

SURAH AS A STORY



Surah Al-Fath

The Victory

The complete journey — the defeat that was a clear victory —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 48 • 29 Ayahs • Medinan

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The Surah at a Glance

Innaa fatahnaa laka fat-ham-mubeenaa

1. Indeed, We have given you a clear victory,

*Huwal-lazeee anzalas-sakeenata fee
quloobil-mu'mineen*

4. It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of
the believers,

*Innal-lazeena yubaayi'oonaka innamaa
yubaayi'oonal-laah*

10. Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you pledge
allegiance to Allah.

*Laqad raziyal-laahu 'anil-mu'mineena iz
yubaayi'oonaka tahtash-shajarah*

18. Allah was certainly pleased with the believers when
they pledged allegiance to you under the tree.

*Muhammadur-Rasoolul-laah; wallazeena
ma'ahooo ashiddaaa'u 'alal-kuffaari ruhamaaa'u
baynahum*

29. Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those
with him are firm against the disbelievers, merciful
among themselves.

Seemaahum fee wujoohihim min asaris-sujood



29. Their mark is on their faces from the trace of prostration.

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

A Treaty That Looked Like a Defeat

Beta, to understand this surah you must first understand the day it describes — because on that day, the companions of the Prophet ﷺ were the most heartbroken they had ever been, and Allah called it a CLEAR VICTORY.

In the sixth year after hijrah, the Prophet ﷺ saw in a dream that he and his companions entered Makkah in safety and performed 'umrah. So about fourteen hundred believers set out — unarmed except for travellers' swords, wearing ihram, driving sacrificial animals before them. They had not seen Makkah in six years. Some had been driven out of their own homes there.



Quraysh blocked them at a place called Hdaybiyah. And after tense negotiations, a treaty was signed — and beta, its terms felt like humiliation:

ONE — the Muslims would return WITHOUT performing 'umrah this year, and come back the next.

TWO — there would be a ten-year truce.

THREE — and the term that broke their hearts: if anyone from Quraysh came to the Muslims in Madinah without his guardian's permission, he would be RETURNED to Quraysh; but if a Muslim left Madinah for Makkah, he would NOT be returned.

Beta, an openly one-sided clause. And more: when the document was being written, the Quraysh objected to 'Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Raheem' and to the title 'Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah' — and the Prophet ﷺ agreed to write it their way.

Umar (radiyallahu anhu) was in anguish. He came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked: are you not truly the



Messenger of Allah? He said yes. Are we not upon the truth and they upon falsehood? He said yes. Then why should we accept humiliation in our religion? And the Prophet ﷺ said: 'I am the servant of Allah and His Messenger. I will not disobey Him, and He will not abandon me.'

And the companions were so grieved that when he ﷺ told them to slaughter their animals and shave their heads, nobody moved — not out of rebellion, beta, but out of shock and hope that the decision might still change. He went to Umm Salamah (radiyallahu anha), and she advised him: go out, say nothing to anyone, slaughter your animal and call your barber. He did — and when they saw him, they rose and did the same, almost shaving one another in their grief.

And on the return journey, this surah descended.

We Have Given You a Clear Victory

'INNA FATAHNA LAKA FATHAN MUBEENA — indeed, WE HAVE GIVEN YOU a CLEAR VICTORY.'



Beta, imagine hearing that ayah while riding home from what everyone thought was a humiliating surrender. Umar (radiyallahu anhu) asked: is it a victory? And he was told yes. And later he said that he continued giving charity, fasting and praying for what he had said that day, out of fear of it.

And history proved the ayah with astonishing speed, beta. What did the treaty actually produce?

The truce ended the fighting — and for the first time, the Arabs could travel, talk and listen freely. Islam spread in those two years more than in the previous nineteen. The number who set out for Hdaybiyah was fourteen hundred; two years later, ten thousand marched to the conquest of Makkah.

The clause about returning fugitives, which seemed so unjust, turned against Quraysh: those who escaped to the coast formed a group that intercepted Quraysh's trade caravans, until Quraysh themselves begged for the clause to be cancelled.



And most importantly, beta: by signing a treaty with him, Quraysh had for the first time recognised Muhammad ﷺ as a leader they must negotiate with, not a rebel to be crushed.

Beta, the lesson is one you will need many times in your life: what looks like a setback may be the doorway. You are not able to see the second and third consequences of events; He is. So when a plan collapses and you cannot understand it, remember Hudaibiyah — and remember that Allah named it a victory before anyone could see it.

