

SURAH AS A STORY



Surah As-Saffat

Those Ranged in Ranks

The complete journey — the greatest test ever asked of a father —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 37 • 182 Ayahs • Meccan

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The Surah at a Glance

Was-saaqffaati saffaa

1. By those (angels) lined up in rows,

Wa qaala innee zaahibun ilaa Rabbee sa-yahdeen

99. And he said: I am going to my Lord; He will guide me.

*Yaaa abati-f'al maa tu'mar; satajidooneee in
shaaa'al-laahu minas-saabireen*

102. O my father, do as you are commanded. You will
find me, if Allah wills, of the patient.

*Qad saddaqtar-ru'yaa; innaa kazaalika
najzil-muhsineen*

105. You have fulfilled the vision. Indeed, thus do We
reward the doers of good.

Wa fadaynaahu bizibhin 'azeem

107. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.

Falawlaaa annahoo kaana minal-musabbiheen

143. And had he not been of those who glorify Allah...

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Ranks, and a Guarded Sky

Beta, this surah opens with three oaths describing beings you cannot see: 'WAS-SAFFATI SAFFA — by those RANGED IN RANKS — FAZ-ZAJIRATI ZAJRA — and those who DRIVE (the clouds, or repel) with force — FAT-TALIYATI ZIKRA — and those who RECITE the reminder.'

The scholars explain these as the angels: standing in ordered rows for worship, driving and repelling by Allah's command, and reciting His words.

Beta, note the first image — 'saffa', in RANKS. And connect it to something the Prophet ﷺ told us. He asked his companions: will you not line up as the angels line up before their Lord? They asked how the angels do it. He said: they complete the FIRST rows, and they are TIGHTLY PACKED in the row.

Beta, so every time you straighten a row in the masjid and close the gap beside you, you are imitating the arrangement of the heavens. The rows of salah are not



crowd management — they are a copy of something happening above.

'INNA ILAHAKUM LA-WAHID — indeed, YOUR GOD IS ONE — RABBUS-SAMAWATI WAL-ARDI WA MA BAYNAHUMA WA RABBUL-MASHARIQ — Lord of the heavens and earth and what is between them, and Lord of the EASTS.'

Beta, 'al-mashariq' — the plural. Because the sun does not rise from one fixed point; its rising position shifts along the horizon through the year. The Arabs of that desert knew this by observation, and the ayah names it.

'INNA ZAYYANNAS-SAMA'AD-DUNYA BI-ZEENATINIL-KAWAKIB — indeed, We adorned the nearest heaven with an adornment of STARS — WA HIFZAN MIN KULLI SHAYTANIN MARID — and as PROTECTION from every rebellious devil.'

Beta, the stars serve two purposes at once: beauty for you to look at, and a guarded boundary against those who would eavesdrop on the heavens.



You Will Be Asked, and They Will Blame Each Other

The surah then moves to the Day of Judgement, and there is a scene here that every young person should read.

'WA QIFOOHUM INNAHUM MAS'OOLON — and STOP THEM; indeed, THEY ARE TO BE QUESTIONED.'

Beta, 'qifoohum' — halt them. Picture a crowd being moved along, and then a command: STOP. Nobody passes without questions.

And then the followers and the leaders turn on each other: 'QALOO INNAKUM KUNTUM TA'TOONANA 'ANIL-YAMEEN — they will say: indeed, YOU USED TO COME AT US FROM THE RIGHT.' Beta, 'from the right' — from the side of apparent goodness and sincerity, making evil look respectable.

'QALOO BAL LAM TAKOONOO MU'MINEEN — they will reply: rather, YOU WERE NOT BELIEVERS — WA MA



KANA LANA 'ALAYKUM MIN SULTAN — and we had
NO AUTHORITY OVER YOU — BAL KUNTUM
QAWMAN TAGHEEN — rather, you were a
transgressing people.'

