

SURAH AS A STORY



Surah At-Takwir

The Folding Up

The complete journey — twelve endings and one question —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 81 • 29 Ayahs • Meccan

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The Surah at a Glance

Izash-shamsu kuwwirat

1. When the sun is wrapped up and darkened,

Wa izan-nujoomun-kadarat

2. and when the stars fall, losing their light,

Wa izal-maw'oodatu su'ilat. Bi-ayyi zambin qutilat

8-9. and when the girl buried alive is asked, for what sin
she was killed —

Wa izas-suhufu nushirat

10. and when the pages are spread open,

'Alimat nafsum-maaa ahdarat

14. every soul will know what it has brought (with it).

Fa-ayna tazhaboon

26. So where are you going?

Listen to the Arabic recitation of this Surah, ayah by ayah, with the Qari
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Twelve Things That Will End



Beta, this surah opens with a cascade — twelve short ayahs, each beginning with 'when...', each describing something familiar being undone. Read them like a countdown of the world's last moments.

'IZASH-SHAMSU KUWWIRAT' — when the SUN is WRAPPED UP.' 'Kuwwirat', beta, is the word used for winding a turban around the head — folded, coiled, its light rolled away. That sun which has never missed a single morning in your entire life, which every civilisation has measured its days by — folded up like cloth.

'WA IZAN-NUJOOMU-NKADARAT' — and when the STARS FALL, scattered and dimmed.' The fixed points sailors navigated by, poets wrote about, scientists mapped — falling.

'WA IZAL-JIBALU SUYYIRAT' — and when the MOUNTAINS are SET IN MOTION.' The definition of immovable — moving.



'WA IZAL-'ISHARU 'UTTILAT — and when the FULL-TERM PREGNANT SHE-CAMELS are ABANDONED.' Beta, to an Arab, a ten-month pregnant camel was the most precious property a man could own — his savings, his status, his family's future. And on that Day, it will simply be left standing, unattended. Every 'most valuable asset' — the property file, the portfolio, the business — abandoned mid-thought.

'WA IZAL-WUHOOSHU HUSHIRAT — and when the WILD BEASTS are GATHERED.' Even the animals of the forests, brought together — nothing forgotten in the summoning.

'WA IZAL-BIHARU SUJJIRAT — and when the SEAS are SET ABLAZE.' Water itself burning, beta — the extinguisher becoming the fire.

'WA IZAN-NUFOOSU ZUWWIJAT — and when the SOULS are PAIRED' — each person joined with his like: the truthful with the truthful, the wrongdoer with his kind; every soul finally with the company it chose in life.



The Question That Shook Arabia

And then, beta, in the middle of this cosmic collapse — the sun folded, the seas burning — Allah stops the countdown to ask about ONE little girl.

'WA IZAL-MAW'OODATU SU'ILAT — and when the GIRL BURIED ALIVE is ASKED — BI-AYYI ZANBIN QUTILAT — FOR WHAT SIN SHE WAS KILLED.'

Beta, understand what this ayah did to the world. In pre-Islamic Arabia, some tribes buried infant daughters alive — out of shame at having a girl, or fear of poverty. It was a private family matter; nobody was ever questioned about it. The girl had no name, no grave, no witness, no case.

And Allah announces that on the Day the sun is folded up and the mountains walk, the universe will pause — and that little girl will be ASKED: for what crime were you killed?



Notice, beta, the exquisite justice in the wording: the QUESTION IS PUT TO HER, not to her killer. She is the one given the microphone. Because when the victim speaks, the criminal is already condemned — there is nothing left for him to say. Allah gave the voiceless the first voice.

And feel what this single ayah accomplished: a society that treated daughters as a disgrace was told that the murdered girl-child would open the proceedings of the Day of Judgement. The Prophet ﷺ went on to teach: whoever has two daughters and raises them well, he and I will be in Jannah like these two fingers. From burying daughters to daughters being a door to Jannah — in one generation.

Beta, and there is a lesson beyond that historic crime. Whenever the weak are wronged and nobody records it — a servant humiliated, an employee cheated of wages, a child crushed, a wife broken quietly behind a respectable door — remember: the file exists, and the wronged one will be asked to speak.



Every Soul Will Know

The countdown continues: 'WA IZAS-SUHUFU NUSHIRAT — and when the PAGES are SPREAD OPEN.' Beta, the records we cannot see now — opened and laid out. 'WA IZAS-SAMA'U KUSHITAT — and when the sky is STRIPPED AWAY' — pulled off like a skin. 'WA IZAL-JAHEEMU SU''IRAT — and when Hellfire is SET ABLAZE. WA IZAL-JANNATU UZLIFAT — and when Paradise is BROUGHT NEAR.'

And then the sentence that all twelve ayahs were building toward: "ALIMAT NAFSUN MA AHDARAT — EVERY SOUL WILL KNOW WHAT IT HAS BROUGHT WITH IT.'

Beta, that is the whole point of the collapse of the universe: not spectacle, but disclosure. All of it happens so that finally, with no distractions left — no sun to measure days by, no wealth to be busy with, no company to hide behind — every single soul sees exactly what it brought to the exam hall.



