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First Edition: April 2021

ISBN 978-1-7353991-1-9

Published and Distributed by:
Quran For Humanity Foundation,
8926, N. Greenwood Ave, Unit 261
Niles, IL 60714
E-mail: info@quranforhumanity.org
www.quranforhumanity.org

Acknowledgments

All praise belongs to Allah SWT the Most Merciful and Most Compassionate and may peace be upon the prophet Muhammad and his family and his companions.

First, I thank Allah SWT for enabling me able to compile some notes on Islam and to present them for the benefit of brothers and sisters of other faiths who have had little or no exposure to either Islam or the Qur'an. This work of compilation started more than a decade ago, purely as a personal fascination with collecting notes on the Qur'an and Islam. For that reason, I have not maintained a list of books or other sources I referenced in compiling this collection. May Allah SWT reward them all.

I am sincerely thankful to Shaikh Amin Kholwadia, president of Darul Qasim -Illinois, for his precious guidance and encouragement. His guidance is the major factor in this booklet being published. I am also thankful to Ustad Kamaluddin also from Darul Qasim for sparing his precious time and thoroughly reviewing this compilation and making valuable suggestions to improve it, to Br. Quentin Obis and finally, many thanks to Br. Aaron Wannamaker - Canada for doing the final edit of this work.

May Allah SWT reward them all abundantly both in this world and aakhirah.

A Brief Overview of
The Qur'an

Yunoos Deriwala

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Preface

I seek refuge with God, the Glorious and Exalted, against Shaitan, who is cursed, and I start with the name of God Who is Most Gracious and Most Merciful. Peace and blessings be upon the final Messenger Muhammad (Pbuh) and his family.

Why do we need a brief overview of the Qur'an?

For a multitude of reasons that keep on increasing every day, people from around the world are more interested to know about Islam, Muslims and the Qur'an. But reading the Qur'an for the first time is a somewhat demanding task. The style and structure of the Qur'an is vastly different from that of a normal book. A casual reader unaware of this fact may lose interest altogether or at least will try to read quickly without paying much attention, thus missing the substance of the Qur'an.

Having prior knowledge of the style and themes of the Qur'an will prepare a reader to deal with unexpected aspects, recognize patterns, find common threads and identify the links to capture the essence of the text.

This booklet presents an overview of the various subjects covered in the Qur'an. The goal is to help the reader gain a proper insight and understanding of the subjects of the Qur'an rather than merely roaming through its pages without proper understanding of what is being said by the Almighty God through His divine narration.

Notes:

1.Allah is the Arabic name for God, we have used both the names alternatively.
2.SWT - When mentioning the name of God (Allah), Muslims usually add "Subhanahu Wa Ta-ala", meaning "One who is above all shortcomings and Exalted".

In writing it is shortened to SWT

3.PBUH – When mentioning the name of any prophet, Muslims usually say "peace be upon him". In writing it is shortened to PBUH

Foreword

In the Name of Allah

The Qur'an is arguably the most widely read and discussed book on the planet. Military leaders and politicians quote the Qur'an to inspire; intellectuals and academics study and discuss the Qur'an on its merit and to further expand their horizons of thought; schoolteachers use the Qur'an for guidance in their pedagogy and paradigms; others gravitate towards this miracle of Allah for an array of reasons including seeking inner peace and as a cure for their daily illnesses. This initiative on "A Brief Overview of The Qur'an" taken by Yunoos Deriwala is a most welcome addition to the huge corpus of material already available to the world today on this subject. I believe this work is a fresh introduction to the global community on the subject of The Qur'an and Islam. Deriwala brings ten major themes of the Qur'an to the forefront and elucidates them in a simple yet piercing language. The message of the Qur'an is universal and this work highlights this reality. Muslims may use this work as a manual for informing others of Islam. Non-Muslims will be able to gauge the simplicity and beauty of Islam as they read this work.

At the end, the author also lists a few challenges that need to be appreciated and navigated. He does this to let his readers know that although the Qur'an is indeed a Divine Revelation, it is still up to human beings to administer Divine guidance. Invariably, human beings have lost their humanity by focusing simply on superficial selfish modalities of enjoyment and an insecure sense of power. An approach to reforming human beings by enabling them to refocus on values that are substantial and long-term is in order. This can only be done through a meaningful dialogue. The Qur'an emphasizes dialogue as a necessary tool for social and intellectual engagement. Dialogue and not monologue is what is going to harness harmony amongst all human beings. A Brief Overview of The Qur'an is precisely the kind of dialogue that is going to give us a launching pad for this to happen.

May Allah accept this effort and bless it with barakah ¹and universal acceptance.

Shaykh Mohammed Amin Kholwadia,
Darul Qasim
Glendale Heights, IL
April 16th 2020

¹ Barakah means to obtain or gain full potential of a thing, to derive maximum benefit.

1. Introduction to the Qur'an

According to Muslim belief and Islamic scholarly accounts, the Qur'an is the last revelation from Almighty God (Allah) to mankind. The text of the Qur'an consists of the speech of God, revealed by the angel Gabriel (Jibril) to Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh). Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) started receiving revelations in 610 CE in the cave of Hira, just outside of the city of Mecca, in present-day Saudi Arabia. The first revelation to the Prophet was the first five verses of Surah al-'Alaq, (Surah 96)². Over a span of almost 23 years, Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) continued to receive these divine revelations until just before his passing in 632 CE.

Whenever any verses were revealed, Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) would memorize them and then teach them to his companions, and some wrote them down. During the lifetime of the Prophet (Pbuh), verses of the Qur'an were preserved on leather, bones, scrolls, parchment, and most importantly in the memories of numerous companions. The Qur'an's verses were recorded in complete book form during the caliphate³ of the Prophet's companion Abu Bakr, and the text was standardized during the caliphate of Uthman (644-656 CE). Therefore, Muslims all over the world, no matter what denomination, recite and memorize the same text that was established by the Prophet himself.

The Qur'an has been fully preserved word for word since it was revealed more than 1,430 years ago. This is an extremely important strength of the Qur'an and can surely be considered a miracle since this cannot be said about other earlier revealed scriptures.