'LI-YAGHFIRA LAKALLAHU MA TAQADDAMA MIN ZAMBIKA WA MA TA'AKHKHAR — that Allah may forgive for you what preceded of your sin and what will follow — WA YUTIMMA NI'MATAHU 'ALAYKA WA YAHDIYAKA SIRATAN MUSTAQEEMA — and complete His favour upon you and guide you to a straight path — WA YANSURAKALLAHU NASRAN 'AZEER — and that Allah may aid you with a mighty victory.'

The Tranquillity Sent Down



'HUWAL-LAZI ANZALAS-SAKEENATA FEE
QULOOBIL-MU'MINEENA LI-YAZDADOO IMANAN
MA'A IMANIHIM — it is HE who SENT DOWN
TRANQUILLITY into the HEARTS of the believers, that
they would INCREASE IN FAITH along with their faith.'

Beta, 'sakeenah' — from 'sukoon', stillness. It is a calm
that Allah SENDS DOWN into a heart. Not a calm you
manufacture by reasoning with yourself, not the
absence of danger — a descending peace, given in the
middle of the difficulty.

Notice, beta: the situation had not changed. The treaty
terms were still the same. The 'umrah was still
cancelled. What changed was inside the chest. That is
one of Allah's greatest gifts: sometimes He changes the
circumstance, and sometimes He changes the heart that
is inside it — and the second is the greater mercy.

And note the purpose given: 'li-yazdadoo imanan ma'a
imanihim' — that they might INCREASE in faith. Beta,
this ayah is a clear proof that iman increases and



decreases. It is not a fixed quantity you receive once; it grows with obedience and trials, and it shrinks with heedlessness.

The surah then contrasts them with the ones who stayed behind — those who had made excuses to avoid the journey, thinking the Muslims would never return alive: 'YAQOOLONA BI-ALSINATIHIM MA LAYSA FEE QULOBIHIM — they say with their TONGUES what is NOT in their HEARTS.' Beta, they will ask later to join a profitable expedition, and be refused — because the one who avoids the hardship does not get to arrive for the harvest.

The Pledge Under the Tree

And now, beta, the most beautiful moment of the whole episode.

During the negotiations, the Prophet ﷺ sent 'Uthman ibn 'Affan (radiyallahu anhu) into Makkah as an envoy. He was delayed — and a rumour reached the camp that he had been killed.



Beta, at that moment the Muslims were unarmed, outnumbered, far from home, and facing the entire strength of Quraysh. And the Prophet ﷺ called them to pledge. One by one, fourteen hundred men came and placed their hands in his, swearing that they would not flee — some narrations say they pledged to fight to the death.

It happened under a tree. And it is called BAY'AT AR-RIDWAN — the Pledge of Allah's Pleasure.

'INNAL-LAZINA YUBAYI'OONAKA INNAMA YUBAYI'OONALLAH — indeed, those who PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO YOU only pledge allegiance TO ALLAH — YADULLAHI FAWQA AYDEEHIM — the HAND OF ALLAH IS OVER THEIR HANDS.'

Beta, feel that. Their hands were in the hand of the Messenger ﷺ — and Allah declares that His Hand was above theirs. We affirm this as Allah described it, without asking 'how' and without likening Him to His creation.



'LAQAD RADIYALLAHU 'ANIL-MU'MINEENA IZ
YUBAYI'OONAKA TAHTASH-SHAJARAH — ALLAH WAS
CERTAINLY PLEASED WITH THE BELIEVERS WHEN
THEY PLEDGED ALLEGIANCE TO YOU UNDER THE
TREE — FA-'ALIMA MA FEE QULOObIHIM
FA-ANZALAS-SAKEENATA 'ALAYHIM WA
ATHABAHUM FATHAN QAREEBA — He KNEW what
was in their HEARTS, so He sent down TRANQUILLITY
upon them and rewarded them with a NEAR VICTORY.'

Beta, 'radiyallahu 'anhum' — Allah announced His
PLEASURE with them, by name, in a Book recited until
the end of time. The Prophet ﷺ said of them: 'None of
those who pledged under the tree will enter the Fire.'

And there is a detail worth knowing, beta: later, some
people began visiting that tree seeking blessing from it.
Umar (radiyallahu anhu), during his caliphate, is
reported to have had it cut down — out of fear that
people would begin venerating a tree. Beta, look at the
vigilance: they guarded tawheed even against a tree that
Allah Himself had mentioned. Honour the sign; never



worship it.

