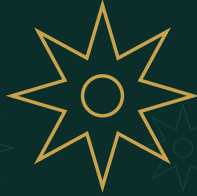


SURAH AS A STORY



# Surah Az-Zukhruf

*The Ornaments of Gold*

The complete journey — the worth of this world, weighed —  
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 43 • 89 Ayahs • Meccan

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## The Surah at a Glance

*Innaa ja'alnaahu Qur'aanan  
'Arabiyyal-la'allakum ta'qiloon*

3. Indeed, We have made it an Arabic Quran that you might understand.

*Subhaanal-lazee sakhkhara lanaa haazaa wa maa  
kunnaa lahoo muqrineen*

13. Glory to Him who subjected this to us, and we could not have done it ourselves.

*Innaa wajaadnaaaa aabaaa'anaa 'alaaa  
ummatinw-wa innaa 'alaaa aasaarihim  
muqtadoon*

23. We found our fathers upon a way, and we are following in their footsteps.

*A hum yaqsimoona rahmata Rabbik*

32. Do they distribute the mercy of your Lord?

*Wa lawlaaa an yakoonan-naasu  
ummatanw-waahidatan*

33. And were it not that mankind would become one community (of disbelievers)...



*Al-akhillaaa'u yawma'izim ba'duhum liba'din  
'aduwwun illal-muttaqeen*

67. Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to one another, except the God-conscious.

Listen to the Arabic recitation of this Surah, ayah by ayah, with the Qari  
— free on [nooraniilm.com](http://nooraniilm.com) (Read & Recite section).

## A Book in Your Own Language

Beta, this surah opens with 'Ha Meem' and an oath by the clear Book, and then a statement worth pausing over: 'INNA JA'ALNAHU QUR'ANAN 'ARABIYYAN LA'ALLAKUM TA'QILOON — indeed, We have made it an ARABIC Quran, that you might USE YOUR REASON.'

Beta, notice the purpose given for the language: not so that you would merely recite it beautifully, but 'ta'qiloon' — so that you would UNDERSTAND. Allah sent it in the language of its first audience precisely so that nobody could say the message was locked away from them.



'WA INNAHU FEE UMMIL-KITABI LADAYNA LA-'ALIYYUN HAKEEM — and indeed it is, in the MOTHER OF THE BOOK with Us, EXALTED and full of WISDOM.' Beta, before it reached your hands, it was already honoured in the highest place.

'A FA-NADRIBU 'ANKUMUZ-ZIKRA SAFHAN AN KUNTUM QAWMAN MUSRIFEEN — should We then TURN THE REMINDER AWAY FROM YOU, disregarding you, because you are a transgressing people?'

Beta, feel the mercy in that question. They had rejected, mocked and transgressed — and Allah asks: should We therefore stop sending reminders to you? The implied answer is no. He kept sending. Beta, that is your Lord: still calling people who have given Him every reason to stop.

## **The Dua You Say Without Thinking**

Then the surah lists Allah's favours, and one of them concerns something you use every day: 'WAL-LAZI KHALAQAL-AZWAJA KULLAHA — and He who created



the PAIRS, all of them — WA JA'ALA LAKUM MINAL-FULKI WAL-AN'AMI MA TARKABOON — and made for you SHIPS and CATTLE that you MOUNT and RIDE.'

'LI-TASTAWOO 'ALA ZUHOORIHI THUMMA TAZKUROO NI'MATA RABBIKUM IZASTAWAYTUM 'ALAYHI — that you may SETTLE YOURSELVES upon their backs, and then REMEMBER THE FAVOUR OF YOUR LORD when you have settled upon it — WA TAQOOLOO SUBHANAL-LAZI SAKHKHARA LANA HAZA WA MA KUNNA LAHU MUQRINEEN — and SAY: GLORY BE TO HIM WHO SUBJECTED THIS TO US, and WE COULD NEVER HAVE DONE IT OURSELVES — WA INNA ILA RABBINA LA-MUNQALIBOON — and indeed, TO OUR LORD WE WILL RETURN.'

Beta, this is the dua of travel that the Prophet ﷺ used to say when he mounted his camel — and it is the dua Muslims say today when they get into a car, a train, an aeroplane. Learn it, and say it every time.