The Qur'an is forthright, consistent, and without any conflict; it comprises divine knowledge that is perfect and ultimate. The message of the Qur'an is universal and directed towards all of humanity for all time to come. The guidance and commands mentioned in the Qur'an are timeless and conclusive. God describes the Qur'an as a criterion which differentiates between right and wrong: "Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His Servant that he may be to the worlds a warner" (25:1). Anyone who studies the Qur'an sincerely will gain knowledge and understanding about many questions pertaining to human existence, life and its purpose, the universe, the Creator and His creations, and more. The Qur'an simplifies many complex questions with sound logical arguments and proofs.

The central theme of the Qur'an is guidance on how to know our Creator and establish a relationship with Him. The Qur'an provides detailed information about The Creator, various creations (including humans), the purpose of our existence, and our relationships with each other. To prove a point, the Qur'an provides number of explanations and challenges for us to ponder over.

² Surah is a section of the Qur'an equivalent to chapter in a book, though some surahs are only a few sentences long

³ Caliphate is an Islamic state under leadership of a religious – political successor to Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh), called Caliph.

The Qur'an deals mainly with theology, but when necessary it does dive into history, philosophy, psychology, worship, law, family, social behavior, and descriptions of the physical world. In short, the Qur'an deals with all types of subjects a human being is likely to encounter in the 'Here' and the 'Hereafter'. The Qur'an is the constitution of life for a Muslim, demands action rather than just wishful thinking.

2. Structure and style of the Qur'an

The Qur'an is not structured like other books that mostly have different chapters covering different topics. The Qur'an consists of 114 sections called surahs that contain varying numbers of verses called ayahs. An ayah may consist of single letter or it may be comprised of just a few sentences.

Each section is a kind of collection of one or more orations revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) on different occasions. For this reason, the sections of the Qur'an may not always deal with one topic. Most sections in the Qur'an contains multiple topics, and a single topic is spread over multiple sections. Each section usually has some major themes that the content flows around.

At first glance, the narrative style of the Qur'an may not appear to follow any pattern and may seem random in tone and flow, as the subject of discussion and to whom it is addressed changes frequently. This makes the Qur'an somewhat difficult to comprehend easily, particularly if one is reading it for the first time. Many passages are simple and self-explanatory but some passages of the Qur'an require some study of the background and knowledge of the context in which the verses were revealed in order to clearly grasp their meaning.

But as one reads and studies it more, a beautiful and coherent pattern emerges and the subjects and wordings of the Qur'an becoming clearer and more captivating. The language of the Qur'an is compact, poetic and powerful. The Qur'anic narration is truly appealing and meaningful, providing its reader with an in-depth sense of serenity and peace. A true seeker of knowledge will never get tired of reading the Qur'an repeatedly; he will always find deeper meaning at every effort. The Qur'an brings awareness and awakening as to who we are. It informs us of the real purpose of our existence and provides us with guidance on how to deal with life.

When we read the Qur'an with an open heart, seeking true guidance from his Creator, we will attain enlightenment and true guidance – qualities that will help us understand the Qur'an and heal ourselves of various vices that cause spiritual damage such as prejudice, pride, and arrogance. The Qur'an is the greatest gift of God to humankind; it consists of advice and guidance that can be a cure for many diseases, including those of the heart. Arrogance and greed are two of the greatest barriers that prevent true light from entering our hearts. The Qur'an creates in us a sense of peace, tranquility, and security: "Verily in the remembrance of God do hearts find rest" (13:28). We ask Allah the Almighty to make His Holy Qur'an a cure for us.

The Qur'an is also called the Book of Signs. This term describes one very important characteristic that is unique to the Qur'an. It describes various signs through which God has manifested Himself. The Qur'an explains at length

signs of the Creator within this universe and within us. Paying attention to these signs will lead the reader to comprehend and acknowledge the existence and Oneness of God. The main subject of the Qur'an is to introduce the Creator to mankind and to show how we can connect ourselves to our Lord, our Creator, and our Sustainer.

The Qur'an also shows us how to deal with other fellow humans, and other creations around us.

The Qur'an deals with a vast number of topics in varying degrees of depth. The next few sections include a few topics and related verses, with commentary, to give glimpse of the unique style of the Qur'an. However, the Qur'an contains many more topics spread across its span that are not covered in this brief compilation.

3. Qur'an as Guidance for Mankind

The core function of the Qur'an is to guide humanity to the right path in all aspects of life – to the ultimate truth; to oneness of God; to wisdom and to purification of heart; to the purpose and meaning of life; how to spend their life; how to deal with themselves and deal with fellow creations of God; and how to recognize God and how to build relationship with Him. The Qur'an aims to develop a holistic overview of the life in each individual.

God has instilled the search for meaning in mankind and every person will have many questions throughout their life about the meaning and purpose of life, about the existence of God. There are no direct answers to all the questions we are facing. Answers are waiting to be discovered within the many creations of God throughout the universe and within ourselves. Answers are available as clues and hints but we have to see them with a sincere heart. The Qur'an provides guidance for this difficult task. It awakens the true intelligence within us by asking soul searching questions. With the guidance of the Qur'an it becomes easy to find these answers.

Guidance is the biggest blessing a human should seek. We may have abundant health, wealth, intelligence, and power, but if we do not have guidance all of these luxuries can corrupt us. With the proper guidance these can turn into true blessings. For this reason, every Muslim is required to seek guidance in every rakat⁴, a minimum twenty times a day. In each rakat it is compulsory to recite Surah Al-Fatiha – the first surah (chapter) of the Qur'an – which is a supplication seeking guidance from God Almighty.

It is mentioned at multiple places in the Qur'an that the Qur'an is meant to be guidance for all of humanity. We can see it from the verses cited below.

“This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah”. (2:2)

“We said, ‘Go down from it, all of you. And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.’” (2:38)

“The month of Ramadhan [is that] in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion.” (2:185)

“These are verses of the wise Book, as guidance and mercy for the doers of good.” (31:3-4)

“And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as 4 A unit of Islamic prayer that includes fixed physical postures which include standing, bowing, prostrating during recitation of the Qur'an and making supplications.

guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims.” (16:89)

“Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His Servant that he may be to the worlds a warner.” (25:1)

The Qur’an does not discuss guidance as a single subject of the entire book, or a topic of a chapter; rather it takes a multidimensional approach. It deals with multiple themes as we will see in next chapter, but all the themes lead to one central aim: guidance for all of humanity.

