MAY BE WARNED BY IT — WA LI-YA'LAMOO ANNAMA HUWA ILAHUN WAHID — AND THAT THEY MAY KNOW THAT HE IS BUT ONE GOD — WA LI-YAZZAKKARA ULUL-ALBAB — AND THAT THOSE OF UNDERSTANDING WILL BE REMINDED.'

Beta, that is how the surah ends: this Book is a delivery. It has been handed to you. What you do with it is now your matter.

And look at what it delivered: that gratitude increases you, that shaytan will publicly admit he had no power over you, that faith is a tree whose roots you must tend



where no one can see, that Allah steadies the believer at the moment he needs it most, that one man's du'a in an empty valley still pulls hearts across the world — and that no injustice is being overlooked, only scheduled.

What This Surah Teaches Us

1. Darkenesses are always plural; the light is always one. There are countless ways to be lost and one way home.
2. Remind yourself of YOUR 'days of Allah' — the rescues you have already been given.
3. 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you' — and He does not specify in what, so gratitude for anything increases you.
4. He guided you to Islam — so why would you doubt Him with anything smaller?
5. Shaytan will stand up and say it himself: I only invited, and you responded — so blame yourselves.



6. Tend the root nobody sees, and give fruit in EVERY season — ask whether anyone is eating from your tree.

7. Ibrahim feared shirk for himself, and asked only to be an establiher of prayer — and Allah's delay of the wrongdoer is an appointment, not an absence.

Rabbij-'alnee muqeemas-salati wa min zurriyyatee,
Rabbana wa taqabbal du'a. 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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