

SURAH AS A STORY



Surah Sad

The Letter Sad

The complete journey — kings, patience, and the first refusal —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 38 • 88 Ayahs • Meccan

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The Surah at a Glance

Saaad; wal-Qur'aani ziz-zikr

1. Sad. By the Quran containing reminder...

*Wazkur 'abdanaa Daawooda zal-ayd; innahooo
awwaab*

17. And remember Our servant Dawud, possessor of strength. Indeed, he was one who repeatedly turned back.

*Innaa ja'alnaaka khaleefatan fil-ardi fahkum
baynan-naasi bil-haqq*

26. Indeed, We have made you a successor upon the earth, so judge between the people in truth.

*Innaa wajadnaahu saabiraa; ni'mal-'abd;
innahooo awwaab*

44. Indeed, We found him patient — an excellent servant. Indeed, he was one who repeatedly turned back.

*Kitaabun anzalnaahu ilayka
mubaarakul-liyaddabbarooo aayaatih*

29. A blessed Book which We have revealed to you, that they might reflect upon its verses.

*Qaala ana khayrum-minhu; khalaqtanee
min-naarinw-wa khalaqtahoo min teen*



76. He said: I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay.

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One God? This Is a Strange Thing

Beta, this surah opens with the letter 'SAD' and an oath: 'WAL-QUR'ANI ZIZ-ZIKR — by the Quran CONTAINING REMINDER.'

And then it describes the real reason the Quraysh resisted: 'BALIL-LAZINA KAFAROO FEE 'IZZATIN WA SHIQAQ — rather, those who disbelieve are in PRIDE and DEFIANCE.'

Beta, note the diagnosis: 'izzah' — a false sense of their own greatness — and 'shiqaq' — opposition for the sake of opposition. Not confusion. Not lack of proof. PRIDE. Remember that word; the surah will end with it.

The Quran then records their meeting: their chiefs walked out saying, 'IMSHOO WASBIROO 'ALA



ALIHATIKUM — walk on, and BE STEADFAST upon your gods! INNA HAZA LA-SHAY'UN YURAD — indeed, this is a thing INTENDED (against us)!'

Beta, notice: they told each other to have SABR upon falsehood. Even people on the wrong road encourage each other to stay on it. That is why the company you keep matters so much.

'A JA'ALAL-ALIHATA ILAHAN WAHIDAN — has he made the gods into ONE GOD? INNA HAZA LA-SHAY'UN 'UJAB — indeed, this is a STRANGE THING!'

Beta, that was their real objection: not that Allah does not exist, but that having only ONE deity, with no intermediaries and no options, was too simple, too demanding, too much of a change to their whole social order.

'MA SAMI'NA BI-HAZA FIL-MILLATIL-AKHIRAH — we have not heard of this in the latest religion — IN HAZA ILLAKH-TILAQ — this is nothing but a fabrication.'



'A UNZILA 'ALAYHIZ-ZIKRU MIN BAYNINA — has the message been revealed to HIM out of all of us?' Beta, there it is again — envy. 'BAL HUM FEE SHAKKIN MIN ZIKREE — rather, they are in doubt about My message — BAL LAMMA YAZOOQOO 'AZAB — rather, they have NOT YET TASTED My punishment.'

Dawud: Strength, and a Test in the Chamber

Then Allah comforts His Messenger ﷺ with the stories of prophets who were tested — and beta, He begins with a king.

'WAZKUR 'ABDANA DAWOODA ZAL-AYD — and REMEMBER OUR SERVANT DAWUD, possessor of STRENGTH — INNAHU AWWAB — indeed, he was one who REPEATEDLY TURNED BACK (to Allah).'

Beta, notice the title Allah gives him first: 'OUR SERVANT'. He was a king, a warrior, the one who killed Jalut — and the honour named first is servanthood.



And 'zal-ayd' — possessor of hands, of strength and capability. The Prophet ﷺ told us about his worship: the most beloved prayer to Allah is the prayer of Dawud — he would sleep half the night, pray a third, and sleep a sixth. And the most beloved fasting is the fasting of Dawud — he fasted every other day. Beta, a working king who structured his nights like that.

'INNA SAKHKHARNAL-JIBALA MA'AHU YUSABBIHNA BIL-'ASHIYYI WAL-ISHRAQ — indeed, We subjected the MOUNTAINS to glorify with him in the evening and at sunrise — WAT-TAYRA MAHSHOORAH — and the BIRDS, gathered.' Beta, mountains and birds joining his dhikr. He was given a voice so beautiful that creation joined in.