4. Themes of the Qur'an

The Qur'an adopts multiple themes to guide humanity, but there are three major focal points:

- a) Oneness of God (Tawhid)
- b) Messengers and the Message (Risaalah)
- c) Hereafter (Aakhirah)

All the themes of the Qur'an fall within and are linked to one or more of these three areas. For the sake of brevity, we will discuss a few of the themes in this chapter.

a) The Oneness of God (Tawhid)

Understanding and accepting the oneness of God is the essence of guidance. It is reiterated multiple times in various combinations of words: that God is one, no one is equal to Him; He does not have partners or a son; do not worship anyone except God, and do not join others in His worship. It is mentioned in the Qur'an that God may forgive all the sins of a person if He so wishes, but He will not forgive ascribing partners to Him as this is the biggest sin a person can ever commit.

"Indeed, God does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with God has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin." (4:48)

Verses about the oneness of God.

- "And your god is one God. There is no deity (worthy of worship) except Him, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful." (2:163)
- "God - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence." (2:255)
- "That is God, your Lord; there is no deity except Him, the Creator of all things, so worship Him. And He is Disposer of all things." (6:102)
- "Say, "He is God, [who is] One; God, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent." (112:1-4)

More verses on oneness of God:

6:119, 7:158, 9:31, 16:22, 18:110, 20:8, 21:22, 23:91, 27:62-64, 28:70, 28:88

No partners or equals to God

This is just an extension of the oneness of God, but the Qur'an emphasizes the oneness of God by mentioning that God does not have any equal, partner,

subordinate, or son.

- “And say, “Praise to God, who has not taken a son and has had no partner in [His] dominion and has no [need of a] protector out of weakness; and glorify Him with [great] glorification.” (17:111)
- “God - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills. His Kursi ⁵ extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Most Great.” (2:255)
- “And [mention, O Muhammad (Pbuh)], when Luqman said to his son while he was instructing him, “O my son, do not associate [anything] with God. Indeed, association [with him] is great injustice.”” (31:13)

Further Qur’anic verses on “No partners or equals”:

2:165, 6:19, 14:30, 15:96, 17:22, 39:42, 21:22, 23:91, 39:8, 41:9

b) Attributes of God

Knowing the attributes of God is a one of the best ways we can come to know Him. The Qur’an provides a detailed description of His attributes, some of which are described here.

It is mentioned many times in the Qur’an that God is only One. He has no partner with whom He must share power, no equals, and no family, as the Qur’an states: “[He is] Originator of the heavens and the earth. How could He have a son when He does not have a companion and He created all things? And He is, of all things, Knowing” (Qur’an 6:101). He has existed forever and is everlasting. He is All-Able by Himself, and achieves anything He wishes by command. When He commands “Be”, it becomes. He is All-Knowing, possessing perfect knowledge of the past, present and future. He knows what is manifest and what is hidden; He knows what is buried in our hearts, and no one equals Him in knowledge. He shares His knowledge with whomsoever He wishes and as much as He wishes.

He has created this universe and all the things within this universe with His knowledge and power, and He is sustaining all these things with His power and knowledge. Everything on this Earth will vanish one day, and we will be gathered before Him to give an account of our life on earth. He is the owner of the Day of Judgment.

He has complete control of His affairs. He does not beget, nor was He begotten. He does not get tired and does not sleep. He does not have, nor does He

⁵ Kursi means Throne

need, a family. He has no son or daughter. He does not need help from anyone. He is Self-Sustaining.

Some of His attributes are described by way of His names. To name a few:

- All-Powerful (Al-Qaadir)
- All-Seeing (Al-Baseer)
- All-Hearing (As-Samee)
- All-Watching (Ar-Raqeeb)
- The Forgiving (Al-Ghafoor)
- The Loving (Al-Wadud)
- The Entirely Merciful (Ar-Rahman)
- The Most Holy (Al-Quddus)
- The Protector (Al-Hafiz)
- The Sovereign (Al-Malik)
- The Dominant (Al-Mutakabbir)
- The Wise (Al-Hakeem)
- The Just (Al-Adel)
- The Exalted (Al-Aala)
- The Great (Al-Kabir)
- The Sustainer (Rabb)
- The Omnipotent (Al-Qaadir)
- The Glorious (Al-Maajid)
- The Majestic (Al-Jalil)
- The Mighty (Al-Azeez)
- The Magnificent (Al-Adzheem)
- The Discreet One (Al-Latif)
- The Clement (Al-Haleem)

Given below are some of His attributes in detail as mentioned in the Qur'an.

The Entirely Merciful (Ar-Rahman)

This name appears before every surah (chapter) of the Qur'an except one (Surah Taubah). This name also appears 57 times at other places in The Qur'an⁶.

Verses related to The Entirely Merciful:

- "In the name of God, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful" (1:1)
- "The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful" (1:3)
- "And they say, "The Entirely Merciful has taken a son." Exalted is He! Rather, they are [but] honored servants" (21:26)
- "[And] who created seven heavens in layers. You do not see in the creation of the Entirely Merciful any inconsistency. So return [your] vision [to the sky]; do you see any breaks?" (67:3)

Other Qur'anic verses on The Entirely Merciful:

⁶ IEQ- Volume I, page 333 Al-Rahman and al-Rahim by Center for Islamic Science

1:1, 1:3, 2:163, 13:30, 19:61, 19:96, 20:5, 20:108-9, 21:26, 21:36, 25:26, 43:19, 43:45, 67:19-20, 67:29, 78:37-38

The Most Merciful (Ar-Raheem)

This name is also recited at the beginning of every surah (chapter) except for Surah Taubah.

- “Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of repentance, the Most Merciful.” (2:37)
- “Say, [O Muhammad (Pbuh)], ‘It (The Qur’an) has been revealed by He who knows [every] secret within the heavens and the earth. Indeed, He is ever Forgiving and Merciful.’” (25:6)
- “He said, ‘My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, so forgive me,’ and He forgave him. Indeed, He is the Forgiving, the Most Merciful.” (28:116)

Other Qur’anic verses on The Most Merciful:

1:1, 1:3, 2:37, 2:54, 3:31, 3:89, 12:53, 22:65, 24:5, 26:104, 27:11, 27:30, 28:16, 30:5, 49:5, 49:12, 60:12, 64:14, 66:1, 73:20

The Creator (Al-Khaliq)

- That is Allah, your Lord; there is no deity except Him, the Creator of all things, so worship Him. And He is Disposer of all things. (6:102)
- That is Allah, your Lord, Creator of all things; there is no deity except Him, so how are you deluded? 40:62

