

SURAH AS A STORY



Surah Al-Insan

Man

The complete journey — the drop, the choice, and the silver cups —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 76 • 31 Ayahs • Medinan

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The Surah at a Glance

*Hal ataa 'alal-insaani heenum-minad-dahri lam
yakun shay'am-mazkooraa*

1. Has there come upon man a period of time when he
was not a thing mentioned?

*Innaa hadaynaahus-sabeela immaa
shaakiranw-wa immaa kafooraa*

3. Indeed, We guided him to the way — whether grateful
or ungrateful.

*Wa yut'imoonat-ta'aama 'alaa hubbihee
miskeenanw-wa yateemanw-wa aseeraa*

8. And they give food, in spite of love for it, to the needy,
the orphan and the captive,

*Innamaa nut'imukum li-wajhil-laahi laa nureedu
minkum jazaaa'anw-wa laa shukooraa*

9. saying: we feed you only for the countenance of Allah;
we wish from you neither reward nor thanks.

*Wa jazaahum bimaa sabaroo jannatanw-wa
hareeraa*

12. And He rewarded them for their patience with a
garden and silk.



*Inna haazaa kaana lakum jazaaa'anw-wa kaana
sa'yukum mashkoora*

22. Indeed, this is for you a reward, and your effort has
been appreciated.

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A Time When You Were Nothing

Beta, this surah opens with a question so quiet and so
devastating that it deserves a whole night of thought:
'HAL ATA 'ALAL-INSANI HEENUN MINAD-DAHRI LAM
YAKUN SHAY'AN MAZKOORA — has there come upon
man a period of time when he was NOT A THING
MENTIONED?'

Think about it. There was a time — not long ago —
when you did not exist at all. Not as a body, not as a
name, not as a thought in anyone's mind. The world
went on: markets opened, rivers flowed, people laughed
— and you were nothing, unmentioned, unnamed,
absent from every conversation on earth.



And then Allah decided you would be. 'INNA KHALAQNAL-INSANA MIN NUTFATIN AMSHAJIN NABTALEEH — indeed, We created man from a drop of MIXED fluid, that We may TEST him — FA-JA'ALNAHU SAMEE'AN BASEERA — so We made him HEARING and SEEING.'

Beta, feel the sequence: from a mixed drop to a creature that hears and sees. And notice why: 'nabtaleeh' — to test him. Your ears and eyes were not given as decoration; they were issued as exam equipment.

And then the master ayah of human freedom: 'INNA HADAYNAHUS-SABEELA IMMA SHAKIRAN WA IMMA KAFOORA — indeed, We GUIDED him to the way — whether he be GRATEFUL or UNGRATEFUL.'

Beta, Allah did not leave the road unmarked. He sent prophets, books, signs in the horizons, and a conscience inside the chest. The way is SHOWN. And then — He allows the choice. Grateful, or ungrateful. Those are the only two categories in the end: shakir and kafoor.



Everything else — rich or poor, famous or unknown, healthy or sick — is only the setting in which one of those two answers is given.

They Feed, Though They Love It

The surah briefly shows the end of the ungrateful — chains, shackles and a Blaze — and then turns, for most of its length, to something far more beautiful: a detailed portrait of AL-ABRAR, the righteous. And the portrait begins not with their prayers, but with their TABLE.

'YOOFOONA BIN-NADHRI — they FULFIL their vows —
WA YAKHAFOONA YAWMAN KANA SHARRUHU
MUSTATEERA — and they FEAR a Day whose evil will
be widespread.' Two marks first, beta: they keep their
promises to Allah, and they carry a healthy fear of that
Day.

'WA YUT'IMOONAT-TA'AMA 'ALA HUBBIHI
MISKEENAN WA YATEEMAN WA ASEERA — and they
GIVE FOOD, IN SPITE OF LOVE FOR IT, to the NEEDY,
the ORPHAN, and the CAPTIVE.'



Beta, examine every word. They give food — not leftovers, not surplus — 'ala hubbihi', while they themselves love it and want it. That is the difference between charity and ITHAAR: giving what you would happily have eaten yourself.

