

SURAH AS A STORY



Surah 'Abasa

He Frowned

The complete journey — the blind man who taught the world —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 80 • 42 Ayahs • Meccan

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The Surah at a Glance

'Abasa wa tawallaaa. An jaaa'ahul-a'maa

1-2. He frowned and turned away, because the blind man came to him.

Wa maa yudreeka la'allahoo yazzakkaa

3. And what would make you know — perhaps he might be purified?

Kallaaa innahaa tazkirah. Faman shaaa'a zakarah

11-12. No! Indeed, it is a reminder — so whoever wills may remember it.

Qutilal-insaanu maaa akfarah. Min ayyi shay'in khalaqah

17-18. Destroyed is man — how ungrateful he is! From what thing did He create him?

Falyanzuril-insaanu ilaa ta'aamih

24. So let man look at his food —

Yawma yafirrul-mar'u min akheeh

34. The Day a man will flee from his brother...

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A Frown Recorded Forever

Beta, today's surah begins with an event so extraordinary that it is, by itself, one of the strongest proofs that the Quran is from Allah.

The Prophet ﷺ was in the midst of a crucial conversation. Before him sat the chiefs of Quraysh — men like 'Utbah, Shaybah, Abu Jahl, Umayyah — the very leaders whose acceptance of Islam could have opened the doors of Makkah for the whole message. He ﷺ was presenting Islam to them with all his hope and care.

And in the middle of that meeting, a poor blind companion — Abdullah ibn Umm Maktoom (radiyallahu anhu) — came in, not seeing who was present, and called out: O Messenger of Allah, teach me from what Allah has taught you!

He repeated it, interrupting. And the Prophet ﷺ — hoping not to lose this rare opportunity with the chiefs — did something entirely human: he frowned slightly,



and turned his face away, and continued with the leaders.

And revelation came down from above the seven heavens — not about a war, not about a law, but about that frown: 'ABASA WA TAWALLA — HE FROWNED AND TURNED AWAY — AN JA'AHUL-A'MA — because the BLIND MAN came to him.'

Beta, pause here. Notice the tenderness in HOW Allah corrects His beloved: He does not say 'YOU frowned' — He uses the third person, 'he frowned', as if softening the address before turning to him directly. And then: 'WA MA YUDREEKA LA'ALLAHU YAZZAKKA — and what would make YOU know — PERHAPS HE MIGHT BE PURIFIED — AW YAZZAKKARU FA-TANFA'AHUZ-ZIKRA — or be reminded, and the reminder would benefit him?'

Then Allah lays out the contrast that this surah exists to teach: 'AMMA MANIS-TAGHNA — as for HE WHO CONSIDERS HIMSELF FREE OF NEED — FA-ANTA



LAHU TASADDA — to HIM you give your attention! WA
MA 'ALAYKA ALLA YAZZAKKA — and it is not upon you
if he is not purified. WA AMMA MAN JA'AKA YAS'A —
but as for he who came to you RUNNING, striving —
WA HUWA YAKHSHA — and he FEARS Allah —
FA-ANTA 'ANHU TALAHHA — from HIM you are
Distracted.'

The Proof Inside the Correction

Beta, now think about what this surah IS. Here is a man claiming prophethood. If he were inventing this Book, would he publish — in his own scripture, to be recited by every follower in prayer until the end of time — a public correction of his own frown? Would a forger record his own mistake in the very document meant to establish his authority?

Beta, no. A man polishing his image hides such moments. This Book preserved it. That is the signature of a Sender above the Messenger.



And see what the Prophet ﷺ did afterwards, which is the real lesson. He did not resent Abdullah ibn Umm Maktoom (radiyallahu anhu) — he HONoured him for the rest of his life. Whenever he met him, he would greet him with: 'Welcome to the one because of whom my Lord rebuked me!' He would spread out his own cloak for him to sit on. And he appointed this blind man as his deputy over Madinah more than once when he ﷺ travelled — the city left in the care of the man he had once turned away from.