Other Qur’anic verses on The Creator: 2:117,6:1, 6:102, 13:16, 39:62,15:86, 24:45,30:11, 40:62, 59:22-24

The Omnipotent (Al-Qadir)

- “Do they not see that God, who created the heavens and earth, is [the one] Able to create the likes of them?” (17:99)
- “God is the one who created you from weakness, then made after weakness strength, then made after strength weakness and white hair. He creates what He wills, and He is the Knowing, the Competent.” (30:54)

Other Qur’anic verses on The Omnipotent:

46:33, 86:8

The Mighty (Al-Aziz)

- “Blessed is He in Whose hand is the kingdom, and He has power over all things, Who created death and life that He may try you which of you is best in deeds; and He is The Mighty, the Forgiving, Who created the seven heavens one above another; you see no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent God; then look again, can you see any disorder?” (67:1-3)

Other Qur'anic verses on The Mighty:
3:6, 4:158, 9:40, 9:71, 48:7, 59:23, 61:1

The Provider (Al-Razzaq)

• “Indeed, it is God who is the [continual] Provider, the firm possessor of strength.” (51:58)

The All Knowing (Al-Alim)

“Indeed, God [alone] has knowledge of the Hour and sends down the rain and knows what is in the wombs. And no soul perceives what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul perceives in what land it will die. Indeed, God is Knowing and Acquainted.” (31:34)

Other Qur'anic verses on The All Knowing:
2:158, 3:92, 4:35, 24:41,33:40, 35:38, 57:6

The Forgiver (Al-Ghafoor)

“Say: “O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of God: for God forgives all sins: for He is The Forgiver, Most Merciful.” (39:53)

Other Qur'anic verses on The Forgiver:
2:173, 8:69, 16:110, 41:32, 60:7

The Eternal (Al-Hayy)

“God – there is no deity except Him, The Eternal, the Sustainer of existence.” (3:2)

Other Qur'anic verses on The Eternal:
2:255, 3:2, 20:111, 25:58, 40:65.

More Qur'anic verses on the attributes of God:

2:116-117, 2:129, 2:158, 2:164, 11-6, 16:51, 17:111, 18:4, 20:111, 20:114, 29-60, 30:11, 30:22, 37:149, 39-53, 43:16, 45:36, 52:35-36, 52:39,57:3, 59:22-24, 62:1, 40:64-65, 2:255, 47:38, 57:24, 24:41, 33:40, 35:38, 57:6, 31:16, 33:34, 67:14, 72:3, 112:2

c) Signs of God

As per His wisdom, God has veiled Himself from us, but He has provided His signs within the universe and within ourselves to ponder upon and recognize Him. This exercise of pondering upon these signs develops our inner faculties and leads us to realize our importance as humans, as well as our position in

relation to the universe. This realization directs us to recognize our Creator and our God.

The Qur'an describes many such signs and calls us to recognize Him through His signs. The following are some verses on Signs of God:

- “Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the [great] ships which sail through the sea with that which benefits people, and what God has sent down from the heavens of rain, giving life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and dispersing therein every [kind of] moving creature, and [His] directing of the winds and the clouds controlled between the heaven and earth are signs for a people who use reason.” (2:164)

- “Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding.” (3:190-191)

- “And it is He who sends down rain from the sky, and We⁷ produce thereby the growth of all things. We produce from it greenery from which We produce grains arranged in layers. And from the palm trees – of its emerging fruit are clusters hanging low. And [We produce] gardens of grapevines and olives and pomegranates, similar yet varied. Look at [each of] its fruit when it yields and [at] its ripening. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who believe.” (6:99)

- “And how many a sign within the heavens and earth do they pass over while they, therefrom, are turning away.” (12:105)

- “It is God who erected the heavens without pillars that you [can] see; then He established Himself above the Throne and made subject the sun and the moon, each running [its course] for a specified term. He arranges [each] matter; He details the signs that you may, of the meeting with your Lord, be certain. And it is He who spread the earth and placed therein firmly set mountains and rivers; and from all of the fruits He made therein two mates; He causes the night to cover the day. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought. And within the land are neighboring plots and gardens of grapevines and crops and palm trees, [growing] several from a root or otherwise, watered with one water; but We make some of them exceed others in [quality of] fruit. Indeed in that are signs for a people who reason.” (13:2-4)

- “And He gave you from all you asked of Him. And if you should count the favor [i.e., blessings] of God, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, mankind is [generally] most unjust and ungrateful.” (14: 34)

- “And We have made the night and day two signs, and We erased the sign of the night and made the sign of the day visible that you may seek bounty from

7 This is a unique style of the Quran in which occurs a sudden change of pronouns. Also, in the eastern societies it is common practice for a speaker to use 'we' in place of 'I' to display importance, dignity, and authority.

your Lord and may know the number of years and the account [of time]. And everything We have set out in detail.” (17:12)

- “Then, has it not become clear to them how many generations We destroyed before them as they walk among their dwellings? Indeed in that are signs for those of intelligence.” (20:128)
- “That is because God causes the night to enter the day and causes the day to enter the night and because God is Hearing and Seeing. That is because God is the Truth, and that which they call upon other than Him is falsehood, and because God is the Most High, the Grand. Do you not see that God has sent down rain from the sky and the earth becomes green? Indeed, God is Subtle and Acquainted. To Him belongs what is in the heavens and what is on the earth. And indeed, God is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy. Do you not see that God has subjected to you whatever is on the earth and the ships, which run through the sea by His command? And He restrains the sky from falling upon the earth, unless by His permission. Indeed God, to the people, is Kind and Merciful. And He is the one who gave you And He is the one who gave you life; then He causes you to die and then will [again] give you life. Indeed, mankind is ungrateful.” (22: 61-66)
- “God has created every [living] creature from water. And of them are those that move on their bellies, and of them are those that walk on two legs, and of them are those that walk on four. God creates what He wills. Indeed, God is over all things.” (24:45)
- “Did they not look at the earth – how much We have produced therein from every noble kind? Indeed, in that is a sign, but most of them were not to be believers.” (26:7-8)
- “Is He [not best] who made the earth a stable ground and placed within it rivers and made for it firmly set mountains and placed between the two seas a barrier? Is there a deity with God? [No], but most of them do not know. Is He [not best] who responds to the desperate one when he calls upon Him and removes evil and makes you inheritors of the earth? Is there a deity with God? Little do you remember. Is He [not best] who guides you through the darknesses of the land and sea and who sends the winds as good tidings before His mercy? Is there a deity with God? High is God above whatever they associate with Him.” (27:61-63)
- “Say, “Have you considered: if God should make for you the night continuous until the Day of Resurrection, what deity other than God could bring you light? Then will you not hear?”. Say, “Have you considered: if God should make for you the day continuous until the Day of Resurrection, what deity other than God could bring you a night in which you may rest? Then will you not see?”” (28:72-73)