Beta, this is the great disillusionment of that Day. The
people you followed — the friend whose approval you
feared losing, the celebrity whose life you copied, the
leader you defended — will stand up and say: I never
forced you. You chose.

And the truth is, beta, they are right. Nobody can make
you sin. They can suggest, mock, pressure, tempt — but
the hand that acts is yours.

And then the surah shows a man in Paradise
remembering a friend from this world: 'QALA QA'ILUN
MINHUM INNI KANA LEE QAREEN — a speaker
among them will say: indeed, I HAD A COMPANION —
YAQOOLU A INNAKA LA-MINAL-MUSADDIQEEN —
who used to say: are you really one of those who
BELIEVE (all this)? A IZA MITNA WA KUNNA



TURABAN WA 'IZAMAN A INNA LA-MADEENON — when we have died and become dust and bones, are we really to be judged?'

Beta, note the tone of that old friend: mockery of the believer's seriousness. 'You actually believe that?'

'QALA HAL ANTUM MUTTALI'OON — he will say: WOULD YOU LIKE TO LOOK? FATTALA'A FA-RA'AHU FEE SAWA'IL-JAHEEM — so he will look and SEE HIM in the MIDST OF THE BLAZE — QALA TALLAHI IN KIDTTA LA-TURDEEN — he will say: BY ALLAH, YOU ALMOST RUINED ME! WA LAWLA NI'MATU RABBI LA-KUNTU MINAL-MUHDAREEN — and if not for the favour of my Lord, I would have been among those brought (to the Fire).'

Beta, feel that. 'You almost took me with you.' The friend who laughed at his prayers, who called him extreme, who said 'live a little' — and by Allah's favour alone he did not follow.



Beta, one day you will look back at some person in your life and say exactly this sentence. Make sure it is said from the right side.

Ibrahim: My Son, I See in a Dream

And now, beta, the passage that is the heart of this surah — the greatest test ever asked of a father, and the greatest answer ever given by a son.

Ibrahim (alaihis salam), after breaking his people's idols and being thrown into the fire, left his homeland: 'WA QALA INNI ZAHIBUN ILA RABBI SA-YAHDEEN — and he said: indeed, I AM GOING TO MY LORD; HE WILL GUIDE ME.'

Beta, an old man leaving everything he knows, with no map — and complete certainty about the destination.

'RABBI HAB LEE MINAS-SALIHEEN — my Lord, GRANT ME (a child) from among the RIGHTEOUS.' Beta, note the request: not a clever child, not a strong child — a RIGHTEOUS one.



'FA-BASHSHARNAHU BI-GHULAMIN HALEEM — so We gave him good tidings of a FORBEARING BOY.' Beta, 'haleem' — gentle, patient, slow to anger. And you are about to see exactly how much hilm that boy had.

'FA-LAMMA BALAGHA MA'AHUS-SA'YA — and when he reached with him the age of EXERTION, of working alongside him — QALA YA BUNAYYA INNI ARA FIL-MANAMI ANNI AZBAHUKA FANZUR MAZA TARA — he said: O MY DEAR SON, I SEE IN A DREAM THAT I AM SACRIFICING YOU — SO SEE WHAT YOU THINK.'

Beta, stop and feel the weight of this. Ibrahim waited decades for this child. The boy has just grown to the age where he can walk and work beside his father — the very age a father begins to enjoy his son as a companion. And the command comes.

And notice how he speaks: 'YA BUNAYYA' — O my LITTLE SON, the most affectionate form of address in Arabic. He does not command; he does not deceive the child. He tells him the truth and asks his view.



And the boy's reply, beta — the sentence that should be taught to every child on earth:

'YA ABATI-F'AL MA TU'MAR — O MY FATHER, DO AS YOU ARE COMMANDED — SATAJIDUNEE IN SHA'ALLAHU MINAS-SABIREEN — YOU WILL FIND ME, IF ALLAH WILLS, OF THE PATIENT.'