Beta, that is how a great soul receives correction: not with defensiveness, not with embarrassment turned into distance — but by raising the person who was the cause of it.

And the principle Allah established here governs the ummah forever: a sincere seeker of knowledge — however poor, however disabled, however unimportant in the world's eyes — has more claim on your attention than a wealthy man who feels no need. Look around our own gatherings, beta: who gets the front seat, the warm



handshake, the extra minutes? This surah audits every one of us.

Written on Honoured Pages

Then Allah lifts the discussion to the Quran itself:
'KALLA INNAHA TAZKIRAH — NO! Indeed, it is a
REMINDER — FA-MAN SHA'A ZAKARAH — so
whoever WILLS may remember it.'

Beta, notice: the message is not to be pushed onto those who feel no need, nor withheld from those who come running. It is placed in the open — whoever wills, takes.

'FEE SUHUFIN MUKARRAMAH — (recorded) in
HONOURED SHEETS — MARFOO'ATIN MUTAHHARAH
— EXALTED and PURIFIED — BI-AYDEE SAFARAH —
by the hands of SCRIBES (angels) — KIRAMIN
BARARAH — NOBLE and DUTIFUL.'

Beta, look at the chain of honour Allah describes for His Book: honoured pages, raised high, kept pure, carried by noble and obedient angelic hands. And then it is



delivered to... a gathering where a rich man is prioritised over a poor believer. The contrast is the point. Something this pure deserves to be handled with matching purity — in how we recite it, how we live it, and how we treat the people who come seeking it.

Look at Your Food

Then the surah turns to man's ingratitude with words of remarkable severity: 'QUTILAL-INSANU MA AKFARAH — may man be DESTROYED; how UNGRATEFUL he is!'

And then Allah asks a question designed to deflate every swollen ego: 'MIN AYYI SHAY'IN KHALAQAH — from WHAT THING did He create him? MIN NUTFATIN KHALAQAHU FA-QADDARAH — from a DROP He created him and PROPORTIONED him. THUMMA SABEELA YASSARAH — then He made the way EASY for him' — the passage of birth, and the path of life. 'THUMMA AMATAHU FA-AQBARAH — then He causes him to DIE and provides a GRAVE for him.'



Beta, notice that even burial is listed as a favour: 'aqbarah' — He gave him a grave. Allah honoured the human body by legislating that it be covered in the earth rather than left out like the carcass of an animal. Even in death, dignity was arranged for you.

'THUMMA IZA SHA'A ANSHARAH — then when He wills, He will RESURRECT him. KALLA LAMMA YAQDI MA AMARAH — NO! Man has NOT YET ACCOMPLISHED what He commanded him.' Beta, that ayah is a quiet indictment of every life: with all the favours listed, man still has not finished doing what he was told.

And then the surah gives one of the most beautiful invitations to reflection in the Quran: 'FALYANZURIL-INSANU ILA TA'AMIH — SO LET MAN LOOK AT HIS FOOD.'

Beta, look at your plate. Not at the sky, not at galaxies — at the roti in your hand. 'ANNA SABABNAL-MA'A SABBA — that WE poured down the water in showers.



THUMMA SHAQAQNAL-ARDA SHAQQA — then We
SPLIT the earth in fragments — FA-ANBATNA FEEHA
HABBA — and caused to grow within it GRAIN — WA
'INABAN WA QADBA — and grapes and herbs — WA
ZAYTOONAN WA NAKHLA — and olives and
date-palms — WA HADA'IQA GHULBA — and gardens
of dense trees — WA FAKIHATAN WA ABBA — and
fruit and pasture — MATA'AN LAKUM WA
LI-AN'AMIKUM — as PROVISION for you and your
GRAZING ANIMALS.'

Beta, trace the chain: water sent from above, soil split
open below, a seed pushing up through darkness,
sunlight, months of growth, a farmer, transport, a
kitchen, and then your hand lifting it to your mouth.
Not one link in that chain is yours. And Allah says:
LOOK at it. Really look, before you eat, and the eating
itself becomes worship.

