



A JOURNEY THROUGH SURAH QĀF

STUDY NOTES



A Journey Through Surah Qāf

Introduction:

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

Do they not then reflect on the Qur'ān? Or are there locks upon their hearts? (47:24)

The two different orders of the Qur'ān:

1. Revelation order - The last full sūrah to be revealed was Sūrah an-Nasr and the last verse to be revealed was:

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

2. Compilation order - Jibrīl ('alayhis-salām) spent the time reviewing the Qur'ān in this order to the Prophet ﷺ.

Why are there two orders?

- Relevant to the time—the Qur'ān was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ to solve societal and personal problems.
- The Tāwrah and Injīl were revealed all at once. However, the Qur'ān was revealed gradually so that it could respond to issues as they occurred, and transform people and society gradually.

Makkan vs. Madinan Period of Revelation:

- The Prophet ﷺ received revelation at the age of 40 and passed away at 63.
- He spent 13 years in Makkah and 10 in Madinah. The majority of the Qur'ān was revealed in Makkah; less than 30 sūrahs were revealed in Madinah.
- Once 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās asked Ubayy b. Ka'b how many sūrahs were revealed in Madinah to which Ubayy replied 27. The rest were revealed in Makkah.
- There are three main themes of Makkī sūrahs: Allah's Oneness, Prophethood and Resurrection.
- The majority of the aḥkāṁ, however, were revealed in Madinah:
 - Hijāb became obligatory 18 years after Prophethood (5th year of Hijrah).

- Fasting became obligatory 15 years after Prophethood (2nd year of Hijrah).
- The Qur'ān taught us that if we want to solve issues, we shouldn't look at the symptoms, rather we need to look at the root causes: diseases of the heart and mind.
- The Companions were ready to do anything for the sake of Allah because their hearts were already filled with the love of Allah.
- The problem we encounter now is a lack of love of Allah. We need to revive this by learning about His Names and Attributes, and learning the sīrah of the Prophet ﷺ, leading us to love the religion.
- Methodology of the Qur'ān: Build relationship with Allah.
- We should make an effort to build our relationship with the Qur'ān; we need to recite it, understand it, reflect upon it and interact with it on a daily basis in order to truly connect to it.

Background

- Sūrah Qāf is from the Makkan sūrahs and hence its focus is on laying the foundations of belief in Allah and the Hereafter.
- The sūrah has 45 verses.

Virtues

The Prophet ﷺ used to recite this sūrah in large audiences:

- Jumu'ah ṣalāh;
- The Friday sermon: Umm Hishām b. Ḥārithah b. Nu'mān (a female Companion) mentions that she memorised the sūrah just by hearing it in the khuṭbah of the Prophet ﷺ;
- The two Eid ṣalāhs: The wisdom behind this was to remind the Companions to always remember the Day of Judgement; and not to commit sins or act arrogantly on this day of celebration.
- Fajr ṣalāh.

Central Themes:

- Sūrah Qāf is a reminder of resurrection and the Day of Judgement. Belief in the Hereafter (ākhirah) is one of the fundamental pillars of īmān. It completely alters our perspective on life and gives us an ākhirah-focused lens. It has a transformative impact on our relationship with Allah and how we treat others.
- The purpose of Prophethood was warning; warning the disbelievers about the Final Day & the afterlife where we will face the grand accountability.

The ending of the verses in this sūrah are very strong, with letters that have qalqalah—to emphasise the seriousness of the Day of Judgement. Even if you

don't know the meaning of the sūrah, just hearing the sounds of the sūrah will compel you to pay attention.

Part 1: Truth & Denial

The Sūrah mentions resurrection and its denial by the disbelievers. The Qur'ān, firstly, awakens their hearts so that they can reflect. It does this by asking them to look at the signs around them.

Verse 1:

قَٓ وَالْقُرْآنِ الْمَجِيدِ ١

Qāf. By the glorious Quran!

- The Sūrah starts with a letter: ق.
- 29 sūrahs start with disjointed letters (al-ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭa'āt) consisting of 14 unique letters from the alphabet.
- The Qur'ān is a miracle in every sense. Allah challenged the Quraysh to produce something similar to the Qur'ān but they were unable to do so.
- Qāf, Nūn, and Ṣād - these are the only sūrahs starting with one disjointed letter.

The letter Qāf:

- Strong letter.
- The purpose is to wake up the heedlessness of the Quraysh and send a message of warning; it is to force them to pay attention to what is coming next.
- The letter Qāf will be repeated many times in this sūrah too.

وَالْقُرْآنِ الْمَجِيدِ

- The sūrah starts with an oath. The purpose of the oath is to alert the listener to the importance of what follows, along with reflecting on the object of the oath: 'the Glorious Qur'ān'.
- The Qur'ān is the greatest miracle Allah has sent down to us. It is the comfort to our hearts, the anchor which guides us at every point in life and it is our eternal companion.
- الْمَجِيد - Lofty status; Glorious; Majestic; Great. The Qur'ān is the pinnacle of eloquence and loftiest words to benefit humanity.

When looking at our relationship with the Qur'ān, we should assess ourselves against these metrics and see where we fall:

1. Learn how to recite the Qur'ān properly.
2. Have a fixed daily amount (*wird*) of recitation. The Qur'ān brings life to our hearts.
3. Learn and understand the meaning of what you recite.
4. Reflect upon the Qur'ān. Ask yourself: what is Allah saying to ME in these verses? What lessons can I take away from these verses?
5. Increase your īmān through it.¹
6. Try to memorise a portion of the Qur'ān.
7. Act upon the Qur'ān and behave according to it: This is the most important one.

Verse 2:

بَلْ عَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنْذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَقَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا شَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ ۚ

‘All will be resurrected,’ yet the deniers are astonished that a warner has come to them from among themselves ‘warning of resurrection’. So the disbelievers say, “This is an astonishing thing!

This sūrah mentions the two issues raised by the Quraysh. This verse focuses on the first issue which is why was a human prophet sent instead of an angel prophet.

- The Qur'ān also mentions this issue in another sūrah:

• أَكَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا أَنْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى رَجُلٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ أَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ

- “Is it astonishing to people that We have sent revelation to a man from among themselves, ‘instructing him,’ “Warn humanity” (10:2).
- They are surprised that Allah sent them a person from amongst them to warn them.
- Allah didn’t send the Prophet ﷺ until he reached the age of 40. Why 40? When you come with a new message to people, the first thing they do is focus on the messenger. The Quraysh knew every single detail about the messenger.



Reflect

How did the Quraysh perceive the Prophet ﷺ before he received Prophethood?

¹ إِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ (8:2)



Reflect

If Allah had sent an angel instead of a human messenger, how do you think some people would have reacted?

Verse 3:

أَءِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا دَلِكَ رَجُعٌ بَعِيدٌ ۝۳

"Will we be returned to life, when we are dead and reduced to dust? Such a return is impossible."

This is the second issue that the Quraysh raised. The rest of the sūrah is a response to this issue.

Death & Resurrection:

- Nothing shakes a person's heart like death and nothing fills them with dread like perishing does.
- The Quraysh did not believe it was possible for humans to be brought back to life after their bones had decomposed and they had perished.
- The Prophet ﷺ said:

وَيَبْلَى كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا عَظْبَ ذَنَبِهِ، فِيهِ يُرَكَّبُ الْخَلْقُ

*"Everything of the human body will decay except the coccyx bone (of the tail) and from that bone Allah will reconstruct the whole body."*²



Reflect

Why was resurrection a huge issue for the Quraysh?
Why did Allah dedicate the whole sūrah to addressing this issue?