And look at the phrase 'wa ma kunna lahu muqrineen' — we could NEVER have subdued it ourselves. Beta, think about a camel: an animal several times a man's weight and strength, which could kill him easily — and it kneels for a child to climb on. Who made it agree to that? Not us.

And apply it to your own life: the engine you did not design, the roads you did not build, the fuel you did not create, the physics that holds a hundred tonnes of aircraft in the air. 'Ma kunna lahu muqrineen.'

And notice how the dua ends, beta — not with 'have a safe journey' but with 'to our Lord we will return'. Every journey is a rehearsal of the final one. That is why the dua of travel contains a reminder of death: because the person who says it is being taught that all movement ends in the same place.

## **We Found Our Fathers Upon a Way**

Then, beta, the surah exposes the single most common obstacle to truth in human history — and it does it in a



way that leaves no escape.

The Quraysh said: 'INNA WAJADNA ABA'ANA 'ALA UMMATIN WA INNA 'ALA ATHARIHIM MUQTADOON — WE FOUND OUR FATHERS UPON A WAY, and we are FOLLOWING IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS.'

And Allah shows that this is not a Makkan argument — it is the universal one: 'WA KAZALIKA MA ARSALNA MIN QABLIKA FEE QARYATIN MIN NAZEERIN ILLA QALA MUTRAFOOHA INNA WAJADNA ABA'ANA 'ALA UMMAH — and thus, We sent NOT INTO A CITY ANY WARNER BEFORE YOU except that its AFFLUENT ONES said: we found our fathers upon a way.'

Beta, absorb that: EVERY warner, in EVERY city, heard the SAME sentence. And notice who says it — 'mutrafoooha', the affluent, the comfortable ones. Because those with the most to lose from change are the ones most attached to 'the way things have always been'.



And the prophet's reply is given: 'QALA A WA LAW  
JI'TUKUM BI-AHDA MIMMA WAJADTUM 'ALAYHI  
ABA'AKUM — he said: even if I brought you BETTER  
GUIDANCE than that upon which you found your  
fathers? QALOO INNA BIMA URSILTUM BIHI  
KAFIROON — they said: indeed, WE ARE  
DISBELIEVERS in what you were sent with.'

Beta, look at how the conversation ends. He offers to  
show them something better; they refuse to even LOOK.  
That is the tell-tale sign of blind imitation: not  
disagreement after examination, but refusal to examine.

And beta, be honest — this is not only about idol  
worshippers. Any custom we defend with 'this is how it  
has always been done in our family', 'this is our culture',  
'my father did it this way' — without ever asking  
whether Allah permitted it — falls under this ayah.  
Some of our wedding customs, some of our practices  
around death, some of our attitudes toward women's  
rights in inheritance and marriage: defended by  
ancestry, not by evidence.





Beta, honour your fathers. Love them, serve them, make dua for them. But never let their practice outrank Allah's ruling. And Allah answers with the story of Ibrahim (alaihis salam), who said to his own father and people: 'INNANEE BARA'UN MIMMA TA'BUDOON — indeed, I am FREE of what you worship — ILLAL-LAZI FATARANEE — except the One who created me.' Beta, Ibrahim is our father too — and his example is the opposite of blind imitation.

## Do They Distribute His Mercy?

Then, beta, the Quraysh made a revealing objection: 'WA QALOO LAWLA NUZZILA HAZAL-QUR'ANU 'ALA RAJULIN MINAL-QARYATAYNI 'AZEEM — and they said: why was this Quran not sent down to a GREAT MAN from one of the two cities?' — meaning a wealthy chief of Makkah or Ta'if.

Beta, note the criterion they used: 'azeem — great. And by 'great' they meant rich and powerful. They could not accept that revelation went to a man who was an orphan



and not among the wealthiest.

And Allah's answer is one of the most powerful rebukes in the Quran: 'A HUM YAQSIMOONA RAHMATA RABBIK — DO THEY DISTRIBUTE THE MERCY OF YOUR LORD?'

Beta, feel the force of that question. Who appointed YOU to decide who receives Allah's favour? Do you hold the keys to His mercy that you can approve or reject the recipient?

