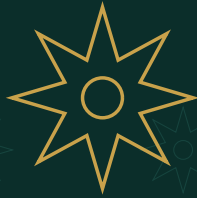


SURAH AS A STORY



Surah Al-Qalam

The Pen

The complete journey — the pen, the character, and the vanished garden —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 68 • 52 Ayahs • Meccan

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The Surah at a Glance

Noon; wal-qalami wa maa yasturoon

1. Nun. By the pen and what they write —

Maaa anta bini'mati Rabbika bimajnoon

2. you are not, by the favour of your Lord, mad.

Wa inna laka la-ajran ghayra mamnoon

3. And indeed, for you is a reward uninterrupted.

Wa innaka la'alaa khuluqin 'azeem

4. And indeed, you are upon a magnificent character.

Wa laa yastasnoon

18. And they made no exception (they did not say 'in sha Allah').

*Fasbir li-hukmi Rabbika wa laa takun
kasaahibil-hoot*

48. So be patient for the decision of your Lord, and be not like the companion of the fish.

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

An Oath By the Pen



Beta, this surah opens with a single Arabic letter — 'NUN' — one of those openings whose full meaning Allah kept with Himself, and whose first lesson is humility: even in His Book, some knowledge belongs to Him alone.

And then Allah swears an oath — and look what He chooses to swear by: 'WAL-QALAMI WA MA YASTUROON — by the PEN, and what they WRITE.'

Beta, feel the honour placed on the pen. This was revealed to an unlettered Messenger ﷺ, in a city where almost nobody could read, in a culture where the sword decided everything. And Allah swears by the humble reed pen — the instrument of knowledge, record and civilisation. The first revelation had already announced the Lord 'who taught by the PEN'; now He takes an oath by it.

And the scholars mention that among what is written is the writing of the angels, and the Pen that wrote the decree. So the oath covers everything from the Preserved



Tablet above to the ink of a student's notebook below. Beta, whatever you write matters — a pen either builds or destroys, guides or misleads. Nothing you write is neutral.

The Greatest Certificate Ever Written

Why this mighty oath? Because of the cruelty that followed it. When the chiefs of Makkah could not answer the message, they attacked the messenger — whispering to travellers and pilgrims: 'he is MAJNOON, possessed, out of his mind.' It is the oldest tactic on earth, beta: when you cannot break the argument, break the reputation of the one who carries it.

And upon that oath by the pen, Allah answered: 'MA ANTA BI-NI'MATI RABBIKA BI-MAJNOON — you are NOT, by the favour of your Lord, mad. WA INNA LAKA LA-AJRAN GHAYRA MAMNOON — and indeed, for you is a reward UNINTERRUPTED, unending, with no reminder of favour attached to it.'



And then, beta, came four words that outweigh every medal, title and honour ever given to any human being in history: 'WA INNAKA LA-'ALA KHULUQIN 'AZEEM — AND INDEED, YOU ARE UPON A MAGNIFICENT CHARACTER.'

Think about who is speaking, beta. Not a friend praising a friend. Not a nation honouring its hero. The Creator of the heavens and the earth, whose word is truth itself, certifying one man's AKHLAQ — and preserving that certificate in a Book recited until the end of time.

And when our mother Aisha (radiyallahu anha) was asked to describe his character, she gave the most complete answer in history: 'KANA KHULUQUHUL-QURAN' — HIS CHARACTER WAS THE QURAN. Beta, understand what that means: this Book, walking. Every command in it — mercy, honesty, patience, generosity, humility — was visible in one life. If you want to know what this ayah looked like in practice, read his seerah: his gentleness with children, his forgiveness at the conquest of Makkah, his honesty



even with enemies who trusted him with their goods, his patience with the rudest questioners.

And notice the lesson underneath, beta: slander was answered by CHARACTER, not by rage. Allah added: 'SO SOON YOU WILL SEE, AND THEY WILL SEE, which of you is the AFFLICTED one.' Time and akhlaq together silence every mocker. Fourteen centuries later, we see.

Do Not Obey the Man of Ten Faults

Then Allah gives His Messenger ﷺ — and every believer after him — a command about compromise, followed by a portrait so precise it functions as a character test for all of us: 'FALA TUTI'IL-MUKAZZIBEEN — so do NOT obey the deniers. WADDOO LAW TUDHINU FA-YUDHINOON — they WISH that you would SOFTEN, so they too would soften.'

Beta, 'tudhin' means to be pliable, to give a little, to blur the line so everyone stays comfortable. That is how truth is usually lost — not by a sudden surrender, but by a slow softening, a small compromise to keep the peace.