The Dream Fulfilled, and the Portrait of a Generation

'LAQAD SADAQALLAHU RASOOLAHUR-RU'YA
BIL-HAQQ — Allah has certainly FULFILLED His
Messenger's VISION in truth —
LA-TADKHULUNNAL-MASJIDAL-HARAMA IN
SHA'ALLAHU AMINEEN — you will surely ENTER the
Sacred Mosque, if Allah wills, in SAFETY —
MUHALLIQEENA RU'OOSAKUM WA MUQASSIREEN LA
TAKHAFOON — with your heads SHAVED and
shortened, NOT FEARING.'

Beta, the dream was true — it simply had a timetable
that the companions did not know. 'FA-'ALIMA MA
LAM TA'LAMOO FA-JA'ALA MIN DOONI ZALIKA
FATHAN QAREEBA — He KNEW what YOU DID NOT
KNOW, and He made, besides that, a NEAR VICTORY.'

Beta, memorise that phrase for every disappointment:
'fa-'alima ma lam ta'lamoo' — He knew what you did



not know. Your dua is not denied; sometimes it is scheduled.

And then, beta, the final ayah of this surah — a portrait of the Prophet ﷺ and his companions so precise that it has been quoted for fourteen centuries:

'MUHAMMADUR-RASOOLULLAH — MUHAMMAD IS THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH — WAL-LAZINA MA'AHU ASHIDDA'U 'ALAL-KUFFARI RUHAMA'U BAYNAHUM — and those WITH HIM are FIRM against the disbelievers, MERCIFUL among themselves.'

Beta, look at the balance: firmness and mercy in the same people, each in its correct place. Not harsh with their brothers and soft with falsehood — the opposite. And note that this describes their stance toward hostility and aggression; the Quran itself commands kindness and justice toward those who do not fight the believers.

'TARAHUM RUKKA'AN SUJJADAN YABTAGHOONA FADLAN MINALLAHI WA RIDWANA — you see them



BOWING and PROSTRATING, seeking BOUNTY from Allah and PLEASURE.'

Beta, note what they seek: 'fadlan wa ridwana' — His bounty and His PLEASURE. Not fame, not power, not even a stated demand for Jannah in this description — His pleasure.

'SEEMAHUM FEE WUJOOHIHIM MIN
ATHARIS-SUJOOD — their MARK is on their FACES
from the TRACE of PROSTRATION.'

Beta, the scholars explained this in two ways, and both are beautiful. Some said it refers to the physical trace on the forehead. But many, including from the salaf, explained it as the LIGHT and dignity that appears on the face of one who prays much — a visible calm and humility. And they warned against the opposite: a hardened mark on the forehead displayed for people to see is not the 'seemah' this ayah praises; it praises the light that a person cannot fake and does not advertise.



And the ayah ends by saying this description is in the Torah and in the Injeel — and it gives a farming image: 'KA-ZAR'IN AKHRAJA SHAT'AHU FA-AZARAHU FASTAGHLAZA FASTAWA 'ALA SOOQIHI YU'JIBUZ-ZURRA' — like a plant which sends out its SHOOT, then STRENGTHENS it, so it grows THICK and stands FIRM on its STEM, DELIGHTING THE SOWERS — LI-YAGHEEZA BIHIMUL-KUFFAR — so that He may ENRAGE by them the disbelievers.'

Beta, what an image to end on. This ummah began as a single thin shoot in Makkah — mocked, boycotted, nearly crushed. Then it strengthened, thickened, and stood upright on its own stem, until the farmers who planted it were delighted at the sight.

And that, beta, is the last word on Hudaybiyah. The companions saw a defeat. Allah saw a seedling being strengthened before the harvest.

What This Surah Teaches Us



- 1.** What looks like a setback may be the doorway — Allah called Hudaybiyah a clear victory before anyone could see it.
- 2.** Obedience sometimes means accepting terms you dislike: 'I am the servant of Allah; He will not abandon me.'
- 3.** Sakeenah is sent DOWN — sometimes He changes the circumstance, and sometimes the heart inside it; the second is the greater mercy.
- 4.** Iman increases and decreases — feed it deliberately.
- 5.** Honour the signs of the deen without ever worshipping them — even a tree Allah mentioned was cut to protect tawheed.
- 6.** 'He knew what you did not know' — your dua may not be denied, only scheduled.
- 7.** Live the final ayah: firm where firmness belongs, merciful with your brothers, and marked by a light that you never advertise.



Ya Allah, send Your sakeenah into our hearts, make our setbacks into openings, and mark our faces with the light of sujood. 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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