'WA SHADADNA MULKAHU WA ATAYNAHUL-HIKMATA WA FASLAL-KHITAB — and We strengthened his kingdom and gave him WISDOM and DECISIVE SPEECH.'



And then, beta, comes the episode of the two disputants:
'WA HAL ATAKA NABA'UL-KHASHM IZ
TASAWWARUL-MIHRAB — has there come to you the
story of the litigants, when they CLIMBED OVER THE
WALL of his private chamber?'

They came upon him suddenly, and he was startled.
They said: do not fear — 'KHASHMANI BAGHA BA'DUNA
'ALA BA'D — two litigants, one of us has wronged the
other — FAHKUM BAYNANA BIL-HAQQI WA LA
TUSHTIT — so judge between us in truth and do not
exceed — WAHDINA ILA SAWA'IS-SIRAT — and guide
us to the even path.'

One said: 'INNA HAZA AKHEE LAHU TIS'UN WA
TIS'OONA NA'JATAN WA LIYA NA'JATUN WAHIDAH —
this is my brother; he has NINETY-NINE ewes and I
have ONE — FA-QALA AKFILNEEHA WA 'AZZANEE
FIL-KHITAB — and he said: entrust her to me — and he
overpowered me in speech.'



'QALA LAQAD ZALAMAKA BI-SU'ALI NA'JATIKA ILA NI'AJIH — he said: he has certainly WRONGED YOU in demanding your ewe to add to his ewes.'

Beta, Dawud (alaihi salam) judged immediately, after hearing one side. And then: 'WA ZANNA DAWOODU ANNAMA FATANNAHU FASTAGHFARA RABBAHU WA KHARRA RAKI'AN WA ANAB — and Dawud REALISED that We had TESTED him, and he ASKED FORGIVENESS of his Lord and FELL DOWN BOWING and TURNED IN REPENTANCE.'

Beta, this is a place where great care is needed. Many strange tales were imported into books of tafseer about this incident from earlier scriptures, and the verifying scholars rejected them, because prophets are protected from major sins. What the Quran actually says is restrained: he judged before hearing the second party, he recognised it as a test, and he immediately turned to Allah.



And the lesson, beta, is one every parent, manager and judge needs: NEVER decide after hearing only one side. Every story sounds airtight until the other person speaks. Ali (radiyallahu anhu) is reported to have been taught by the Prophet ﷺ: when two people come to you, do not judge for the first until you have heard the second.

'FA-GHAFARNA LAHU ZALIK — so We forgave him that — WA INNA LAHU 'INDANA LA-ZULFA WA HUSNA MA'AB — and indeed, for him with Us is NEARNESS and an EXCELLENT PLACE OF RETURN.'

And then Allah gives him — and every person in authority — the charter of leadership: 'YA DAWOODU INNA JA'ALNAKA KHALEEFATAN FIL-ARDI FAHKUM BAYNAN-NASI BIL-HAQQI WA LA TATTABI'IL-HAWA FA-YUDILLAKA 'AN SABELILLAH — O Dawud, We have made you a SUCCESSOR upon the earth, so JUDGE between people IN TRUTH, and DO NOT FOLLOW DESIRE, for it will lead you astray from the path of Allah.'



Beta, the danger to a leader is named precisely: not ignorance — DESIRE. Judges rarely go wrong because they cannot see the truth; they go wrong because they want a particular outcome.

Sulayman, and the Horses at Sunset

'WA WAHABNA LI-DAWOODA SULAYMAN — and to Dawud We gave SULAYMAN — NI'MAL-'ABD — an EXCELLENT SERVANT — INNAHU AWWAB — indeed, he was one who repeatedly turned back.'

Beta, notice: the same praise given to the father is given to the son — 'ni'mal-'abd, innahu awwab'. And again, the honour is SERVANTHOOD, not kingship.

'IZ 'URIDA 'ALAYHI BIL-'ASHIYYIS-SAFINATUL-JIYAD — when there were displayed before him in the afternoon the well-bred, swift HORSES — FA-QALA INNI AHBABTU HUBBAL-KHAYRI 'AN ZIKRI RABBEE — and he said: indeed, I have LOVED the love of good things over the remembrance of my Lord — HATTA TAWARAT BIL-HIJAB — until the sun DISAPPEARED



behind the veil.'