More Qur'anic verses on Signs of God:

10:6, 10:101, 16:3-17, 17:12, 17:59, 17:66, 24:43-44, 29:19-20, 29:44, 30:8-9, 31:20, 31:29, 34:9, 36:37-42, 36:77-83, 40:63-70, 81-83, 41:39-42, 41:53-54, 42:29-36, 45:3-6, 50:6-11, 51:20-22, 52:35-36, 67:19, 71:13-20, 77:20-23, 78:6-16, 79:25-33, 86:5-7, 88:17-21

d) Creations of God

In the Qur'an, God discusses at great length His various creations, such as the earth, skies, planets, animals, humans, and unseen creatures such as the angels and the jinn. He also describes in detail His purpose in creating mankind, our importance, and the characteristics which make humans superior to other creatures. Certain events that took place in the creation of human beings are also presented in the Qur'an.

The key point here is that God alone is the Creator of all creation, and He has given human beings a remarkable ability to recognize Him. In His immense Wisdom, He has also given humans free will to accept the Prophet and follow him, or to disbelieve and rebel against Him. The consequence of the former is Paradise, and the consequence of the latter is Jahannam, or Hellfire – we seek refuge in our Caretaker from that.

Angels

The angels were created from light (noor) before humans. They possess many abilities but do not possess free will like humans. They carry out the commands of God and worship God constantly. However, unlike humans, they are not in need of any kind of rest, sleep, or food.

- “O you who have believed, believe in God and His Messenger and the Book that He sent down upon His Messenger and the Scripture which He sent down before. And whoever disbelieves in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day has certainly gone far astray.” (4:136)
- “Say, ‘The angel of death will take you who has been entrusted with you. Then to your Lord you will be returned.’” (32:11)
- “And to God prostrates whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth of creatures, and the angels [as well], and they are not arrogant.” (16:49)
- “To Him belongs whoever and whatever is in the heavens and the earth. And those near Him are not prevented by arrogance from His worship, nor do they tire. They exalt [Him] night and day [and] do not slacken.” (21:19-20)

More Qur'anic verses on angels:

35:1, 42:5, 50:17-18, 66:6

Jinn

The jinn were created from fire, also before humans, and they dwell on this Earth but they are not normally visible to us. They possess powers that humans

do not, while humans possess powers that they do not. One thing they share with us is free will. The message of God has reached them also, and they must decide whether to accept it or not. Like humans, they are also responsible for their own choices and actions, and just like us, they too will be accountable on the Day of Judgment.

- “And We did certainly create man out of clay from an altered black mud. And the jinn We created before from scorching fire.” (15:26-27)
- “And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” (51:56)

More Qur’anic verses on the jinn:
6:128, 6:112, 17:88, 34-12:14

The Devil (Shaitan or Shaytan)

He was one of the jinn who worshipped God extensively⁸. His name is Iblees and through his constant worshipping of God he was given a very high rank and he was present when God created the first human – Adam. God asked the angels and Iblees to prostrate to Adam. Obeying God’s command, every one of them prostrated to Adam except Iblees. He refused to prostrate out of pride and arrogance. It was this refusal to follow God’s command that made God curse him, and so Iblees became an enemy to mankind and will remain so until the Day of Judgment.

- “Indeed, Satan is an enemy to you; so take him as an enemy. He only invites his party to be among the companions of the Blaze.” (35:6)

More Qur’anic verses on Iblees:
2:167-8, 16:98-100, 7:17, 17:61-65, 35:6

Human Beings

Humans were created from earth. God created various creations, but human-kind is the best of all His creations. God created the first man, Adam, from earth and then blew from His spirit into his body. We find many superior qualities in mankind that other creations do not possess. Due to these superior qualities, it is expected of us to recognize God, worship Him, and act in accordance with high moral values in this life.

- “O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women.” (4:1)
- “And indeed we have honored the children of Adam and we have provided them with transport on land and sea. And we have provided them with the good and pure things for livelihood and given them special favors over and above great part of Our creation.” (17:70)
- “We have truly created man in the best of forms.” (95:4)
- “From the earth We created you, and into it We will return you, and from it We will extract you another time.” (20:55)

⁸ He could not have been a fallen angel, as is mentioned in Christian narratives, because angels do not disobey God.

- “And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam – from their loins – their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They said, ‘Yes, we have testified.’ [This] lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, ‘Indeed, we were of this unaware.’” (7:172)
- “Who perfected everything which He created and began the creation of man from clay. Then He made his posterity out of the extract of a liquid disdained. Then He proportioned him and breathed into him from His [created] soul and made for you hearing and vision and hearts; little are you grateful.” (32:7-9)
- “And indeed, We created man from dried clay (earth) that is capable of making sounds, from mud cast into shapes. And the jinn We created before from scorching fire.” (15:26-27)

More Qur’anic verses on human beings:
2:30-34, 30:20-22

Women

The Qur’an mentions that woman is created equal to man, but man is given the responsibility to be the head of family. Men are exhorted to take care of the women in their lives and to treat them well. The Qur’an elevated the status of women in pre-Islamic Arabia and gave them inheritance and property possession rights. Through repeatedly mentioning women along with the men in the verse mentioned below, the Qur’an made it clear that men and women have equal status in eyes of Creator.

- “Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting man and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember God often and the women who do so – for them God has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.” (33:35)

Some more Qur’anic verses on Women:
2:187, 2:228, 9:72, 3:195, 3:36, 9:172, 33:35, 67:14

Other Creations

The Qur’an discusses many other creations as well, such as animals, birds, land, trees, vegetation, mountains, rivers, skies, stars, galaxies. The Qur’an mentions that everything in the entire universe is in submission to God, Who has created all these for the benefit of mankind – and it teaches us about our relationship with each of them.

e) Messengers

For the guidance of mankind, God Almighty sent His messengers and scriptures from time to time to all parts of the world. The Qur’an informs us that all

the messengers sent by God came with the same message: worship God, and do not associate partners with Him.