'NAHNU QASAMNA BAYNAHUM MA'EESHATAHUM FIL-HAYATID-DUNYA — WE have DISTRIBUTED among them their LIVELIHOOD in the life of this world — WA RAFA'NA BA'DAHUM FAWQA BA'DIN DARAJATIN LI-YATTAKHIZA BA'DUHUM BA'DAN SUKHRIYYA — and We have raised some above others in degrees, SO THAT THEY MAY MAKE USE OF ONE ANOTHER for service.'

Beta, look at the wisdom here. Differences in wealth and ability are not accidents — they are a designed system



that makes society function. If everyone were identical in wealth and skill, no one would need anyone; nothing would get built; there would be no doctor and patient, no teacher and student, no employer and worker. The differences create the interdependence that makes human life possible.

And then the ayah that puts every worldly disparity in its place: 'WA RAHMATU RABBIKA KHAYRUN MIMMA YAJMA'OON — and the MERCY OF YOUR LORD is BETTER than whatever they ACCUMULATE.'

Beta, whatever they gather in a lifetime — He gives something better in a moment.

## **Doors of Silver and Roofs of Gold**

And now, beta, the passage that gives this surah its name — and it contains the Quran's most striking statement about the true value of this world.

'WA LAWLA AN YAKOONAN-NASU UMMATAN WAHIDATAN — and WERE IT NOT that MANKIND



would become ONE COMMUNITY (all disbelieving) —  
LA-JA'ALNA LI-MAN YAKFURU BIR-RAHMANI  
LI-BUYOOTIHIM SUQUFAN MIN FIDDATIN WA  
MA'ARIJA 'ALAYHA YAZ-HAROON — WE WOULD  
HAVE MADE FOR THOSE WHO DISBELIEVE IN  
AR-RAHMAN, for their houses, ROOFS OF SILVER and  
STAIRWAYS upon which they mount — WA  
LI-BUYOOTIHIM ABWABAN WA SURURAN 'ALAYHA  
YATTAKI'OON — and for their houses DOORS and  
COUCHES upon which they recline — WA ZUKHRUFA  
— and ORNAMENTS OF GOLD.'

Beta, understand what Allah is saying. He is saying: this world is so WORTHLESS in My sight that I would have given every disbeliever a house with a silver roof and gold ornaments — I would have handed the whole thing over to those who deny Me — except for one reason: that people are so easily impressed by wealth that if all the deniers were rich, everyone would abandon faith just to join them.



Beta, that is the true valuation of dunya. The only thing that stopped Allah from giving it entirely to those who reject Him is that we are too weak to see past a gold roof.

And the ayah concludes: 'WA IN KULLU ZALIKA LAMMA MATA'UL-HAYATID-DUNYA — and ALL OF THAT is nothing but the ENJOYMENT of worldly life — WAL-AKHIRATU 'INDA RABBIKA LIL-MUTTAQEEN — and the HEREAFTER, with your Lord, is for the RIGHTEOUS.'

Beta, the Prophet ﷺ said that if this world were worth the wing of a mosquito to Allah, He would not have given a disbeliever a drink of water from it. And he ﷺ once passed a dead lamb with deformed ears and asked the companions who would want to buy it for a dirham — and they said they would not want it for anything. He said: this world is more insignificant to Allah than this is to you.

Beta, this does not mean wealth is evil or that you should not work. It means: do not use worldly success as



your measure of Allah's love. A man's silver roof tells you nothing about his standing with his Lord.

And the surah adds a warning for the heedless: 'WA MAN YA'SHU 'AN ZIKRIR-RAHMANI NUQAYYID LAHU SHAYTANAN FA-HUWA LAHU QAREEN — and whoever TURNS BLIND to the remembrance of Ar-Rahman, We APPOINT for him a devil, and he is a CONSTANT COMPANION to him.'

Beta, an unforgettable image: the shaytan is not merely nearby — he is ASSIGNED, tied to the person like a companion. 'WA INNAHUM LA-YASUDDOONAHUM 'ANIS-SABEELI WA YAHSABOONA ANNAHUM MUHTADOON — and indeed, they avert them from the path while they THINK THAT THEY ARE GUIDED.'

Beta, that is the most dangerous state of all: to be going the wrong way while feeling certain you are right.