'Ahdarat' — what it has PRESENTED, brought forward.
Beta, ask yourself tonight, quietly: if the pages were
spread open right now, what would I be holding?

The Messenger and the Messenger

The second half of the surah turns to defend the source
of this news, and it does so with a series of oaths: 'FA-LA
UQSIMU BIL-KHUNNAS — so I swear by the
RETREATING stars — AL-JAWARIL-KUNNAS — those
that RUN and SET (or hide). WAL-LAYLI IZA 'AS'AS —
and by the NIGHT as it departs — WAS-SUBHI IZA
TANAFFAS — and by the DAWN when it BREATHES.'

Beta, what a description of sunrise: the dawn 'breathes'.
Anyone who has stood outside in the last darkness
before Fajr knows exactly that feeling — as if the world
inhales, and light enters.

And what is the oath for? 'INNAHU LA-QAWLU
RASOOLIN KAREEM — indeed, it is the word of a
NOBLE MESSENGER' — here meaning Jibreel, who
carries it — 'ZEE QUWWATIN 'INDA ZIL-'ARSHI



MAKEEN — possessed of POWER, with the Owner of the Throne, SECURE in position — MUTA'IN THAMMA AMEEN — OBEYED there, and TRUSTWORTHY.'

Beta, look at Jibreel's four qualifications: strength, high standing, obedience from others, and amanah — trustworthiness. That is the messenger who carried the message. And then: 'WA MA SAHIBUKUM BI-MAJNOON — and your COMPANION is NOT MAD.'

'Sahibukum' — YOUR COMPANION, beta. Allah does not say 'this Prophet' or 'this man' — He calls him THEIR companion, the man they had lived beside for forty years, whose honesty they had tested in every trade, whose title among them was Al-Ameen. As if to say: you know him. You have known him your whole lives. Now be honest.

'WA LAQAD RA'AHU BIL-UFUQIL-MUBEEN — and he certainly SAW him in the CLEAR HORIZON' — the Prophet ﷺ saw Jibreel in his true form, filling the horizon. 'WA MA HUWA 'ALAL-GHAYBI BI-DANEEN —



and he is not, concerning the unseen, STINGY' — he does not withhold what he was given; every word he received, he delivered. 'WA MA HUWA BI-QAWLI SHAYTANIR-RAJEEM — and it is not the word of an accursed devil.'

So Where Are You Going?

And then, beta, comes one of the shortest and most piercing questions in the entire Quran — three words in Arabic: 'FA-AYNA TAZHABOON — SO WHERE ARE YOU GOING?'

Sit with it. The truth has been laid out: the signs, the messenger, the message, the Day. And now Allah asks, almost with wonder: then where are you off to? Which direction is left? What alternative do you imagine you are walking toward?

Beta, ask yourself this question at the crossroads of your own life — when you are about to compromise, about to justify, about to postpone once again: fa-ayna tazhaboon? Where exactly am I going with this?



'IN HUWA ILLA ZIKRUN LIL-'ALAMEEN — it is nothing but a REMINDER to the WORLDS — LI-MAN SHA'A MINKUM AN YASTAQEEM — for whoever among you WILLS TO GO STRAIGHT.'

And then the final ayah, which the scholars call one of the most balanced statements on free will and divine will in the Quran: 'WA MA TASHA'OONA ILLA AN YASHA'ALLAHU RABBUL-'ALAMEEN — and you do not WILL except that ALLAH wills — the Lord of the worlds.'

Beta, hold both ayahs together, because they arrive as a pair. First: 'for whoever WILLS to go straight' — your choice is real, and the door is described as open to whoever wants it. Then: 'and you do not will except that Allah wills' — and even your wanting is under His permission, a gift from Him.

So what does a believer do with this? Two things. He never blames destiny for his laziness, because the first ayah says: whoever wills. And he never becomes proud of his own guidance, because the second says: your very



willing was granted. Beta, when you find yourself praying, giving, holding back from sin — do not say 'look how disciplined I am.' Say alhamdulillah — because He willed that you would will it.

And notice how the surah has travelled: it began with the sun being folded up, and ends inside your own chest, with the question of what you choose to want. The whole universe will be rolled away, beta — and what will remain to be examined is the small, private direction of a human will.

What This Surah Teaches Us

- 1.** Everything you count on will be undone: the sun folded, the stars fallen, the most valuable asset abandoned where it stands.
- 2.** The wronged will be given the microphone — the murdered infant girl opens the questioning; no quiet cruelty is ever off the record.



3. Honour daughters and the weak: this deen turned a disgrace into a door to Jannah in a single generation.

4. The universe collapses so that every soul may finally KNOW what it brought — ask now what you would be holding.

5. The message came through strength and amanah, and was delivered by a man they had known for forty years as Al-Ameen — honesty demands an honest verdict.

6. Keep 'fa-ayna tazhaboon' in your pocket for every crossroads: where exactly am I going with this?

7. Your will is real, and it is granted — so never excuse yourself with destiny, and never take credit for your own guidance.

Ya Rabbal-'Aalameen, make us of those who will to go straight — and thank You for willing that we should will it. 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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