Beta, the scholars explain that these horses were prepared for the sake of Allah's cause, and reviewing them was a legitimate matter — but his absorption in them caused a delay to his remembrance, and for a prophet even that is significant. And what did he do? He commanded them to be brought back, and he dedicated them — the reports of the salaf differ in detail, but the meaning is that he removed from himself the thing that had distracted him.

Beta, that is the lesson for us. When something halal starts pulling you away from Allah, deal with it decisively. The phone that eats your Fajr, the show that eats your night, the hobby that eats your Jumu'ah — do not negotiate with it endlessly. Cut it.

'RABBIGHFIR LEE WA HAB LEE MULKAN LA
YANBAGHEE LI-AHADIN MIN BA'DEE — my Lord,
forgive me and grant me a kingdom such as will not
belong to anyone after me — INNAKA



ANTAL-WAHHAB — indeed, You are the BESTOWER.'

Beta, notice: he asked for forgiveness FIRST, then asked for the kingdom. And he asked for something unique so that it would be an unmistakable sign of prophethood, not mere ambition. And Allah gave him the wind, and the jinn — 'HAZA 'ATA'UNA FAMNUN AW AMSIK BI-GHAYRI HISAB — this is Our gift, so grant or withhold WITHOUT ACCOUNT.'

Ayyub: An Excellent Servant

And then, beta, the prophet whose name is a synonym for patience: 'WAZKUR 'ABDANA AYYOOBA IZ NADA RABBAHU ANNI MASSANIYASH-SHAYTANU BI-NUSBIN WA 'AZAB — and remember Our servant AYYUB, when he called to his Lord: indeed, Satan has touched me with HARDSHIP and TORMENT.'

Beta, look at how he complained — and it is a lesson in adab. He lost his wealth, his children, and his health over long years. And when he finally spoke, he did not say 'why me?' He did not accuse his Lord. He simply



described his state, and attributed the harm to shaytan rather than to Allah. In another surah his words are: 'anni massaniyad-durru wa Anta Arhamur-Rahimeen' — harm has touched me, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful. Beta, he stated his need and then praised Allah's mercy — and left the request unspoken.

'URKUD BI-RIJLIK — STRIKE with your FOOT — HAZA MUGHTASALUN BARIDUN WA SHARAB — this is a cool BATHING WATER and a DRINK.'

Beta, the cure came from beneath his own foot. The healing was in the ground he had been lying on all along. Sometimes what you desperately need is closer than you think — but it comes when Allah decides, not before.

'WA WAHABNA LAHU AHLAHU WA MITHLAHUM MA'AHUM RAHMATAN MINNA WA ZIKRA LI-ULIL-ALBAB — and We gave back his FAMILY and the LIKE OF THEM WITH THEM, as a mercy from Us and a reminder for those of understanding.'



Beta, restored — and doubled.

'WA KHUZ BI-YADIKI DIGHTHAN FADRIB BIHI WA LA TAHNATH — and take in your hand a BUNDLE (of grass) and strike with it, and do not break your oath.'

Beta, he had sworn an oath in a moment of distress regarding a member of his household, and Allah taught him a merciful way to fulfil it without harm. Look at that: even the keeping of an oath is softened by mercy.

'INNA WAJADNAHU SABIRA — INDEED, WE FOUND HIM PATIENT — NI'MAL-'ABD — AN EXCELLENT SERVANT — INNAHU AWWAB — indeed, he was one who repeatedly turned back.'

Beta, that is the testimony every believer should want: 'We found him patient.' Not 'he was never tested' — 'we found him PATIENT'.

The First Refusal

And now, beta, the surah reaches its climax — the scene from the very beginning of human history that explains



the pride the surah opened with.

'IZ QALA RABBUKA LIL-MALA'IKATI INNI KHALIQUN BASHARAN MIN TEEN — when your Lord said to the angels: indeed, I am going to create a HUMAN BEING from CLAY — FA-IZA SAWWAYTUHU WA NAFAKHTU FEEHI MIN ROOHEE FA-QA'OO LAHU SAJIDEEN — so when I have proportioned him and BREATHED INTO HIM OF MY SPIRIT, then FALL DOWN to him in prostration.'