² حَدَّثَنَا عُمَرُ بْنُ حَفْصٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي قَالَ، حَدَّثَنَا الْأَعْمَشُ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا صَالِحٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " بَيْنَ النَّفْخَتَيْنِ أَرْبَعُونَ " . قَالُوا يَا أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ أَرْبَعُونَ يَوْمًا قَالَ أَبَيْتُ. قَالَ أَرْبَعُونَ سَنَةً قَالَ أَبَيْتُ. قَالَ أَرْبَعُونَ شَهْرًا. قَالَ أَبَيْتُ، وَيَبْلَى كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا عَظْبَ ذَنَبِهِ، فِيهِ يُرَكَّبُ الْخَلْقُ. Bukhārī 4814

Verse 4:

قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنْقُصُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ وَعِنْدَنَا كِتَابٌ حَفِيظٌ ۝

We certainly know what the earth consumes of them 'after their death', and with us is a well-preserved Record.

From verses 4 to 14, Allah mentions three key responses to the Quraysh's issue of resurrection. The first key proof is: Allah's complete, absolute and ultimate knowledge.

- قَدْ عَلِمْنَا - The Royal 'We'
- مَا تَنْقُصُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ - Allah knows this exactly.
- وَعِنْدَنَا كِتَابٌ حَفِيظٌ - Recorded in al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ. This book records every single thing. The word 'ḥafīẓ' will also appear later in the sūrah.
- If Allah has absolute knowledge of what the earth has consumed of dead bodies AND everything is recorded in al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ—then He is surely Capable of raising them back to life.

Verse 5:

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي أَمْرٍ مَرِيجٍ ۝

In fact, they reject the truth when it has come to them, so they are in a confused state.

Before Allah ﷻ moves to the second response, He speaks about the consequences of those who reject the divine message:

- مَرِيجٍ - Mixed and confused (marajal baḥrayn); there will be no meaning and purpose to their life if they reject the truth.
- The disbelievers of Makkah were in a confused state. On some days, they would label the Prophet ﷺ and the Qur'ān as a magician/magic, other days it would be poet/poetry, and other days it would be soothsayer/soothsaying.



Reflect

Imagine waking up one day randomly on an aeroplane. Your mind would race with questions:
How did I get here? Who brought me here? Where am I going? Why am I here?

- We can't appreciate the importance of having a purpose and direction in life as born Muslims; ask those who accepted Islam or those who don't believe in Allah and you will see their confusion.
- When someone moves away from the truth, they are pulled in all directions by different desires and motives; afflicted by doubt, hesitations, moving to the right and to the left. They have no solid base, no safe refuge.

The Impact of Belief in Resurrection:

- Belief in resurrection is central to our īmān—it is the foundation upon which all requirements of Islam are based. As Muslims, we need to make everything we do in life an act of worship, by ensuring that we do everything to please Allah and to gain His acceptance and serve His cause.
- Not all of our actions are rewarded immediately in this life; they are deferred until the final reckoning. Similarly, ultimate justice will be served in the Hereafter.
- It makes us view our lives and the world around us with an Ākhirah-centric lens.



Reflect

Do you truly believe in resurrection?
Are you living your life in accordance with this belief?
What will you do differently to realign your actions to this belief?

Verses 6-11:

The second key proof of resurrection that Allah presents is: The Perfect Creation of Allah.

أَفَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَوْقَهُمْ كَيْفَ بَنَيْنَاهَا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ فُرُوجٍ ٦

Have they not then looked at the sky above them: how We built it and adorned it 'with stars', leaving it flawless?

This is an invitation from Allah to open our eyes and look at the signs around us:

- Look up at the sky; don't limit yourself to the earth.
- Three dimensions of this verse: built it, adorned it, flawless. Stability, beauty and perfection (no holes or cracks in its structure), along with clear features are common to both the sky and the truth. How can there not be a Creator of this flawless beauty?

- Whenever Allah mentions the universe, He mentions both the power and beauty.
- Feeling and appreciating beauty is part of our nature. Going out into nature is crucial. A report in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim mentions that the Prophet ﷺ would look at the sky a lot.
- We should always strive to find the spiritual within the physical. Many aḥādīth describe how the Prophet ﷺ would reflect on the signs around him—such as the sky—and recite specific verses or du‘ās.³



Act

Revive this sunnah. Go out into nature, look at the world around you, look at the trees, look at the sky and take a moment to pause and think about the Creator.

وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوْسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ ۝٧

As for the earth, We spread it out and placed upon it firm mountains, and produced in it every type of pleasant plant—

- In Arabic, the usual order is madadnā and then arḍ (VSO=Verb-Subject-Object). The order has been changed; Allah is telling us to look at the earth first.
- رَوْسِيَ - This is the adjective of mountains and the noun hasn't been mentioned but it is implied as this is specific to mountains. The purpose of this is to make the earth firm. Revelation came in mountains; the purpose of revelation is to make the human firm, straight on the path to Allah.
- We have two books: the book of 'revelation' and the book of the 'universe'. The book of revelation encourages you to read the book of the universe: this will increase your yaqīn (conviction) in your Creator.
- بَهِيجٍ - Joyous, beautiful. Look at the creation of Allah; it's beautiful. We just need to open our eyes.

Now that the universal image has been drawn, the sūrah touches our hearts directing us to reflect on the purpose of creation:

تَبَصَّرَةٌ وَذِكْرَىٰ لِكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُّنِيبٍ ۝٨

'all as' an insight and a reminder to every servant who turns 'to Allah'.

³ حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ أَبِي مَرْيَمَ ، حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ ، قَالَ : أَخْبَرَنِي شَرِيكٌ ، عَنْ كُرَيْبٍ ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا ، قَالَ : بَتُّ فِي بَيْتٍ مَيْمُونَةٍ ، وَالنَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عِنْدَهَا ، فَلَمَّا كَانَ ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ الْآخِرُ ، أَوْ بَعْضُهُ ، قَعَدَ فَتَنَظَرَ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ ، فَقَرَأَ : (إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ) { (Muslim 5886)}

- **تَبَصَّرَةٌ** comes from baṣār (outer) and baṣīrah (internal).
- Reminder is only for: **عَبْدٌ مُنِيبٌ**. The reminder will only be internalised by those who constantly return to Allah.
- The purpose of all knowledge is to remind us of Allah. Every piece of new knowledge about a star, planet, and humans should be transformed into a message to our hearts. This inevitably emphasises the oneness of God as the Creator of the universe. Any knowledge that does not lead to this objective is incomplete, false or useless.
- The book of the universe is:
 - Readable in all languages by all methods; a person living in a rural area can access it as easily as someone living in a palace.
 - Accessible to people with all abilities: literate and illiterate people. Even if divine revelation does not reach a person, the signs in creation around them should be enough to lead them to recognise the existence of God.

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُبَارَكًا فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَحَبَّ الْحَصِيدِ ٩

And We send down blessed rain from the sky, bringing forth gardens and grains for harvest,

- Allah now wants us to reflect on the source of life and sustenance: water. Through it, countless fruits and vegetables grow—with a stunning variety of colours, textures, and tastes.
- Reflect: How can a seed, soil and water produce something as sweet, succulent and tasty as a mango? How can there not be a Creator?
- There are many parables in the Qurʾān between water from the sky and revelation from the heavens:
 - Allah described water as mubārak (blessed) and the Qurʾān is also described as mubārak.
 - Allah sent water to a dead earth, and when water is sent, the earth is brought back to life. Similarly, our hearts were dead, and the Qurʾān was sent to bring them back to life.

وَالنَّخْلَ بَاسِقَاتٍ لَهَا طَلْعٌ نَضِيدٌ ١٠

and towering palm trees 'loaded' with clustered fruit,

From these, Allah specified the palm tree due to its unique qualities⁴:

- Can survive in extreme heat;
- Have a long life and durability;
- Produce abundant fruit: variety of flavours, colours and textures.