Beta, look at everything in that answer. He calls him 'ya abati' — my dear father — with the same tenderness he received. He does not argue or plead. He identifies the source: 'as you are COMMANDED' — he understood immediately that this was not his father's idea.

And most beautifully: 'IN SHA'ALLAH' — if Allah wills. Beta, even in the moment of the greatest possible courage, he did not claim his own patience. He attributed it to Allah's help. That is the difference between confidence and arrogance.

'FA-LAMMA ASLAMA WA TALLAHU LIL-JABEEN — and when they had BOTH SUBMITTED, and he had laid him down on his FOREHEAD...'



Beta, the Quran stops there. It does not describe the knife, or the father's face, or the moment. It simply says: they both submitted. Two submissions — the father's and the son's — and the word used is 'aslama', from the same root as Islam.

'WA NADAYNAHU AN YA IBRAHEEM — and We called out to him: O IBRAHIM! QAD SADDAQTAR-RU'YA — YOU HAVE FULFILLED THE VISION — INNA KAZALIKA NAJZIL-MUHSINEEN — indeed, thus do We reward the DOERS OF GOOD — INNA HAZA LA-HUWAL-BALA'UL-MUBEEN — indeed, this was the CLEAR TRIAL.'

Beta, note carefully: 'you have FULFILLED the vision.' The command was never the killing — it was the WILLINGNESS. Allah wanted the surrender, not the son. And the moment the surrender was complete, the test was over.

'WA FADAYNAHU BI-ZIBHIN 'AZEEM — and WE RANSOMED HIM WITH A GREAT SACRIFICE.'



Beta, and this is why, every year, across the whole earth, millions of Muslims slaughter an animal on the day of Eid al-Adha. We are not commemorating a story. We are re-enacting a surrender.

'WA TARAKNA 'ALAYHI FIL-AKHIREEN — and We left for him among later generations: SALAMUN 'ALA IBRAHEEM — PEACE UPON IBRAHIM.'

Beta, and here is the lesson to carry: everything Ibrahim was asked to give up, he was given back and more. He gave up his homeland — Allah made his descendants nations. He was willing to give up his son — and from that son's line came the final Messenger ﷺ. He was willing to give up his life in the fire — and Allah made the fire cool.

Beta, nothing surrendered to Allah is ever lost. It is only exchanged.

Yunus, and the Prison of the Whale



The surah then moves through other prophets — Musa and Harun, Ilyas, Lut — and arrives at Yunus (alaihis salam), whose story here is told with striking brevity.

'WA INNA YOONUSA LA-MINAL-MURSALEEN — and indeed, Yunus was among the messengers — IZ ABAQA ILAL-FULKIL-MASHHOON — when he RAN AWAY to the laden ship.'

Beta, he had left his people in frustration before Allah's permission came. 'FA-SAHAMA FA-KANA MINAL-MUDHADEEN — and he drew lots and was among the LOSERS — FALTAQAMAHUL-HOOTU WA HUWA MULEEM — then the great FISH SWALLOWED HIM, while he was BLAMEWORTHY.'

And then, beta, comes the ayah that has saved countless believers in their darkest moments:

'FA-LAWLA ANNAHU KANA MINAL-MUSABBIHEEN — AND HAD HE NOT BEEN OF THOSE WHO GLORIFY ALLAH — LA-LABITHA FEE BATNIHI ILA YAWMI YUB'ATHOON — HE WOULD HAVE REMAINED INSIDE



ITS BELLY UNTIL THE DAY THEY ARE RESURRECTED.'

Beta, absorb what this ayah is saying. What got him out of the belly of a fish, in the depths of the sea, in total darkness, with no possible human help? Not strength. Not cleverness. Not a rescue party.

TASBEEH. His habit of glorifying Allah — which the scholars explain as his worship BEFORE the crisis as well as during it.

Beta, this is one of the most practical lessons in the entire Quran. The dhikr you do in your easy days is being deposited for the day you will need extraction. Yunus was in a place no one could reach — and the words he had been saying all his life reached him there.