And look at the three recipients, in order: the miskeen, the poor person; the yateem, the orphan; and — subhanAllah — the ASEER, the CAPTIVE. Beta, in that era, a captive was a prisoner of war: someone who had come to fight against them, whose people had killed theirs. And the Quran praises believers who fed HIM, from food they themselves desired. The Prophet ﷺ instructed the companions regarding prisoners: treat them well. Some captives later said that their Muslim captors would give them the bread and eat dates themselves. That, beta, is the standard of mercy this deen set — and it was set in the seventh century, on a battlefield.

And then the line that reveals what makes any of it acceptable: 'INNAMA NUT'IMUKUM LI-WAJHILLAHI



— we feed you ONLY FOR THE FACE OF ALLAH — LA NUREEDU MINKUM JAZA'AN WA LA SHUKOORA — we want from you NEITHER REWARD NOR THANKS.'

Beta, note the two things they refuse: 'jaza' — repayment, any favour in return; and 'shukoor' — even a THANK YOU. Even the small payment of gratitude, even the pleasure of being appreciated, they do not want, because that too is a wage — and they have already fixed their fee with Allah. This is one of the highest stations of ikhlas in the Quran. Ask yourself, beta, the next time you give: would I still give this if no one ever knew, and no one ever thanked me?

And their motive: 'INNA NAKHAFU MIN RABBINA YAWMAN 'ABOOSAN QAMTAREERA — indeed, we FEAR from our Lord a Day, frowning and fiercely distressful.'

Their Reward, In Detail

And now, beta, Allah opens the doors of their reward — and it is one of the most sensuous, detailed descriptions



of Jannah in the entire Quran. Read it slowly; it was revealed to make hearts long.

'FA-WAQAHUMULLAHU SHARRA ZALIKAL-YAWM — so Allah PROTECTED them from the evil of that Day — WA LAQQAUM NADRATAN WA SUROORA — and gave them RADIANCE and JOY.' Beta, the exact two things they had feared losing — safety and happiness — are handed to them, doubled.

'WA JAZAHUM BIMA SABAROO JANNATAN WA HAREERA — and He rewarded them, FOR THEIR PATIENCE, with a GARDEN and SILK.' Note: for their SABR. The feeding, the fasting, the giving of what they loved — all of it was patience, and it is patience that is paid.

Then the details: 'reclining on adorned couches; they will find neither burning SUN nor freezing COLD' — a climate of perfect gentleness, beta; 'and its shade close upon them, and its clusters of fruit hanging LOW, made utterly SUBSERVIENT' — the fruit bends to the hand.



'And there will be circulated among them vessels of SILVER and cups of CRYSTAL — QAWAREERA MIN FIDDAH — crystal made of SILVER, which they have determined in measure.' Beta, the scholars pause here in wonder: crystal is transparent, silver is opaque — and in Jannah, vessels combine the clarity of glass with the substance of silver, a material this world has never seen. And 'qaddaroohaa taqdeera' — filled exactly to the measure each person desires. Personalised, to the sip.

'And they will be given to drink a cup whose mixture is of ZANJABEEL — ginger — from a fountain called SALSABEEL.' 'And there will circulate among them eternal young servants — WILDANUN MUKHALLADOON — if you saw them, you would think them scattered PEARLS.'

'And when you look there, you will see PLEASURE and a GREAT DOMINION. Upon them will be green garments of fine silk and brocade, and they will be adorned with BRACELETS OF SILVER, and their Lord will give them a PURE DRINK — WA SAQAHUM RABBUHUM



SHARABAN TAHOORA.'

Beta, stop at that last line — it is the summit of the passage. Everything before was served BY attendants; this final drink is described as given by 'their LORD'. And it is 'tahoor' — purifying; a drink that cleanses the heart of every residue of envy, grudge, sorrow and regret carried from this world.

And then the sentence that will make every tired night of worship worth it: 'INNA HAZA KANA LAKUM JAZA'AN — indeed, THIS is for you a reward — WA KANA SA'YUKUM MASHKOORA — and your EFFORT has been APPRECIATED.'

Beta, 'mashkoora' — thanked, appreciated. The people who refused thanks from human beings in ayah 9 are personally thanked by Allah in ayah 22. Whoever gives up the applause of creation, beta, receives the appreciation of the Creator.