And then the ten qualities of the man not to be obeyed — read them as a mirror, beta, not as a description of someone else: 'And do not obey every worthless HABITUAL SWEARER (hallaf maheen)' — one who swears by Allah constantly, for small things, because his word alone carries no weight; 'a SCORNER (hammaz)' — who mocks and belittles people; 'going about with SLANDER (mashsha'in bi-nameem)' — carrying words from house to house to break relationships; 'a PREVENTER of good (manna'in lil-khayr)' — who stops good from happening; 'a transgressor, a sinner; cruel (utul) — and moreover, of doubtful birth (zaneem).'

Beta, look at the list carefully: swearing, mocking, gossiping, blocking good, harshness. Not one of them is a crime a court would punish — they are all TONGUE and TEMPER diseases. And Allah names them as the marks of a man whose opinion should not move you. Why was he like this? 'BECAUSE he was a possessor of wealth and children' — arrogance is often just money and status without gratitude. And his end: 'We will brand him on



the snout.' A humiliating mark on the very face he used to sneer with.

The Garden That Vanished Overnight

And now, beta, the surah tells a story that every earner, businessman and salaried man should hear once a year — the story of the People of the Garden.

There was a righteous man with a fine orchard. At every harvest, he did what the poor of his town had come to depend on: he called them, and gave them their share generously. When he died, his sons inherited the garden — and sat down to do the accounting. Their conclusion: father's charity was a leak in the profits.

So they swore an oath: 'LA YASRIMUNNAHA MUSBIHEEN — we will SURELY harvest it in the early morning' — before dawn, quietly, so the poor would not know — 'WA LA YASTATHNOON — and they made NO EXCEPTION.' Beta, that phrase means they did not say 'IN SHA ALLAH'. They planned the future as if it were a possession in their hands, with no room left for the will



of Allah.

'FA-TAFA 'ALAYHA TA'IFUN MIN RABBIKA WA HUM NA'IMOON — then a VISITOR from your Lord visited it while they were ASLEEP.' While they were dreaming about their clever plan, the decision was already made above. 'FA-ASBAHAT KAS-SAREEM' — and by morning it was like a field already harvested — black, stripped, finished.

At dawn they set out, whispering to each other so no one would hear: 'AN LA YADKHULANNAHAL-YAWMA 'ALAYKUM MISKEEN — let no POOR PERSON enter it upon you today!' — 'and they went early, determined, thinking themselves ABLE.'

Beta, that phrase — 'qadireen', thinking themselves able — is the whole disease in one word.

'FA-LAMMA RA-AWHA QALOO INNA LA-DALLOON — but when they SAW it, they said: WE MUST HAVE LOST OUR WAY!' Their first thought was that they had come to the wrong field — because what they saw was



unrecognisable. Then reality landed: 'BAL NAHNU MAHROOMOON — no... rather, WE HAVE BEEN DEPRIVED.'

And now the best line in the story. 'QALA AWSATUHUM — the most BALANCED of them said: A LAM AQU LAKUM LAWLA TUSABBIHOON — did I not tell you: why do you not GLORIFY ALLAH?' There was one voice of moderation among them who had warned them, and they had ignored it. Beta, there is usually one such voice in every family, every board room, every group of friends — the one who says 'let's do this properly, let's not cut the poor out, let's say in sha Allah.' Do not be the group that ignores him. And do not be too shy to be him.

And then, beautifully, they repented: 'SUBHANA RABBINA INNA KUNNA ZALIMEEN — Glory be to our Lord, indeed WE were the wrongdoers.' They blamed themselves — not fate, not the weather, not each other — and turned in hope: "ASA RABBUNA AN YUBDILANA KHAYRAN MINHA — perhaps our Lord will give us better than it in exchange; indeed, to our



Lord we turn in hope.'

Then Allah states the moral in one sentence for all time: 'KAZALIKAL-'AZAB — such is the punishment. WALA-'AZABUL-AKHIRATI AKBAR — and the punishment of the Hereafter is GREATER, if only they knew.'

Beta, learn the two equations of this story: a plan that CUTS OUT the poor cuts out the barakah — and a plan without 'in sha Allah' is a harvest sown in the air. Your wealth is not reduced by charity; it is protected by it.

The Day the Shin Is Uncovered

The surah then turns to the deniers with a question of simple justice: 'A FA-NAJ'ALUL-MUSLIMEENA KAL-MUJRIMEEN — shall We treat those who submit like the criminals? MA LAKUM, KAYFA TAHKUMOON — what is wrong with you? How do you JUDGE?'