'HATTA IZA JA'ANA QALA YA LAYTA BAYNEE WA BAYNAKA BU'DAL-MASHRIQAYNI FA-BI'SAL-QAREEN — until, when he comes to Us, he says: OH, I WISH



THERE WERE BETWEEN ME AND YOU THE DISTANCE  
OF THE TWO EASTS — HOW WRETCHED A  
COMPANION!'

## Friends That Day Will Be Enemies

And then, beta, comes an ayah about friendship that should shape every choice of company you make for the rest of your life:

'AL-AKHILLA'U YAWMA'IZIN BA'DUHUM LI-BA'DIN  
'ADUWWUN ILLAL-MUTTAQEEEN — CLOSE FRIENDS,  
THAT DAY, WILL BE ENEMIES TO ONE ANOTHER —  
EXCEPT THE RIGHTEOUS.'

Beta, 'akhilla'' is the plural of 'khaleel' — the deepest kind of friend, the one whose love has entered your innermost self. And Allah says that on that Day, all such friendships turn to enmity — with ONE exception: those built on taqwa.

Think about why. Every friendship built on sin becomes a source of blame on that Day: you introduced me to



that; you kept me busy; you laughed when I hesitated; because of you I stopped praying. Each will turn on the other.

But friendships built on Allah survive death itself. Because those friends only ever pushed each other toward good — so there is nothing to blame, only gratitude.

Beta, this is the most practical ayah in the surah. Look at the five people you speak to most. Do they make Allah easier to remember, or harder? Because those relationships are being carried into the next life either as support or as accusation.

And then Allah addresses the righteous with words of such tenderness: 'YA 'IBADI LA KHAWFUN  
'ALAYKUMUL-YAWMA WA LA ANTUM TAHZANOON  
— O MY SERVANTS, NO FEAR WILL THERE BE FOR  
YOU TODAY, NOR WILL YOU GRIEVE.'

Beta, notice what is removed: khawf — fear of what is coming; and huzn — grief over what has passed. Those





two emotions cover almost all human suffering. We are anxious about the future or sad about the past. Both are lifted in one sentence.

'UDKHULUL-JANNATA ANTUM WA AZWAJUKUM  
TUHBAROON — ENTER PARADISE, YOU AND YOUR  
SPOUSES, DELIGHTED. YUTAFU 'ALAYHIM BI-SIHAFIN  
MIN ZAHABIN WA AKWAB — circulated among them  
will be plates and vessels of GOLD.'

Beta, look at this. The gold that Allah said He would have given to the disbelievers as roofing in this world — that same gold is here served to the believers as dishes. The thing people fought over down here is the tableware up there.

'WA FEEHA MA TASHTAHEEHIL-ANFUSU WA  
TALAZZUL-A'YUN — and therein is whatever the  
SOULS DESIRE and the EYES DELIGHT IN — WA  
ANTUM FEEHA KHALIDOON — and you will abide  
therein eternally.'



Beta, and one more mercy at the close: the people of the Fire will call out to the keeper of Hell, 'Ya Malik, let your Lord finish us off!' — and the answer comes:

'INNAKUM MAKITHOON — you will remain.' The scholars mention that this reply comes after a very long wait. There is no exit.

So the surah, beta, which began with a Book sent in a language you can understand, ends by asking whether you understood the one thing it kept repeating: the gold on the roof is worth nothing, and the friend who leads you to Allah is worth everything.

## What This Surah Teaches Us

1. The Quran was sent in clear language so you would UNDERSTAND it — not merely recite it.

2. Say the travel dua every time you ride:

'Subhanal-lazi sakhkhara lana hadha wa ma kunna lahu muqrineen... wa inna ila Rabbina la-munqaliboon.'



3. 'We found our fathers upon a way' was the reply of EVERY nation to EVERY prophet — honour your elders without letting custom outrank Allah's ruling.
  4. Nobody distributes Allah's mercy but Allah — never judge who deserves His favour.
  5. Differences in wealth and skill are a designed system that makes society function, not a scale of divine love.
  6. Allah would have roofed every disbeliever's house in silver — that is what this world is worth; never read wealth as approval.
  7. Every friendship except one built on taqwa turns to enmity that Day — audit the five people you speak to most.
- Ya Allah, free us from blind imitation, keep our hearts unimpressed by gold, and give us friends who bring us closer to You. 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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