⁴ For further information on lessons we can take from a palm tree:
<https://www.islam21c.com/spirituality/the-believer-and-the-date-palm-tree/>

رَزَقًا لِلْعِبَادِ وَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ بَلَدَةً مَّيْتًا كَذَلِكَ الْخُرُوجُ ١١

'as' a provision for 'Our' servants. And with this 'rain' We revive a lifeless land. Similar is the emergence 'from the graves'.

- The dead land was brought back to life with the water.
- كَذَلِكَ الْخُرُوجُ - The parable is here regarding resurrection. This is the main point Allah is proving to the disbelievers: the One who can cause the dead earth to come back to life, can certainly bring you back to life again; He can bring your soul back to life once more.

Verses 12-14:

These verses are a consolation to the Prophet ﷺ and a warning to the disbelievers. The examples from history prove that those who rejected the Divine message will surely be punished and destroyed.

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَأَصْحَابُ الرَّسِّ وَثَمُودُ ١٢

Before them, the people of Noah denied 'the truth, as did the people of the Water-pit, Thamūd,

وَعَادُ وَفِرْعَوْنُ وَإِخْلُونُ لُوطُ ١٣

'Ād, Pharaoh, the kinfolk of Lot,

وَأَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ وَقَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ كُلٌّ كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ وَعِيدُ ١٤

the residents of the Forest, and the people of Tubba'. Each rejected 'their' messenger, so My warning was fulfilled.

Allah now mentions the third key proof of resurrection: learning from history.

Look at History; Eight Civilisations

4 in Arabia (Aṣḥāb al-Rass, 'Ād, Thamūd, Qawm Tubba') and 4 outside of Arabia.

- In the passage above, Allah mentions a total of 8 civilisations:
 - 4 were in Arabia: Aṣḥāb al-Rass, 'Ād, Thamūd, Qawm Tubba'.
 - 4 were outside of Arabia: People of Nūḥ, Lūṭ, Fir'awn, Aṣḥāb al-Aykah.

- Water is a blessing, however Allah is showing us that when they rejected the message, they were destroyed by water (highlighted in blue are those afflicted by water-related punishment):
 - قَوْمُ نُوحٍ: They were destroyed by the flood.
 - أَصْحَابُ الرَّسِّ:
 - They buried their Prophet in a well and Allah destroyed them by removing water from them (the more common opinion).
 - Community living around a water source.
 - ثَمُودُ: They were killed by earthquakes, thunderbolts and a deafening blast.
 - عَادُ: They thought it was a cloud bringing them rain, but it was in fact fierce wind.⁵
 - فِرْعَوْنُ: They were all destroyed through drowning.
 - إِخْنُونُ لُوطٍ: Rocks of clay were sent down to kill them.⁶
 - أَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ: Intense heat, from which they found no escape. Then a wide, cool cloud was sent to them, and they began rushing under its shade to seek relief. However, Allah sent down fire from it, burning them completely.⁷
 - قَوْمُ تَبَعٍ - The king who ruled Yemen; both the king and his people will be punished. This punishment is not limited to the king alone. This is an important theme in the Qur'ān: following someone is not an excuse—you cannot place the blame on others.



Reflect

All of us are doing things and behaving in ways that are displeasing to Allah. Reflect and write.

- Some civilizations reached great heights, building towering structures and strong buildings. However, this didn't stop them from rejecting the message and thus didn't protect them from punishment. Allah is teaching a lesson through history: كُذِّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ وَعِيدُ.

⁵ ﴿فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دِيَارِهِمْ جَائِعِينَ﴾ (76:Hūd)

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ غَارِضًا مُسْتَقْبِلَ أَوْدِيَّتِهِمْ قَالُوا هَذَا غَارُصٌ مُمِطِرُنَا بَلْ هُوَ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ بِهِ رِيحٌ فِيهَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

⁶ لِنُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ جَارَازَةً مِّن طِينٍ ۚ ٣٣ Dhariyat

⁷ فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَهُمْ عَذَابٌ يَوْمَ الظُّلَّةِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ١٨٩ Shuara

Summary of Verses 1-14:

1. The Qur'ān is filled with immense goodness and blessings, and the fact that Allah swears by the Qur'ān proves its importance and magnificence.
2. The disbelievers of the Quraysh couldn't believe the two facts: that Allah sent a messenger from amongst them (Prophet Muhammad) and that concept of resurrection after death.
3. Nothing is impossible for Allah—He created the heavens and the earth and is in control of everything. He is more than capable of bringing us back to life again after death.
4. Amongst the proofs of Allah's might are the heavens and skies which are held together without pillars, the firm mountains, and the fruitful trees that bear a variety of fruits with different flavours and colours.
5. Rain is another proof of Allah's might.
6. Just as Allah causes the dead land to be revived and brought back to life, He too will be able to resurrect us after death.
7. Those who reject the Divine message will surely be punished and destroyed.

Part 2: A Journey Through Life

The theme of resurrection continues but now from a new angle:

1. Allah's constant watch over us;
2. Scenes of man in the throes of death;
3. Opening of records;
4. Reckoning;
5. Hell;
6. Paradise.

It is a single journey which begins with birth, goes through death and ends with resurrection and deed reckoning. Throughout the journey, we are under Allah's watchful gaze. We cannot escape. When we realise this, our hearts are filled with awe and apprehension. Only Allah knows our innermost thoughts.

Verse 15:

أَفَعَيَيْنَا بِالْخَلْقِ الْأَوَّلِ بَلْ هُمْ فِي لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ١٥

Were We incapable of creating 'them' the first time? In fact, they are in doubt about 'their' re-creation.

- **أَفَعَيَيْنَا:** Incapability - Were we incapable of creating you the first time round?
- **لَبْسٍ** - this means confusion. The verb **لبس** means to mix something; confusion arises when things are mixed up and are unclear.
- Repeating something is easier than creating it from scratch:

قُلْ: يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ، وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ [يس ٣٦ / ٧٨ - ٧٩].

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ، ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ، وَهُوَ أَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ [الروم ٣٠ / ٢٧]

قال الله: كذبني ابن آدم ولم يكن له ذلك، وشتمني ولم يكن له ذلك، فأما تكذيبه إياي فقلوه: لن يعيدني كما بدأتي، وليس أول الخلق بأهون علي من إعادته، وأما شتمه إياي فقلوه: اتخذ الله ولدا، وأنا الأحد الصمد، لم ألد ولم أولد، ولم يكن لي كفئاً أحد⁸

Verse 16:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ ١٦

Indeed, 'it is' We 'Who' created humankind and 'fully' know what their souls whisper to them, and We are closer to them than 'their' jugular vein.

Allah will now take us on a journey: everything we do in this life will be written, we will die, we will be resurrected and then the *qarīns* will come (angel and shaytan).

⁸ Sahih al Bukhari 4974

- Allah draws our attention to one of the biggest proofs of His power, existence, Oneness and resurrection: the creation of the human being.



Reflect

Think of one amazing fact that you know about the body/mind.