And his dua from that darkness is recorded elsewhere: 'LA ILAHA ILLA ANTA SUBHANAKA INNI KUNTU MINAZ-ZALIMEEN' — there is no god but You, glory be to You, indeed I was among the wrongdoers. The Prophet ﷺ said that no Muslim ever supplicates with it for anything except that Allah responds to him.



Beta, memorise it. And notice its structure: it contains no request at all. It is tawheed, then glorification, then confession. He did not even ask to be released — and he was.

'FA-NABAZNAHU BIL-'ARA'I WA HUWA SAQEEM — so We threw him onto the open shore while he was ill — WA ANBATNA 'ALAYHI SHAJARATAN MIN YAQTEEN — and We caused to grow over him a GOURD PLANT.'

Beta, look at the tenderness of that detail. A man cast up on a bare shore, his skin raw — and Allah grows a broad-leafed plant over him for shade. The same Power that commanded the fish arranged a leaf for his comfort. That is your Lord: He handles the enormous and the small with the same care.

Glory to the Lord of Might

And the surah closes, beta, by dismissing the falsehoods people attached to Allah — the claim that He had daughters, the claim of kinship between Him and the jinn — and then it gives the honour to those who serve



Him:

'WA LAQAD SABAQAT KALIMATUNA
LI-'IBADINAL-MURSALEEN — and Our word has
already gone forth for Our servants, the messengers —
INNAHUM LA-HUMUL-MANSOOROON — that THEY
WOULD BE THE VICTORIOUS — WA INNA JUNDANA
LA-HUMUL-GHALIBOON — and that OUR SOLDIERS
WILL BE THE VICTORS.'

Beta, this was revealed in Makkah when 'Our soldiers'
were a handful of persecuted people, some of them
slaves being tortured in the sun. And Allah announced
the result in advance, in the past tense of certainty: the
word has ALREADY gone forth.

And the final three ayahs, beta — and they are among
the most beautiful closings in the Quran:

'SUBHANA RABBIKA RABBIL-'IZZATI 'AMMA
YASIFOON — EXALTED IS YOUR LORD, THE LORD OF
MIGHT, ABOVE WHAT THEY DESCRIBE — WA
SALAMUN 'ALAL-MURSALEEN — AND PEACE UPON



THE MESSENGERS — WAL-HAMDU LILLAH
RABBIL-'ALAMEEN — AND ALL PRAISE IS DUE TO
ALLAH, LORD OF THE WORLDS.'

Beta, 'Alee ibn Abi Talib (radiyallahu anhu) is reported to have said: whoever wishes to be given the fullest measure of reward on the Day of Resurrection, let him say at the end of every gathering: 'Subhana Rabbika Rabbil-'izzati 'amma yasifoon, wa salamun 'alal-mursaleen, wal-hamdu lillahi Rabbil-'alameen.'

Beta, three lines: glorify Allah, send peace on His messengers, and praise the Lord of the worlds. Say them when you leave a gathering, close a meeting, or end a conversation — a perfect ending, taught by the Quran itself.

What This Surah Teaches Us

1. Straighten and close your rows in salah — you are copying the arrangement of the angels.



- 2.** Nobody will take responsibility for your choices on that Day: 'we had no authority over you.'
 - 3.** One day you will look back at someone and say 'you almost ruined me' — make sure you are on the saved side of that sentence.
 - 4.** Speak to your children as Ibrahim did — 'ya bunayya', with the truth and with respect for their view.
 - 5.** The command was the willingness, not the killing: Allah wants the surrender. And nothing surrendered to Him is ever lost — only exchanged.
 - 6.** The dhikr of your easy days is the rope that reaches you in the belly of the fish.
 - 7.** Close your gatherings as the surah closes: 'Subhana Rabbika Rabbil-'izzati... wal-hamdu lillahi Rabbil-'alameen.'
- Ya Allah, grant us the surrender of Ibrahim, the answer of Isma'il, and the tasbeeh of Yunus. 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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