Advice for the One Who Carries the Message



The surah then turns to the Prophet ﷺ with a set of instructions that every believer needs in a difficult environment:

'INNA NAHNU NAZZALNA 'ALAYKAL-QUR'ANA
TANZEELA — indeed, it is WE who have sent down to
you the Quran, progressively. FASBIR LI-HUKMI
RABBIKA — so BE PATIENT for the decision of your
Lord — WA LA TUTI' MINHUM ATHIMAN AW
KAFOORA — and do NOT obey from among them a
SINNER or an UNGRATEFUL one.'

Beta, notice the pairing: patience, and refusal to obey.
Patience does not mean agreeing. You can be gentle in
manner and immovable in principle at the same time —
that is the prophetic balance.

'WAZKURISMA RABBIKA BUKRATAN WA ASEELA —
and REMEMBER the name of your Lord MORNING and
EVENING — WA MINAL-LAYLI FASJUD LAHU — and
during the night PROSTRATE to Him — WA
SABBIH-HU LAYLAN TAWHEELA — and glorify Him a



LONG part of the night.'

Beta, here is the fuel supply for anyone facing pressure: morning dhikr, evening dhikr, and a portion of the night in sujood. This is not extra decoration on a believer's life; it is the power supply that makes patience possible.

And then the diagnosis of those who resist: 'INNA HA'ULA'I YUHIBBOONAL-'AJILAH — indeed, THESE people LOVE THE IMMEDIATE — WA YAZAROONA WARA'AHUM YAWMAN THAQEELA — and they LEAVE BEHIND THEM a HEAVY DAY.' Beta, what a phrase: they leave a heavy Day lying behind them, unprepared for, like an unopened bill.

'NAHNU KHALAQNAHUM WA SHADADNA ASRAHUM — WE created them and STRENGTHENED THEIR FRAMES — WA IZA SHI'NA BADDALNA AMTHALAHUM TABDEELA — and when We will, We can REPLACE them entirely with others like them.' The very joints and sinews used to disobey Him were tightened by Him.



And the surah closes with the balance of the whole deen in two ayahs: 'INNA HAZIHI TAZKIRAH — indeed, this is a REMINDER — FA-MAN SHA'A ITTAKHAZA ILA RABBIHI SABEELA — so whoever WILLS may take to his Lord a WAY. WA MA TASHA'OONA ILLA AN YASHA'ALLAH — and you do not will except that Allah wills. INNALLAHA KANA 'ALEEMAN HAKEEMA — indeed, Allah is Knowing, Wise. YUDKHILU MAN YASHA'U FEE RAHMATIH — He admits whom He wills into His MERCY — WAZ-ZALIMEENA A'ADDA LAHUM 'AZABAN ALEEMA — but the wrongdoers, He has prepared for them a painful punishment.'

Beta, hold both halves together, as Ahlus-Sunnah always have: you have a real will and a real choice — 'whoever wills may take a way' — and yet your very willing happens inside Allah's will. So never say 'it was decreed' to excuse laziness, and never say 'I did it myself' to feed pride. Choose, strive, and then thank Him for enabling the choice. And notice the final beauty, beta: He enters people into His MERCY — not into their deeds. Deeds



are the road; mercy is the door.

What This Surah Teaches Us

1. Remember the time when you were 'not a thing mentioned' — existence itself is a gift you did not earn.
2. Your hearing and sight are exam equipment, not decoration — and there are finally only two answers: shakir or kafoor.
3. Give what you actually want yourself ('ala hubbihi) — that is the giving Allah praised, and He praised it toward the poor, the orphan and even the captive.
4. Purify the fee: want neither repayment nor even thanks — those who refuse creation's thanks are thanked by the Creator: 'your effort has been appreciated.'
5. Jannah is paid for patience — every restrained desire and every quiet sacrifice is being counted.
6. Power your patience with morning and evening dhikr and a portion of the night in sujood.



7. Hold the balance: you truly choose, yet nothing happens outside His will — so strive hard, then thank Him for the ability to strive.

Ya Allah, make us of the grateful, purify our giving of every hidden fee, and let us hear on that Day: 'your effort has been appreciated.' 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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