- Allah also highlights His absolute knowledge again. In the first instance (at the start of the sūrah), Allah mentioned the grand things that He knows (verse 4). Now, he is mentioning the minute things and details that He knows.
- مَا تُؤَسِّرُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ - Allah knows everything. When we imagine this fact, we are bound to experience a shiver down our spine. If we really understood this statement, we would not dare say a single word that does not please Allah. We wouldn't even think of a bad thought. This statement is sufficient to make us careful, always alert. This is the essence of **taqwā**.
- وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ - The 'we' here refers to:
 - Allah's knowledge
 - The Angels Allah sent to watch our every move
- This analogy is beautiful because the jugular vein, despite its closeness, is not felt by a person due to its hidden nature. Similarly, a person does not always perceive Allah's closeness to them, even though it is a reality.
- Out of Allah's mercy, He doesn't record our thoughts as clarified in verse 18 and emphasised in the hadith below:
 - «إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى تَجَاوَزَ لِأُمَّتِي عَمَّا حَدَّثَتْ بِهِ أَنْفُسَهَا، مَا لَمْ تَتَكَلَّمْ بِهِ أَوْ تَعْمَلْ بِهِ»⁹
 - "Indeed, Allah has pardoned my Ummah for their thoughts, so long as they do not verbalise or act upon it."
 - Qushayrī (rahimahullāh) says about this: "In this verse, there is awe, dread, and fear for one group, and comfort, solace, and peace of heart for another group."



Reflect

How does this verse make you feel?

⁹ أخرجه أصحاب الكتب الستة (البخاري ومسلم وأبو داود والترمذي والنسائي وابن ماجه) عن أبي هريرة، وأخرجه الطبراني عن عمران بن حصين رضي الله عنه.

Verse 17:

إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشَّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ ۝١٧

As the two recording-angels—‘one’ sitting to the right, and ‘the other to’ the left—note ‘everything’,

- The Prophet ﷺ said, “The scribe (angel) on the left delays registering the sin of a Muslim for six hours. If he repents (within these six hours), and seeks Allah’s forgiveness, they drop it off. If he doesn’t, they write it down as a single sin” (Ṭabarānī).

Verse 18:

مَا يَلْفُظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ ۝١٨

not a word does a person utter without having a ‘vigilant’ observer ready ‘to write it down’.

- رَقِيبٌ - Watching carefully.
- عَتِيدٌ - Writing everything diligently.
- The Prophet ﷺ said, “Indeed, one of you utters a statement which pleases Allah, thinking it does not amount to much; yet Allah decrees His pleasure with him because of it, until the day he will meet Him. And indeed, one of you utters a statement which angers Allah, thinking it does not amount to much; yet Allah decrees His anger with him because of it, until the day he will meet Him” (Tirmidhī).
- When we are alone, we are more susceptible to sinning as we are not under the watch of any human beings. This ayah is a reminder to us to be vigilant of sinning in secret too as Allah is always watching us.
- The secret of the people of Jannah is to fear Allah when they are alone. Secret worship is very important. We live at a time when everything is public; social media has become a huge part of our lives and thus, all of our actions are available for public viewing. Thus, secret worship and munājāt (speaking to our Lord in our own languages; pouring our heart out to Him and begging Him) are extremely vital to help us maintain our sincerity and build our relationship with Allah, away from the public eye.



Reflect

How long do you spend talking to YOUR Lord on a daily basis?
Do you confide your innermost secrets/thoughts with Him?

- It is reported that when Imām Aḥmad was in the throes of death, he moaned in pain. It was said to him that even moans are recorded. He then stopped moaning until he died.

Verse 19:

وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ ۙ ١٩

‘Ultimately,’ with the throes of death will come the truth. This is what you were trying to escape!

After explaining their rejection of resurrection, Allah highlights the time when truth will prevail: the small qiyāmah (death) and the large qiyāmah (Day of Judgement). In this āyah, Allah mentions the former.

There is nothing we seek to escape more than death.

- سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ** - Literally means a drunken state. When death was approaching the Prophet ﷺ, he wiped sweat off his face and said: “There is no god worthy of worship except Allah! Death has its stupor!”¹⁰ He said this, even though he had chosen to be in Allah’s company, longing to see Him. So how about us?
- بِالْحَقِّ** - In that moment, we will see everything. No one can deny anything at that moment.
- تَحِيدُ** - Escape. We know we’re going to die but we don’t want to prepare for death or for the hereafter.
- There are 4 stages of life:
 - On the ground
 - Underground
 - Plane on the Day of Judgement

¹⁰(Bukhārī 6510)

حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عُثَيْدٍ بْنُ مَيْمُونٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَيْسَى بْنُ يُونُسَ، عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ سَعِيدٍ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي ابْنُ أَبِي مَلِيكَةَ، أَنَّ أَبَا عَمْرٍو، ذَكَوَانَ مَوْلَى عَائِشَةَ أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ عَائِشَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا - كَانَتْ تَقُولُ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَتَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ رُكُوعًا - أَوْ غُلْبَةً فِيهَا مَاءٌ، يَشْكُ عُمَرُ - فَجَعَلَ يُدْخِلُ يَدَيْهِ فِي الْمَاءِ، فَيَمْسَحُ بِهِمَا وَجْهَهُ وَيَقُولُ " لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، إِنَّ لِلْمَوْتِ سَكْرَاتٍ ". ثُمَّ نَصَبَ يَدَهُ فَجَعَلَ يَقُولُ " فِي الرَّفِيقِ الْأَعْلَى ". حَتَّى قُبِضَ وَمَالَتْ يَدُهُ. قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْغُلْبَةُ مِنَ الْخَسْبِ وَالرُّكُوعُ مِنَ الْأَدَمِ.

4. Eternal resting: Paradise or Hell-Fire
- The first, shortest and most important stage is on the ground. Our status in all of the other stages is dependent on how we behave in the first stage of life.

Verse 20:

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْوَعِيدِ

And the Trumpet will be blown. This is the Day 'you were' warned of.

- The trumpet will be blown. The Prophet ﷺ mentioned that the angel responsible for blowing the trumpet has already placed it on his lips, waiting for the command to blow it.¹¹
- Qiyāmah will start with a large sound. When important announcements are made, they are usually preceded by a loud sound/distinct sound to alert people and wake them up.
- يَوْمُ الْوَعِيدِ - Allah wants to warn us out of His mercy. He wants us to succeed eternally.

In the next few verses, some scenes of the Day of Judgement are unveiled.

Verses 21-22:

وَجَاءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّعَهَا سَائِقٌ وَشَهِيدٌ ۚ

Each soul will come forth with an angel to drive it and another to testify.

- This is the divine court
- In a court, the police comes with the criminal:
 - Two angels will come with every person. The two that are with us our whole lives will now come to report on our actions.
 - Some say these are both generic nouns and could be more than one angel for both.

¹¹ كيف أنعم وصاحب القرن قد التقم القرن وحنى جبهته، وأصغى السمع متى يؤمر، قال: فسمع ذلك أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

فشق عليهم، فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: قولوا: حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل.

الراوي: زيد بن أرقم | المحدث: شعيب الأرنؤوط | المصدر: تخريج المسند لشعيب | الصفحة أو الرقم: 19345 | خلاصة حكم المحدث:

صحيح | التخریج: أخرجه أحمد (19345) واللفظ له، والطبراني (196/5) (5072)، وابن عدي في ((الكامل في الضعفاء)) (19/3)

- سَائِقٌ - Someone who drives. In this context, it means push forward to the place of gathering.
- شَهِيدٌ - One to bear witness for or against the person.

لَقَدْ كُنْتَ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَٰذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ ٢٢

'It will be said to the denier, "You were totally heedless of this. Now We have lifted this veil of yours, so Today your sight is sharp!"

- This verse is addressing:
 - The disbelievers: They are heedless of the consequences of their actions.
 - Everyone: "O mankind, you were unaware that every soul has a driver and a witness with it," as such knowledge can only be known through Divine revelation.
 - The Prophet ﷺ: "O Muhammad, you were unaware of the Divine message while living among the Quraysh during their era of ignorance."
- فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ i.e. your ignorance or blindness and this could refer to:
 - At birth
 - At resurrection
 - On the Day of Judgement when being questioned
 - When revelation was sent down

Verses 23-26:

وَقَالَ قَرِينُهُ هَٰذَا مَا لَدَيَّ عَتِيدٌ ٢٣

And one's accompanying-angel will say, "Here is the record ready with me."