'FA-SAJADAL-MALA'IKATU KULLUHUM AJMA'OON — so the angels prostrated, ALL of them ENTIRELY — ILLA IBLEES — EXCEPT IBLEES — ISTAKBARA WA KANA MINAL-KAFIREEN — he was ARROGANT and became of the disbelievers.'

Beta, notice the emphasis: 'kulluhum ajma'oon' — every single one, without exception. Except one.

And Allah asked him: 'MA MANA'AKA AN TASJUDA LI-MA KHALAQTU BI-YADAYY — what PREVENTED you from prostrating to what I created with My Hands?



A STAKBARTA AM KUNTA MINAL-'ALEEN — were you ARROGANT, or were you of the exalted?'

'QALA ANA KHAYRUN MINHU — HE SAID: I AM BETTER THAN HIM — KHALAQTAKEE MIN NARIN WA KHALAQTAHU MIN TEEN — YOU CREATED ME FROM FIRE AND CREATED HIM FROM CLAY.'

Beta, this is the first arrogant sentence ever spoken in creation, and every arrogance since has been a copy of it. Study its structure:

ONE — 'I am better than him.' A comparison, made by the creature himself, using a scale he invented.

TWO — he did not deny Allah. He did not doubt His existence or His power. He simply DISAGREED with the command, because his own reasoning told him it was beneath him.

Beta, that is the terrifying part. Iblees's problem was never belief; it was pride. He knew Allah, spoke to Allah, and even asked Allah for respite — and was still



expelled. Knowledge and belief did not save him, because he would not BOW.

And note the material argument: fire versus clay. He judged by RAW MATERIAL — by origin, by substance, by what a thing is made of. Beta, does that sound familiar? Every claim of superiority by race, caste, family, colour or nation is the same argument: my origin is finer than yours. It is the argument of Iblees, and it has never had any other author.

'QALA FAKHRUJ MINHA FA-INNAKA RAJEEM — He said: GET OUT OF IT, for you are EXPELLED — WA INNA 'ALAYKA LA'NATEE ILA YAWMID-DEEN — and indeed, upon you is My curse until the Day of Recompense.'

And he asked for respite, and it was granted, and he swore: 'FA-BI-'IZZATIKA LA-UGHWIYANNAHUM AJMA'EEN — by YOUR MIGHT, I will surely mislead them ALL — ILLA 'IBADAKA MINHUMUL-MUKHLASEEN — EXCEPT, among them,



Your CHOSEN, SINCERE SERVANTS.'

Beta, look at the one group he admitted he cannot reach: 'al-mukhlaseen' — those made sincere, purified for Allah alone. He said it himself, under oath, by Allah's own might. So the protection is named by the enemy: SINCERITY.

Beta, so this surah ends where it began. It opened saying the deniers were 'in pride and defiance' — and it closes by showing you the origin of that pride, in a creature who refused one prostration because he considered himself finer material.

And the surah's last instruction to the Prophet ﷺ: 'QUL MA AS'ALUKUM 'ALAYHI MIN AJRIN WA MA ANA MINAL-MUTAKALLIFEEN — say: I do not ask you for any payment, and I am not of those who PRETEND — IN HUWA ILLA ZIKRUN LIL-'ALAMEEN — it is but a REMINDER TO THE WORLDS — WA LA-TA'LAMUNNA NABA'AHU BA'DA HEEN — and you will surely know its truth AFTER A TIME.'



Beta, one bow was all that was ever asked of Iblees. And one bow, five times a day, is what is asked of you — precisely so that the disease that destroyed him never takes root in you.

What This Surah Teaches Us

1. Rejection of truth usually comes from pride and defiance, not from missing evidence.
2. Even the greatest kings are honoured in the Quran first as SERVANTS — 'abdana Dawood', 'ni'mal-'abd'.
3. Never judge after hearing one side; every story sounds airtight until the other person speaks.
4. The danger to anyone in authority is not ignorance but DESIRE — 'do not follow hawa'.
5. When something permissible starts eating your remembrance, cut it decisively as Sulayman did.
6. Complain like Ayyub: describe your state, praise His mercy, and never accuse your Lord. 'We found him patient.'



7. 'I am better than him' was the first arrogant sentence ever spoken — and every claim of superiority by origin since is a copy of it. The one group shaytan admitted he cannot reach is the sincere.

Ya Allah, make us of Your mukhlaseen, save us from the pride of Iblees, and let us be found patient and 'awwab'. 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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