The Qur'an has mentioned names of twenty-five messengers and various details for some of them. May God's peace be upon them all:

- Adam (Adam)
- Enoch (Idris)
- Noah (Nuh)
- Eber (Hud),
- Salah (Salih)
- Abraham (Ibrahim)
- Lot (Lut)
- Ishmael (Ismail)
- Isaac (Ishaaq)
- Jacob (Yaqub)
- Joseph (Yusuf)
- Job (Aiyub)
- Ezekiel (Dhul-Kifil)
- Jethro (Shuayb)
- Moses (Musa)
- Aaron (Harun)
- David (Dawud)
- Solomon (Sulaiman)
- Jonah (Yunus)
- Elias (Ilyas)
- Elisha (Al-Yasa)
- Zachariah (Zakariya)
- John (Yahya)
- Jesus (Isa)
- Muhammad (Pbuh)

Five of them are briefly mentioned below.

Adam (Pbuh)

Adam was the first human God created and sent to Earth – thus, he is referred to as the father of humanity. The Qur'an describes various events surrounding his creation and his descent to the Earth. An important point to note here is that the Qur'an states clearly that Adam (and by extension, all of mankind) was preferred by God over all His other creations including jinn and angels. The Qur'an also mentions the mistake he committed along with Hawwa (Eve), and the fact that God forgave their mistake. Because of this Muslims do not believe in the concept of original sin, but instead believe that everyone is born sinless. It is also mentioned in the Qur'an that he and all generations to follow were instructed to abide by the guidance whenever it came to them.

There are many references to the story of Adam throughout the Qur'an, such

as this one from Surah Al-Baqarah:

• “And He taught Adam the names - all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, ‘Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful.’ They said, ‘Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise.’ He said, ‘O Adam, inform them of their names.’ And when he had informed them of their names, He said, ‘Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth? And I know what you reveal and what you have concealed.’ And [mention] when We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate before Adam’; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers. And We said, ‘O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.’ But Satan caused them to slip out of it and removed them from that [condition] in which they had been. And We said, ‘Go down, [all of you], as enemies to one another, and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement and provision for a time.’ Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful.” (2:31-38)

• “And they [i.e., Adam and his wife] ate of it, and their private parts became apparent to them, and they began to fasten over themselves from the leaves of Paradise. And Adam disobeyed his Lord and erred. Then his Lord chose him and turned to him in forgiveness and guided [him].” (20:121-122)

More Qur’anic verses on Adam:
2:30-39, 3:59, 7:11, 19-26, 7:172

Abraham (Ibrahim) (Pbuh)

He is considered the father of three great nations: Jews, Christians, and Muslims. He is described in the Qur’an as the one who was fully focused to the worship of One God. The Qur’an exhorts later generations to be as focused as Abraham in their worship of One God.

• “And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him was] Ishmael, [saying], ‘Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing. Our Lord, and make us Muslims [in submission] to You and from our descendants a Muslim nation [in submission] to You. And show us our rites and accept our repentance. Indeed, You are the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful. Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them. Indeed, You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise.’” (2:127-129)

More Qur’anic verses on Abraham:
2:124-131, 2:258, 2:260, 3:67-68, 4:125, 6:74-83, 11:69-76, 16:120-123, 19:41-

Moses (Musa) (Pbuh)

Moses was another of the mighty prophets and is mentioned in the Qur'an more times than any other prophet. He was from the tribe of Israel. Moses was instructed by God to invite Pharaoh, the rulers of his time towards guidance, and lead his tribe out of their bondage in Egypt. Moses was given the scripture called the Taurah (Torah). He worshipped one God and called his nation and Pharaoh to worship Him. The Qur'an contains several references to Moses right from his birth to the time he led his tribe of Israel away from the persecution of Pharaoh.

- “And We certainly sent Moses with Our signs, [saying], ‘Bring out your people from darknesses into the light and remind them of the days of God.’ Indeed, in that are signs for everyone patient and grateful. And [recall, O Children of Israel], when Moses said to His people, ‘Remember the favor of God upon you when He saved you from the people of Pharaoh, who were afflicting you with the worst torment and were slaughtering your [newborn] sons and keeping your females alive. And in that was a great trial from your Lord. And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, ‘If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.’ And Moses said, ‘If you should disbelieve, you and whoever is on the earth entirely – indeed, God is Free of need and Praiseworthy.’” (14:5-8)
- “And mention in the Book, Moses. Indeed, he was chosen, and he was a messenger and a prophet. And We called him from the side of the mount at [his] right and brought him near, confiding [to him]. And We gave him out of Our mercy his brother Aaron as a prophet.” (19:51-53)

There is a detailed description about Moses in Surah 7 of the Qur'an in verses 103 to 171.

More Qur'anic verses on Moses:

2:51-61, 2:67, 2:87, 2:92, 3:84, 4:153, 4:164, 5:20-26, 6:84, 6:91, 7:103-171, 14:5-8, 17:2, 17:101

Jesus (Isa) (Pbuh)

Jesus is described as one of the mighty prophets of God in the Qur'an. He was born of miraculous birth to Mary, but he was not a begotten son of God. Jesus never claimed divinity. He worshipped God just as all other prophets did before and after him. His teaching was to worship the One and Only God without ascribing any partners to Him. He was sent to the tribe of Israel with the Injil (the Gospel). He was raised alive to heaven by God, and he did not die on the cross as believed by many, and he will be sent back to Earth by God near the end of time.

- “Indeed, the example of Jesus to God is like that of Adam. He created Him (Adam) from dust; then He said to him, ‘Be,’ and he was.” (3:59)

- “And (I have come to you), confirming Torah which was before me. And to make lawful to you, part of what was (before) forbidden to you; and I have come to you with proof from your Lord, so fear God, and obey me. It is God Who is my Lord and your Lord; So, worship Him Alone; This is the straight path.” (3:50-51)

- “O Children of Israel! I am, indeed the Messenger to you, confirming that which was (revealed) before me, and giving good tidings of a Messenger who will come after me, whose name shall be ‘the praised one’ (which is the translation of Ahmed, the other name of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh)).” (61:6)

Muhammad (Pbuh)– Messenger for all people for all time

The Qur’an describes in detail the status of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) as the seal of prophets (the last prophet). The Qur’an describes Muhammad (Pbuh) as a human but the best of them all, and a perfect role model for all humanity until the end of time (33:21). He was a warner and a giver of glad tidings. He did perform many miracles, but the biggest miracle God gave him was the Qur’an. The Qur’an emphatically states that Muhammad (Pbuh) did not compile the Qur’an nor could he have written it on his own, as Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) was unable to read or write like most people in his society. Muslims are commanded by God to obey Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh), never to disrespect him, and try to emulate him in every possible way.