- قَرِينٌ - Close companion, the one who is always with you. The plural is Quranā'.
 - This word is mentioned twice in this sūrah; one with و and one without و. The qarīn mentioned here is the angel and the next qarīn is the devil. There are two qarīn with us in our lives: angel & shayṭān.
 - Zamakhsharī: Qarīn refers to the devil who was assigned to the person:

نُقِيطُ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا، فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ [الزخرف ٤٣ / ٣٦]

This would mean that one angel drives him, another witnesses against him and a devil who is bound to him says: I have prepared you for Hell.¹²

¹² وَقَالَ قَرِينُهُ: هَٰذَا مَا لَدَيَّ عَتِيدٌ أَي قَالَ الملك الموكل به بابن آدم:

هَٰذَا مَا عِنْدِي مِنْ كِتَابِ عَمَلِكَ مَعَدَّ مُحْضَرٌ بِلَا زِيَادَةٍ وَلَا نَقْصَانٍ. وقال مجاهد:

هَٰذَا كَلَامُ الْمَلِكِ السَّائِقِ يَقُولُ: هَٰذَا ابْنُ آدَمَ الَّذِي وَكَلْتَنِي بِهِ قَدْ أَحْضَرْتَهُ، واختار ابن جرير: أَنَّهُ يَعْمُ السَّائِقُ وَالشَّهِيدُ.

- This is now the witness statement in the Divine court.
- The witnesses are many: angel, earth (on that Day the earth will recount everything, 99:4), limbs, hands, legs etc.
- **Al-Hayā' min Allāh** (Being shy of Allah) is a very important concept. We are scared of our records being unveiled in front of others, but what about in front of Allah?
- In this sūrah, Allah gives the verdict straight away. In others, there are some discussions and denials in the Divine court, before a verdict is given.

الْقِيَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ ٢٤

‘It will be said to both angels, “Throw into Hell every stubborn disbeliever,”

Verses 24-26 were revealed because of Walīd b. Mughīrah who prevented his cousin from accepting Islam.¹³

- This sūrah is very strong. Everything is clear.
- **الْقِيَا** - This is a dual form (you two throw):
 - a. These two are the angels (**سَائِقُ وَشَهِيدُ**)
 - b. It's just addressing one angel (**مالك خازن النار**) as the Arabs would sometimes address one person with a dual form.
 - c. Repetition of the word **الْقِيَا** (here and āyah 26)
- **كَفَّارٍ** - noun of intensity of the word 'Kāfir'. Allah gave them chance upon chance, but they were extremely stubborn and denied the truth.

مَنَاعٍ لِلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ مُّرِيبٍ ٢٥

withholder of good, transgressor, and doubter,

- **مَنَاعٍ** - Noun of intensity again. He always prevented goodness for himself and others.
- **مُعْتَدٍ** - Aggressive and crossing the boundaries.

وَفَسَّرَ الزَّمَخْشَرِيُّ الْقَرِينَ هُنَا بِأَنَّهُ هُوَ الشَّيْطَانُ الَّذِي قِيضَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ فِي قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى: نُقَيِّضُ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا، فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ [الزخرف ٤٣ / ٣٦] وَيَشْهَدُ لَهُ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ: قَالَ قَرِينُهُ: رَبَّنَا مَا أَطْغَيْتُهُ يَقُولُ الشَّيْطَانُ: هَذَا شَيْءٌ لَدَيَّ فِي مَلَكْتِي عَتِيدٌ لَجَهَنَّمَ، وَالْمَعْنَى: أَنَّ مَلَكًا يَسُوقُهُ، وَآخِرُ يَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِ، وَشَيْطَانًا مَقْرُونًا بِهِ يَقُولُ: قَدْ اعْتَدْتَهُ لَجَهَنَّمَ وَهَيَّأْتَهُ لَهَا بِإِعْوَائِي وَإِضْلَالِي.

وَقَدْ رَجَحَتِ الرَّأْيَ الثَّانِي، لِأَنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ هُوَ قَرِينُ كُلِّ فَاجِرٍ، يَقُولُ لِأَهْلِ الْمَحْشَرِ، أَوْ لِسَائِرِ الْقُرْنَاءِ: قَدْ هَيَّأْتُ قَرِينِي لَجَهَنَّمَ.

¹³ أَنَّهُ كَانَ يَمْنَعُ بَنِي أَخِيهِ عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ، وَيَقُولُ: لَنْ دَخَلَ أَحَدُكُمْ فِي دِينِ مُحَمَّدٍ لَا أَنْفَعَهُ بِخَيْرٍ مَا عَشْتُ

- مُرِيْب - Doubter and spreading doubts amongst others.



Reflect

Are we intentionally/unintentionally falling within the above categories?
What could the above issues (stubborn, withholder of good, transgressor and doubter) look

الَّذِي جَعَلَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَأَلْقِيَاهُ فِي الْعَذَابِ الشَّدِيدِ ٢٦

who set up another god with Allah. So cast them into the severe punishment."

- The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "A neck will emerge from the Hell-fire on the Day of Resurrection, with two eyes to see, two ears to hear, and a tongue to speak. It will say: Indeed, I am in charge of three persons, every stubborn tyrant, everyone who called upon another god alongside Allah, and every maker of images." (Tirmidhī 2574) ¹⁴

Verses 27-29:

قَالَ قَرِينُهُ رَبَّنَا مَا أَطْعَمْتُهُ، وَلَكِنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ ٢٧

One's 'devilish' associate will say, "Our Lord! I did not make them transgress. Rather, they were far astray 'on their own'."

- Allah now mentions the debate between the leaders and followers.
- This could also refer to the debate with the devil, who throughout the person's life, tried to tempt him away from the truth.
- 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Each one of you has a devil-companion from the jinn over him." They said, "Even you, O Messenger of Allah?" The Prophet said, "Even me, except that Allah helped me against him until he surrendered/embraced Islam. He only orders me to do good."¹⁵

¹⁴ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَخْرُجُ عَنْقِي مِنَ النَّارِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لَهَا عَيْنَانِ تُبْصِرَانِ وَأُذُنَانِ تَسْمَعَانِ وَلِسَانٌ يَنْطِقُ يَقُولُ إِنِّي وَكَلْتُ بِثَلَاثَةِ كُلِّ جَبَّارٍ غَبِيْدٍ وَبِكُلِّ مَنْ دَعَا مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ وَبِالْمُصَوِّرِينَ (2574 سنن الترمذي كتاب صفة جهنم باب ما جاء في صفة النار)

¹⁵ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا وَقَدْ وَكَّلَ بِهِ قَرِينُهُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ قَالُوا وَإِيَّاكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ وَإِيَّايَ إِلَّا أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَانَنِي عَلَيْهِ فَأَسْلَمَ فَلَا يَأْمُرُنِي إِلَّا بِخَيْرٍ

2814 صحيح مسلم كتاب صفة القيامة والجنة والنار باب تحريش الشيطان وبعثه سراياه لفتنة الناس وأن مع كل إنسان قرينا

قَالَ لَا تَخْتَصِمُوا لَدَيَّ وَقَدْ قَدَّمْتُ إِلَيْكُم بِالْوَعِيدِ ٢٨

Allah will respond, “Do not dispute in My presence, since I had already given you a warning.

- الوَعِيدُ refers to:
 - The Qur’ān;
 - They were repeatedly warned of the punishment in the Hereafter by the Messengers sent to guide them.