The Day a Man Flees His Brother



And then the surah moves to the Day, with one of the most emotionally powerful passages in the Quran:

'FA-IZA JA'ATIS-SAKHKHAH — so when the DEAFENING BLAST comes.' Sakhkhah, beta — a sound so overwhelming it deafens the ears.

'YAWMA YAFIRRUL-MAR'U MIN AKHEEH — the Day a man will FLEE FROM HIS BROTHER — WA UMMIHI WA ABEEH — and his MOTHER and his FATHER — WA SAHIBATIHI WA BANEH — and his WIFE and his CHILDREN.'

Beta, sit with that list, because Allah arranged it with terrible precision — brother, mother, father, wife, children. These are the exact people we sacrifice for, worry about, sin for, and organise our whole lives around. And on that Day, a person will RUN from them.

The scholars explain: he flees because he fears they will claim rights from him, or because he knows he cannot help them and cannot bear to be asked. And the ayah explains it: 'LI-KULLI-MRI'IN MINHUM YAWMA'IZIN



SHA'NUN YUGHNEEH — for EVERY man among them, that Day, will be a matter ENOUGH TO OCCUPY HIM.'

Beta, imagine a mother — who would run into fire for her child — that Day too preoccupied to ask about him. That is the weight of the Day.

And the lesson is not to love our families less; it is to understand that love does not transfer merit. Serve them, honour them, provide for them — but never buy their comfort at the price of your account, because on that Day, each of you will be busy with your own file.

Two Kinds of Faces

And the surah ends by showing us the two faces that will exist on that Day — and beta, if you remember nothing else from this surah, remember these four ayahs:

'WUJOOHUN YAWMA'IZIN MUSFIRAH — FACES, that Day, will be BRIGHT — DAHIKATUN MUSTABSHIRAH — LAUGHING, REJOICING at good news.'



Beta, laughing. On the Day of the deafening blast, when mothers flee their children, there will be people LAUGHING with joy — because their account came out well. Which face you carry that Day is being decided in these ordinary days.

'WA WUJOOHUN YAWMA'IZIN 'ALAYHA GHABARAH — and faces, that Day, will have DUST upon them — TARHAQUHA QATARAH — DARKNESS covering them.' Dust and blackness — 'ULA'IKA HUMUL-KAFARATUL-FAJARAH — those are the disbelievers, the wicked.'

Beta, look at the design of this surah from beginning to end. It opened with a FROWN on a noble face — and it closes with faces either LAUGHING or covered in dust. It began with a poor blind man who came running with fear of Allah in his heart — and it ends by telling us which faces will shine.

And here is the final thought, beta: Abdullah ibn Umm Maktoom (radiyallahu anhu) could not see in this



world. But his was the face that ran toward guidance while men with perfect eyesight sat and calculated. On that Day, whose face do you think will be among the bright, laughing ones? The Quran already answered — and it named him only as 'the blind man', so that every reader, in every century, would understand that Allah's scale weighs hearts, not eyes.

What This Surah Teaches Us

1. Allah's scale is not the world's: a poor, blind, sincere seeker outranks a wealthy man who feels no need.
2. The Quran correcting its own Messenger ﷺ over a frown is a proof of its truth — no forger writes his own reprimand.
3. Receive correction the way he ﷺ did: honour the person who was its cause, rather than avoiding them.
4. Audit your own gatherings — who gets your front seat, your warm greeting, your extra minutes?



5. Handle the Quran as Allah described it: honoured, exalted, pure, carried by noble hands.

6. 'Let man look at his food' — trace the chain from rain to your hand; none of the links were yours.

7. On that Day each person will be occupied with his own matter — love your family, serve them, but never buy their comfort with your account.

Ya Allah, make our faces among the bright and laughing ones that Day, and never let us weigh people by their wealth instead of their hearts. 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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