- “And obey God and the Messenger that you may obtain mercy.” (3:132)

- “Indeed, We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him. And we revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, the Descendants, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David We gave the book [of Psalms].” (3:166)

- “O Mankind, the Messenger has come to you with the truth from your Lord, so believe; it is better for you. But if you disbelieve then indeed, to God belongs whatever is in the heavens and earth. And ever is God Knowing and Wise.” (4:170)

- “And [mention] the Day when We will resurrect among every nation a witness over them from themselves. And We will bring you, [O Muhammad], as a witness over your nation. And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims.” [16:89]

• “And those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in what has been sent down upon Muhammad – and it is the truth from their Lord – He will remove from them their misdeeds and amend their condition.” (47:2)

More Qur’anic verses on Muhammad (Pbuh):

2:119, 3:144, 5:15-16, 5:19, 6:50, 6:104, 7-181-182, 7:184, 7:188, 10:16-17, 11:2, 12:3, 12:102-104, 15:98, 16:89, 17:1, 17:79, 17:86-88, 17:105, 22:167, 25:1, 25:56, 27:44-47, 27:85-86, 29:48-52, 33:21, 33:45, 33:71, 48:29, 49:1-2

Special Note on Mary

Mary is the only woman described by name in the Qur’an, and there is an entire chapter named after her. She is described as very pious and the chosen one. The Qur’an describes in detail that she was God-oriented since her early life. The Qur’an also describes how she was informed by the angel Gabriel about the miraculous birth of Jesus, and other events that were to follow.

• “[And mention] when the angels said, ‘O Mary, indeed God gives you good tidings of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary – distinguished in this world and the Hereafter and among those brought near [to God]. He will speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity and will be of the righteous.’ She said, ‘My Lord, how will I have a child when no man has touched me?’ [The angel] said, ‘Such is God; He creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is. And He will teach him writing and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel. And [He will make him] a messenger to the Children of Israel, [who will say], ‘Indeed I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of God. And I cure the blind and the leper, and I give life to the dead – by permission of God. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses. Indeed, in that is a sign for you, if you are believers. And [I have come] confirming what was before me of the Torah and to make lawful for you some of what was forbidden to you. And I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, so fear God and obey me. Indeed, God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is the straight path.’” (3:45-51)

More Qur’anic verses on Jesus and Mary:

2:87, 2:136, 2:253, 3:45, 3:52, 3:55, 3:59, 3:84, 4:157, 4:163, 4:171, 4:156-159, 5:46, 5:78, 5:110, 5:112, 5:114, 5:116, 6:85, 19:34-35, 88-93

History of Early Generations

It is mentioned in the Qur’an that since time immemorial, God Almighty has sent messengers for the guidance of mankind to all parts of world though only a few of them are described in the Qur’an. Studying the lives of these messengers as described in the Qur’an reveals to us that although all of them were sent for the guidance of mankind, only some people believed in their teachings while many people did not pay heed to them. As a result of their disobedience, the

disbelievers were punished by God, whereas those who believed were saved and favored by God in all His mercy. Some of these generations mentioned in the Qur'an are the people of Noah (11:36-44), Aad (11:50-60), Thamud (11:61-68), and the people of Lot (11:74-84), to name just a few.

f) The Qur'an

The Qur'an speaks much about itself, and for very appropriate reasons. No other book exists on this planet that can equal the Qur'an in knowledge, wisdom, and truth.

The main points the Qur'an makes about itself are that it is a direct revelation from Almighty God to Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) and that this is the truth. Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) did not compile this book on his own. In fact, no one has the capacity to compile this kind of book or even just a part of it. The other point the Qur'an makes is that it is a book of guidance that sets apart truth and falsehood for humanity. The Qur'an is highly respected and protected by God and His angels. This is the last revelation from Almighty God and it is just as relevant to us today as it was to the dwellers of Arabia 1,400 years ago, which is a miracle and a sign from God in itself.

The Word of God

• "The revelation of the book is from God, the Almighty, the Wise." (39:1)

Criterion for Mankind

- "[The Qur'an is] A guidance for mankind...and the criterion." (2:185)
- "This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of God." (2:2)
- "Indeed, the Qur'an is a decisive statement, and it is not amusement." (86:13-14)
- "So I swear by the retreating stars, those that run [their courses] and disappear, and by the night as it closes in, and by the dawn when it breathes, that indeed the Qur'an is a word [conveyed by] a noble messenger, [who is] possessed of power and with the Owner of the Throne, secure [in position], obeyed there [in the heavens] and trustworthy." (81:15-21)
- "So I swear by what you see, and what you do not see, [that] indeed the Qur'an is the word of a noble Messenger. And it is not the word of a poet; little do you believe. Nor the word of a soothsayer; little do you remember. [It is] a revelation from the Lord of the worlds." (69:38-43)

More Qur'anic verses on the Qur'an:

2:2, 2:15, 2:228, 4:32, 4:82, 7:204, 10:37, 25:1, 39:27-28, 41:2-4, 56:75-81

The Qur'an describes itself by various names. Each of these names shed light on its character.

Names of The Qur'ān⁹:

- The Book (Al-Kitaab) – 2:2, 2:44, 2:78, 3:3, 3:7
- The Book of Wisdom (Al-Kitaab al-Hakim) – 10:1, 31:2
- The Guidance (Al-Huda) – 2:2, 2:97, 2:185, 5:46, 6:154, 10:57, 31:3
- Very Clear (Al-Mubin) – 15:1, 26:2, 27:1
- The Cure (Al-Shifa) – 10:57, 17:82, 41:44
- The Truth (Al-Haqq) – 28:48, 39:41
- The Glad Tidings (Al-Bashir) – 2:97, 18:2, 41:4
- The Reminder (Al-Tadhkirah) – 80:11-12, 7:172, 80:112
- The Criterion (Al-Furqaan) – 2:185, 3:4, 25:1
- The Clear Sign (Al-Bayyinah) – 45:17, 57:9,
- The Revelation (Al-Tanzil) – 26:192, 36:5, 41:2, 41:42
- The Light (Al-Nur) – 7:157, 64:8
- The Convincing Proof (Al-Burhan) – 4:174
- The Admonishment (Al-Maw'idah) – 10:57
- The Mercy (Al-Rahma) – 6:154, 10:57
- The Sign (Al-Ayat) – 24:1, 28:87, 29:24, 29:50, 33:34, 39:63
- The Warner (Al-Nadhir) – 41:4
- Well Guarded (Kitabul-Maknun) – 15:9, 56:78, 85:21-22

Glad Tidings and Warnings

Giving glad tidings to believers and warning to non-believers are major subjects of the Qur'an. To emphasize the seriousness of human life, the Qur'an mentions either glad tidings or warnings repeatedly during a discussion.