Beta, this is the moral argument for the Hereafter. If the honest and the corrupt end identically in the grave, then justice is a joke and the universe is absurd. Every human



heart that has ever cried 'this is not fair!' is testifying that a Day of judgement must exist.

And then a scene: 'YAWMA YUKSHAFU 'AN SAQIN WA YUD'AWNA ILAS-SUJOODI FALA YASTATEE'OON — the Day the SHIN will be uncovered and they will be called to PROSTRATE, but they will not be able. Their eyes humbled, humiliation covering them — and they USED to be called to prostration while they were sound.'

Beta, understand the mercy hidden in that terror. The ability to make sajdah is not a permanent permission — it is a gift, available NOW, while your back bends and your forehead reaches the ground. There will come a Day when the invitation is given and the body will not obey. So every sajdah you are able to make today is an opportunity that will one day be withdrawn. Do not treat it casually.

Be Patient — But Not Like the Companion of the Fish



As the surah closes, Allah comforts His Messenger ﷺ about those who mock: 'So leave Me and the one who denies this statement — SANASTADRIJUHUM MIN HAYTHU LA YA'LAMOON — We will lead them on gradually, from where they do not know. And I will give them time; indeed, My plan is firm.'

Beta, 'istidraj' is one of the most frightening concepts in the Quran: a person disobeys, and instead of hardship, blessings INCREASE — and he thinks Allah is pleased with him, while he is being drawn nearer to his ruin step by step. So never measure Allah's pleasure by comfort alone. The believer measures it by the ability to obey.

And then the final instruction to the Prophet ﷺ — and this one is delicate, beta, so listen carefully: 'FASBIR LI-HUKMI RABBIKA — so be PATIENT for the decision of your Lord — WA LA TAKUN KA-SAHIBIL-HOOT — and be NOT like the COMPANION OF THE FISH — when he called out while he was choked with distress.'



The companion of the fish is Yunus (alaihis salam) — a noble prophet of Allah, whose story we honour. And this ayah is not an insult to him; it is a lesson drawn from a moment: he left his people in frustration before the permission of his Lord came, and Allah tested him inside the darkness of the whale. And what saved him? The dua we all know: 'La ilaha illa anta, subhanaka, inni kuntu minaz-zalimeen.' The next ayah confirms: 'Had not a FAVOUR from his Lord overtaken him, he would have been cast onto the barren shore while he was blamed. But his Lord CHOSE him and made him of the righteous.'

Beta, the lesson is precious for anyone doing good work and feeling exhausted by ungrateful people: do not walk away before your Lord's decision. Patience is not passive — it is staying at your post until the command comes.

And then the surah's final gift, an ayah millions of believers recite as protection: 'WA IN YAKADUL-LAZINA KAFAROO LA-YUZLIQOONAKA BI-ABSARIHIM LAMMA SAMI'UZ-ZIKR — and indeed,



those who disbelieve would almost make you SLIP with their EYES when they hear the message, and they say: indeed, he is mad. WA MA HUWA ILLA ZIKRUN LIL-'ALAMEEN — but it is nothing except a REMINDER TO THE WORLDS.'

The scholars mention this ayah in connection with the reality of the evil eye — the harm of a hostile, envious gaze, which the Prophet ﷺ confirmed is real. And notice the closing note, beta: after all the mockery, the surah ends by declaring what the Quran actually IS — 'a reminder to the WORLDS.' They called it madness; Allah called it a mercy for all mankind. History has recorded which description was correct.

What This Surah Teaches Us

1. Honour the pen — nothing you write is neutral; it either builds or destroys.
2. Character is the believer's heaviest asset: Allah's own certificate went to akhlaq, and 'his character was the Quran.'



- 3.** Answer slander with conduct and patience, never with rage — 'soon you will see, and they will see.'
 - 4.** Beware the slow softening: truth is usually lost by small compromises, not sudden surrender.
 - 5.** Audit yourself against the ten faults — swearing, mocking, gossiping, blocking good, harshness — they are tongue and temper diseases, and Allah lists them first.
 - 6.** Say 'in sha Allah', and never plan the poor OUT of your wealth — barakah leaves with them, and one night is enough to change a garden.
 - 7.** Do not leave your post before your Lord's decision — and treasure every sajdah you are still able to make.
- Ya Allah, beautify our character with Your Book, keep the share of Your poor safe in our wealth, and grant us patience until Your decision comes. 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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