مَا يُبَدَّلُ الْقَوْلُ لَدَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا بِظَلَمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ ٢٩

My Word cannot be changed, nor am I unjust to ‘My’ creation.”

- Allah is describing Himself in two ways in this verse:
 1. His perfect knowledge prevents any statement being altered in front of Him
 2. His perfect justice and fairness prevents Him from wronging His servants
- Allah is Just and Fair—He sent sufficient warnings before resorting to punishing those who denied the truth.

Summary of Verses 15-29:

1. The fact that Allah created us and knows everything that is happening with us—including our innermost secrets— that He is more than capable of resurrection and bringing people back to life on the Day of Judgement.
2. Nothing can be hidden or concealed from Allah—the metaphor of closer than the jugular vein re-emphasises this concept of His closeness.
3. Allah knows everything about us without the intermediary of an angel; He doesn’t need an angel to make Him aware of us. The purpose of the angels is to be a source of proof and to emphasise that we will be held accountable for our actions.
4. The angels are recording every single deed. Mujāhid: “Everything is written including the groaning/moaning during illness”.
5. As long as the human is alive, all their actions and words will be recorded to hold them accountable. Then death will come and serve them with the truth, just as Allah has promised.
6. Every human will be accompanied by angels on the Day of Judgement: سَائِقٍ who will escort them to the place of gathering and شَهِيدٌ (witness) who testifies for/against him regarding his actions.

7. The actions which lead to the punishment of the Hell-fire include: shirk, rejecting the truth, withholding wealth to those it is due to, doubts in Allah's dīn and leading others to doubt it too.
8. The devils and evil leaders will always disassociate themselves with those they misguided on the Day of Judgement.
9. Allah is the Most Just.

Part 3: Heaven & Hell

Verses 30-33:

يَوْمَ نَقُولُ لِجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ امْتَلَأَتْ وَتَقُولُ هَلْ مِنْ مَّزِيدٍ ۝ ٣٠

‘Beware of’ the Day We will ask Hell, “Are you full ‘yet’?” And it will respond, “Are there any more?”

- The dialogue then continues.
- We see every disbeliever and aggressor being thrown into Hell where they pile up, and then Hell is being questioned whether it's full—it's a truly horrifying and frightening scene!
- There are various ways of explaining this verse:
 - Hell will become full to the extent that no more can be added to it.
 - Hell is so huge that despite the huge numbers of people entering it, there will be room for more.
 - There will always be room for more in Hell as it will just mean that the existing inhabitants will get squashed and constricted even further.

ما أخرجه البخاري عن أنس بن مالك رضي الله عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: «يلقى في النار،

وتقول: هل من مزيد؟ حتى يضع قدمه فيها، فتقول: قط قط»¹⁶

The next set of verses is in contrast to the verses above. This is the perfect balance of the Din; the balance between hope and fear that we, as believers, should always have.

وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ ۝ ٣١

And Paradise will be brought near to the righteous, not far off.

- In contrast, this is a pleasant, calm and friendly scene.
- وَأُزْلِفَتِ - brought close. They won't go to Jannah—it will be brought close to them.

¹⁶ (Bukhārī 4848)

- Every word and action in this scene is indicative of the honour that will be shown to the people of Paradise; Paradise is brought near so they don't have to trouble themselves by going close to it.

هَذَا مَا تُوْعَدُونَ لِكُلِّ أَوَّابٍ حَفِيظٍ ٣٢

‘And it will be said to them,’ “This is what you were promised, for whoever ‘constantly’ turned ‘to Allah’ and kept up ‘His commandments’—

- وَأَنَا عَلَىٰ هَذَا مَا تُوْعَدُونَ - every morning and evening, we recite Sayyid al-Istighfār: وَأَنَا عَلَىٰ عَهْدِكَ وَوَعْدِكَ. ‘Ahd is a promise and wa’d is the contract: if you do good, Allah promises Jannah for you.
- This āyah describes two key characteristics of the people of Jannah:
 - a. أَوَّابٍ - the one who constantly returns to his Lord, he one who always repents to Allah. Allah knows we are human and we sin continuously. He is so Kind and just wants us to return to Him and repent. The 5 prayers are a chance for repentance and for us to turn to Allah.
 - b. حَفِيظٍ - protector; the one who protects their eyes, ears etc from anything ḥarām. Someone who does not exceed/cross the boundaries of Allah.

Tawbah (Repentance)

- Tawbah (repentance) is the hallmark of the believer: truly turning with one’s heart to Allah, and humbly apologising to Him.
- It is inevitable that we are going to sin; but each time we sin, we should rush to make tawbah, so that the sins do not corrode our hearts. Ibn al-Qayyim (rahimahullāh) writes, “The state of tawbah is at the beginning, the middle and the end of the servant’s journey to his Creator. The servant who seeks the pleasure of Allah never abandons tawbah. He remains in the state of tawbah until his death”.
- For tawbah to be sincere, we have to:
 - stop committing the sin;
 - feel a deep sense of regret and remorse over the sin;
 - firmly resolve to never return to that sin;
 - make amends if we have wronged another person (e.g. ask their forgiveness or supplicate for them).

مَنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ الْغَيْبَ وَجَاءَ بِقَلْبٍ مُنِيبٍ ٣٣

who were in awe of the Most Compassionate without seeing ‘Him’,¹ and have come with a heart turning ‘only to Him’.

- This āyah further describes two more characteristics of the people of Jannah:
 - a. **حَشْيَ الرَّحْمَنِ بِالْغَيْبِ** - Khashyah is a type of fear (translated as 'awe') = fear + respect. When a believer is alone and can commit a sin, the only thing that stops them is knowing that Allah is watching them. This is the essence of taqwa.
 - b. **يَقْلِبُ مُنِيبٍ** - This is explained as:
 - i. Sincere heart
 - ii. Heart that is always turning to Allah
 - iii. A heart that remembers its sins in private and seeks repentance for it

This gives us hope. Don't think Jannah is exclusive to those who don't commit sins—it is for those who return to Allah.
- One of our key life goals and du'ā' should be to reach the level of inābah. Inābah is to repeatedly turn to Allah with love and humility, constantly repent, and turn away from other than Him.



Challenge

Which Prophet was described as munīb?
In which other verse of this sūrah does the word munīb appear?

- When describing the people of Jannah, Allah starts with repentance ('awwāb') and ends with repentance ('munīb').
- Qalb: every type of worship has two dimensions: the form and the spirit. When Allah mentions heart in the Qur'ān, it means both the mind and the heart. The heart is a place of feeling; before that there is a process in the brain. Focus on the heart and you will succeed.
- From amongst the seven who will be granted shade on the Day of Judgement:

«ورجل ذكر الله تعالى خاليا، ففاضت عيناه»

"And a man who remembered Allah in solitude, and his eyes overflowed with tears."¹⁷

Verses 34-35:

أَدْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُلُودِ ٣٤

Enter it in peace. This is the Day of eternal life!"

- Salām has two meanings: peace and greetings. Both are intended here.

¹⁷ (Bukhārī 660)

- Go with peace because this is Dār as-Salām; the angels will be waiting at the doors of Jannah to greet us.
- The best greeting we will inshā'Allāh hear is: **سَلَامٌ قَوْلًا مِّن رَّبِّ رَّحِيمٍ** (Yasin: 58)
- Salām: eternal peace and serenity is the ultimate goal. This dunyā is not a place of peace.
- **ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُلُودِ** - The Prophet ﷺ said: "When the people of Paradise go to Paradise and the people of Hell go to Hell, death will be brought and placed between Paradise and Hell. Then it will be slaughtered, and a caller will call out: 'O people of Paradise, there is no death; O people of Hell, there is no death.' Then the joy of the people of Paradise will increase, and the sorrow of the people of Hell will increase."¹⁸

لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ ٣٥

There they will have whatever they desire, and with Us is 'even' more.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyYu0Ph60jA>

- In Jannah there are two types of blessings: physical and spiritual (the feeling of knowing that you will live there forever, eternal peace, never hearing a single word that will hurt you, Allah gathering all the family in a high status, meeting all of the great companions, visiting the Prophet ﷺ, seeing Allah etc)



Reflect

Imagine and list your Jannah.

قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَقُولُ لِأَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ يَا أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ. فَيَقُولُونَ لَبَّيْكَ رَبَّنَا وَسَعْدَيْكَ وَالْخَيْرُ فِي يَدَيْكَ. فَيَقُولُ هَلْ رَضِيتُمْ فَيَقُولُونَ وَمَا لَنَا لَا نَرْضَى يَا رَبَّ وَقَدْ أُعْطِينَا مَا لَمْ تَعْطِ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ. فَيَقُولُ أَلَا أُعْطِيكُمْ أَفْضَلَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ. فَيَقُولُونَ يَا رَبَّ وَأَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَيَقُولُ أَجَلٌ عَلَيْكُمْ رِضْوَانِي فَلَا أَشْخَطَ عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْدَهُ أَبَدًا ".

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Indeed Allah will say to the people of Jannah, 'O people of Jannah!' They will respond, 'Here we are, our Lord, at Your service, and all goodness is in Your Hands.' Then He will say, 'Are you pleased?' They will say, 'Why should we not be pleased, O Lord, when You have given us what You have not given to anyone else

¹⁸ Bukhārī (6182) and Muslim (2850)

from Your creation?' He will then say, 'Shall I give you something even better than that?' They will ask, 'O Lord, what could be better than this?' He will say, 'I bestow My eternal pleasure upon you, and I shall never be displeased with you again.'" (Bukhārī)

وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ - Ultimate Happiness

- The 'more' refers to the gift of seeing Allah.
- The greatest joy a believer will enjoy in the hereafter will be the joy of seeing Allah and meeting Him. There are no words which can describe how phenomenal this experience will be. When the people of Jannah will see Allah ('azza wa jall) with their very own eyes, they will forget all the previous blessings given to them in Paradise.
- The Prophet ﷺ said, "When the people of Paradise enter it, Allah-Blessed and Exalted is He-will say, 'Would you like anything more?' They will say, 'Have You not brightened our faces? Have You not admitted us into Paradise and saved us from Hell-fire?' Then, He ('azza wa jall) will lift the Veil. Nothing they are given will be more beloved to them than looking at their Lord-Majestic and Exalted is He." Then, he ﷺ recited the verse, "Those who do good will have the finest reward and more!" (10:26).
- Allah gives us tribulations and trials to help us wake up and turn to Him; this is done out of His mercy as He wants eternal happiness and bliss for us. He knows that we get distracted in life, and sometimes trials and tribulations are the only way we become closer to Him and turn to Him.

Summary of Verses 30-35

1. Description of Jannah and Jahannam.
2. Allah will fill Hell with those who deserve it until there is no more room. Hell may also seek more inhabitants out of rage against the disbelievers to further constrict the space there.
3. Allah emphasises the feelings of happiness and contentment of the believers in Jannah.
4. The people of Jannah are those who constantly go back to Allah, respect the limits/boundaries set by Allah and do not transgress them; they are always vigilant and cognisant of Allah.
5. The angels will tell the people of Jannah to enter with peace.
6. In Jannah, the muttaqīn will have anything they desire and more and more.¹⁹

¹⁹ وروى الإمام الشافعي في مسنده عن أنس بن مالك قريبا من ذلك، وجاء فيه: «.. فإذا كان يوم الجمعة أنزل الله تعالى ما شاء من الملائكة، وحوله منابر من نور، عليها مقاعد النبيين، وحفت تلك المنابر من ذهب مكللة بالياقوت والزبرجد، عليها الشهداء والصديقون، فجلسوا من ورائهم على تلك الكُثب، فيقول الله عز وجل: أنا ربكم، قد صدقتكم وعدي، فسلوني أعطكم، فيقولون: ربنا نسألك رضوانك، فيقول: قد رضيت عنكم، ولكم علي ما تمنيتم، ولدي مزيد. فهم يحبون يوم الجمعة لما يعطيهم فيه ربهم تبارك وتعالى من الخير، وهو اليوم الذي استوى فيه ربكم على العرش، وفيه خلق آدم، وفيه تقوم الساعة».

Part 4: An Easy Resurrection

Verses 36-38:

This is now the conclusion of the sūrah:

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا فَنَقَّبُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ هَلْ مِن مَّجِيصٍ ٣٦

‘Imagine’ how many peoples We destroyed before them, who were far mightier than them. Then ‘when the torment came,’ they ‘desperately’ sought refuge in the land. ‘But’ was there any escape?

- **فَنَقَّبُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ:**
 - They built many strong and mighty buildings (a strong civilisation);
 - They roamed the lands to search for sustenance
- Allah is reminding us that many nations before them who were mightier and more prosperous were destroyed because they disbelieved and rejected the message. They travelled far to seek livelihood and riches but when the punishment came, nothing could protect them. They had no escape or way out.



Reflect

Do we subconsciously think our wealth and power will protect us?
What do we think will protect us? How do our actions show what we think will

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرَى لِمَن كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ ٣٧

Surely in this is a reminder for whoever has a ‘mindful’ heart and lends an attentive ear.

Allah’s words are a reminder (ذِكْرَى), but only those who meet the requirements actually benefit from it:

- 1) Firstly, they must have hearts that are alive and attentive (قَلْبٌ). We all have hearts, so why does this verse mention ‘heart’? Everyone has a physical heart, but not everyone’s ‘spiritual’ heart is alive or healthy. In order to benefit from revelation, our spiritual hearts need to be alive.
- 2) Then they must direct their sense of hearing completely to the One who is speaking (أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ).
- 3) After that their hearts and minds must be present (شَهِيدٌ) during the experience.

"Reciting the Quran as it should be recited means for the tongue, the mind, and the heart to all take part in the act together. The tongue's duty is to pronounce the letters correctly and recite beautifully, the mind's duty is to explore the meanings, and the heart's duty is to take heed and be responsive to the words with alarm and eagerness to comply. So the tongue recites, the mind explains, and the heart internalises." (Imām al-Ghazālī)



Reflect

What prevents you from reflecting on the Qur'ān?



Reflect

How can you let the Qur'ān's message enter your heart and transform your actions and life?

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ لُغُوبٍ

Indeed, We created the heavens and the earth and everything in between in six Days, and We were not 'even' touched with fatigue.

- Six days:
 - Sunday-Friday;
 - Imām al-Rāzī: six stages (as a day now is in relation to the sun and the moon but this wasn't created then so this refers to 6 periods of time/stages).
- لُغُوبٍ - not even an ounce of tiredness touched Him. There are many synonyms for tiredness in the Qur'ān: نَصَبٍ (nasb), لُغُوبٍ (lughub), تَعَبٍ (ta'b). لُغُوبٍ is the minimum part of tiredness; someone who did the work but not in their full capacity. Not even an ounce of fatigue touched Allah in the creation of the heavens and the earth.
- This rejects the belief of the people of the book who believe that God took a day of rest (Saturday).
- At the start of the sūrah, verses 6-7 mention the creation of the earth and this is now repeated again. This emphasises that the creation of the universe posed no difficulty to Allah and compared to this, bringing the dead back to life is much easier for Him. This reaffirms and re-emphasises Allah's absolute power over all things.
- The **reason for the revelation** of this verse:

The Jews came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked him about the creation of the heavens and the earth. He said: "Allah created the earth on Sunday and Monday. He created the mountains on Tuesday, along with all the benefits within them. On Wednesday, He created trees, water, cities, habitation, and desolation. That makes four days." Then he recited: **'Say, do you indeed disbelieve in the One who created the earth in two days and attribute to Him equals? That is the Lord of the worlds. And He placed firm mountains upon it, blessed it, and determined its sustenance in four days, equally for those who ask.'** (Surah Fussilat: 9-10).

He continued: "On Thursday, He created the heavens, and on Friday, He created the stars, the sun, the moon, and the angels—up until the last three hours of the day. In the first of these three hours, He determined the lifespan of those who will live and those who will die. In the second, He sent afflictions upon everything from which people benefit. In the third, He created Adam, made him reside in Jannah, commanded Iblis to prostrate to him, and then expelled him from it in the final hour of Friday."

Then the Jews asked, "And then what, O Muhammad?" He replied, "Then He rose over the Throne." They said, "You are correct, if only you would complete it." They then said, "And then He rested."

Upon hearing this, the Prophet ﷺ became extremely angry, and then **the verses 38-9 were revealed.**

Verses 39-40:

فَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ ۝ ٣٩

So be patient 'O Prophet' with what they say. And glorify the praises of your Lord before sunrise and before sunset.

- Allah is now telling the Prophet ﷺ to be patient on what they (i.e. the disbelievers) are saying.
- The Prophet ﷺ spent 13 years after prophethood in Makkah. These were the most difficult years of his life; he was called terrible names when in fact he was the complete opposite. Many of his companions were tortured during this period and had to migrate to Abyssinia.
- Our reaction should be **patience**.
- The Arabs in Jāhiliyyah would fight a lot; they had many tribal wars. The Qur'ān came to change the mentality and the way of thinking: when you initiate a war, it should be for the sake of Allah and to establish justice.
- When the Companions understood this concept very well, they were given permission to react in Madinah.
- فَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ:



Reflect

How do you react in difficult situations?

Family
Work
Islamophobia
Religion

- How can we be patient to this level? Allah gave us the source of strength: **وَسَبِّحْ**

بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ

- Through tasbīḥ and ḥamd
- What does tasbīḥ mean? Glorifying Allah and declaring His perfection. Our dhikr shouldn't just emanate from our tongues, rather it should be accompanied by deep reflection and presence of our hearts.
- What is ḥamd? We remember Allah gave us the opportunity to say Subḥānallāh, so we thank Him for giving us that opportunity.
- **طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ** - morning and evening adhkār. These are very important at these times. The adhkār should connect the physical signs around us to our Creator.
- When you glorify Allah, you have a direct link with Him, and whoever maintains such a link is content and reassured and thus able to remain patient. This is because you know that, with Allah's help, you are safe and secure.



Act

Learn the meanings of adhkār and reflect on it: brilliant way of increasing your iman.



Act

Commit to setting a daily adhkār routine.



Reflect

How has dhikr helped you during a difficult time?

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَأَدْبَرَ الشُّجُودِ ٤٠

And glorify Him during part of the night and after the prayers.

- Allah emphasises the night frequently in the Qur'ān.
- The night is for rest. The rest of the body is sleeping. The rest for the soul is qiyām; only those who deeply love Allah wake up for qiyām.
- السُّجُود - prostrating; this indicates ṣalāh. The most important part of ṣalāh is sujūd.
 - Adhkār after ṣalāh: Immediately after ṣalāh, the Prophet ﷺ would say astaghfirullah.
 - This could also refer to the sunan ṣalāh after the farḍ.

Ibn 'Abbās: the times mentioned above refer to the prescribed prayer times: Fajr (before the rising of the sun), Ṣuḥr and 'Aṣr (before the setting of the sun), and 'Ishā' (during a part of the night).

The rising and setting of the sun are all closely linked to the creation of the heavens and the earth.

Verses 41-45:

وَأَسْتَمِعْ يَوْمَ يُنَادِ الْمُنَادِ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ قَرِيبٍ ٤١

And listen! On the Day the caller will call out from a near place,

- Zamakhsharī says that the place will be the rock of al-Quds: it is the closest part of the earth to the sky and the center of the earth.
- It could also refer to the closest places to people so that the call reaches everyone equally, at the same time.

يَوْمَ يَسْمَعُونَ الصَّيْحَةَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُرُوجِ ٤٢

the Day all will hear the 'mighty' Blast in 'all' truth,1 that will be the Day of emergence 'from the graves'.

- الصَّيْحَةُ - screaming; everything important has an announcement. The Day of Judgement will also have an announcement.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْنَا الْمَصِيرُ ٤٣

It is certainly We Who give life and cause death. And to Us is the final return.

- The verse contains repeated emphasis: Indeed, we are, only we, we are the one who give life, we are the one who cause death and only to us is the final return.

يَوْمَ تَشَقُّقُ الْأَرْضُ عَنْهُمْ سِرَاعًا ذَلِكُمْ حَشْرٌ عَلَيْنَا يَسِيرٌ ٤٤

'Beware of' the Day the earth will split open, letting them rush forth. That will be an easy gathering for Us.

- تَشَقُّقُ - the earth will split open and we will all come out on the Day of Judgement.
- ذَلِكُمْ حَشْرٌ عَلَيْنَا يَسِيرٌ - everything is easy for Allah.

نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِجَبَّارٍ فَذَكَرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ ٤٥

We know best what they say. And you 'O Prophet' are not 'there' to compel them 'to believe'. So remind with the Qur'ān 'only' those who fear My warning.

- Allah is saying that He knows everything. Your job (O Prophet) is just to convey the message.
- Allah is comforting the Prophet ﷺ that his job is not to force the people; it's just to convey the message. The only one who can open their hearts is Allah.
- Message for us: Our job is to convey, not force. Guidance is not in the hands of humans. If we do our best, we don't need to worry about the outcome as that will come from Allah.



Reflect

How are we conveying Allah's message? Are we giving it its due right?

فَذَكَرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ

- The Qur'ān is the best reminder; that is why we need to constantly turn to it and reflect on it.
- The Qur'ān is our methodology and our fuel and thus we need it to navigate all of life's challenges.
- Who really benefits from the Quran? Only those who fear Allah truly benefit from His message. The greater our mindfulness, fear, and humility, the more we can benefit from the Qur'an.

- Fear is a piercing awareness of your helplessness and need for Allah, and an essential prerequisite in your journey of self-transformation through the Qur'ān. A heart without taqwā cannot fully absorb its guidance.
- Qatādah used to say: "O Allah, make us among those who fear Your warning and hope for Your promise, O Most Kind, O Most Merciful."

اللهم اجعلنا ممن يخاف وعيدك، ويرجو موعودك يا بارّ يا رحيم

A method of doing tadabbur is reciting a verse and asking yourself: how can I make du'ā' based on this āyah?



Reflect

How has your relationship with the Qur'ān changed over the last 4 weeks?
What do you want your relationship with the Qur'ān to look like?

Summary of Verses 36-45:

1. Allah ﷻ is warning the disbelievers about the painful punishment in the hereafter and is drawing similarities between previous nations who were destroyed. The nations were strong and mighty, more so than the people of Makkah. Yet, they didn't find an escape or way out from Allah's punishment.
2. This is a reminder for a heart that is aware/cognisant.
3. Allah re-emphasises the idea of resurrection and dispels any notions that He rested on the seventh day.
4. Allah taught the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, 4 ways of dealing with challenges:
 - a. Patience
 - b. Seeking help with tasbīḥ and ṣalāh
 - c. Worshipping Allah till the end/always glorifying Him: **وَأَعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ**
 - d. Reminding people of the Qur'ān, continuing to spread its message, and warning people.

وصلّى اللّهم وسلم على نبينا محمد