Glad Tidings

- “And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient, who, when disaster strikes them, say, ‘Indeed we belong to God, and indeed to Him we will return.’” (2:155-156)
- “[And mention] when the angels said, ‘O Mary, indeed God gives you good tidings of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary – distinguished in this world and the Hereafter and among those brought near [to God].’” (3:45)
- “And give good tidings to the believers that they will have from God a great bounty.” (33:47, 2:25, 2:155, 10:63-64, 22:34-35, 39:17, 57:12, 61:6)

Warnings

- “O mankind, fear your Lord. Indeed, the convulsion of the [final] Hour is a terrible thing. On the Day you see it every nursing mother will be distracted from that [child] she was nursing, and every pregnant woman will abort her pregnancy, and you will see the people [appearing] intoxicated while they are not intoxicated; but the punishment of God is severe.” (22:1-2)

⁹ Words that Moved the World—Qazi Ashfaq Ahmad—The Islamic Foundation

- “O mankind, fear your Lord and fear a Day when no father will avail his son, nor will a son avail his father at all. Indeed, the promise of God is truth, so let not the worldly life delude you and be not deceived about God by the Deceiver¹⁰.” (31:33)
- “And this The Qur’an was revealed to me that I may warn you thereby and whomever it reaches.” (6:19, 2:119, 6:192, 14:44, 16:2, 17:105)

Destiny for Rejecters of God

2:24, 2:126, 2:161-162, 3:4, 3:10-12, 3:56, 3:116, 3:131, 3:181-182, 3:192, 4:14, 4:18, 4:30

g) Worship, Human Behavior and Moral Ethics

There are multiple verses in the Qur’an dealing with worship, human behavior, family life, social conduct, and moral ethics.

Prayers, Alms, Fasting, Pilgrimage

The greatest virtue for a human is bearing witness to the fact that there is no one worthy of worship except God and that Muhammad (Pbuh) is His slave and messenger, and leading life according to the guidance of the Qur’an and Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh). This makes one a Muslim. Then there are various acts of worship a Muslim must perform such as the five daily prayers, giving mandatory charity, fasting during Ramadan, and making the pilgrimage to Mecca for those who are able.

- “O you who believe! Bow down and prostrate yourselves and worship your Lord, that you may succeed.” (22:77)
- “And spend (in charity) out of the (sustenance) for which He has made you the inheritors. And (for those) who believe and spend (in charity), for them is a great reward.” (57:7)

More Qur’anic verses on prayer, charity, fasting and pilgrimage:
6:72, 29:45, 31:18-19, 2:269-273

Social Behavior – Moral Ethics

The Qur’an provides indispensable guidelines regarding social behavior, ethics, morals, justice, human rights, equality, kindness to parents, and the purpose of life. Some of the verses are mentioned here:

- **Honesty:** “Cover not the truth with falsehood, nor conceal the Truth when you know it.” (2:42)
- **Modesty:** “Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty. And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty.” (24:30-31)

¹⁰ The word ‘Deceiver’ refers to the devil, because he tries to deceive people.

• **Thankfulness:** “And God has brought you forth from the wombs of your mother – you did not know anything – and He gave you hearing and sight and hearts that you may give thanks.” (16:78)

• **Patience:**

• “Indeed, God is with those who patiently endure.” (8:46)

• “O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, God is with those who are patient.” (2:153)

• **Justice:** “O you who believe! Stand firmly for justice as witness to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor.” (4:135)

• **Doing good:**

• “God has promised to those who believe and do good deeds (that) they shall have forgiveness and mighty reward.” (11:15)

• “If you do good, you do it to yourselves. If you do evil, you do it to your own detriment.” (17:7)

• “God commands justice and doing good and giving to relatives. And He forbids indecency and doing wrong and tyranny. He warns you so that hopefully you will pay heed.” (16:90)

• “Those who control their rage and pardon other people – God loves good doers.” (3:134)

• “Do not strut arrogantly about the earth. You will certainly never split the earth apart nor will you ever rival the mountains in height.” (17:37)

More Qur’anic verses on a moral system:

2:177, 49:13, 3:146, 3:133-134, 31:18-19, 17:26, 2:212

More Qur’anic verses on justice:

2:282, 4:58, 4:135, 7:29, 16:90

More Qur’anic verses on human rights:

4:148, 5:8, 5:32, 49:11-12, 24:27

Kindness to parents

Good treatment of parents is essential in Islam and a highly desirous quality of a believer. Kindness to parents is emphasized repeatedly in the Qur’an. Many times, God mentions this immediately after a declaration of His own rights, in order to emphasize its great importance.

• “And [recall] when We took the covenant from the Children of Israel, [enjoining upon them], ‘Do not worship except God; and to parents do good and

to relatives, orphans, and the needy. And speak to people good [words] and establish prayer and give charity.’ Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you were refusing.” (2:83)

- “And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], ‘uff,’ and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word.” (17:23-24)

- “And We have enjoined upon man, to his parents, good treatment. His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship, and his gestation and weaning [period] is thirty months. [He grows] until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, ‘My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to work righteousness of which You will approve and make righteous for me my offspring. Indeed, I have repented to You, and indeed, I am of the Muslims.’” (46:15)

More Qur’anic verses on kindness to parents:

4:36, 6:151, 31:14

More Qur’anic verses on righteous people and virtues:

2:25, 2:177, 2:277, 3:133, 3:148, 4:57, 4:122, 4:124, 4:152, 4:162, 5:10, 6:32, 7:43, 68:34-36

h) Knowledge of the Unseen (Ghayb) and Future Events

The Unseen and its aspects are important subjects enunciated in the Qur’an. Having faith in the Unseen and God’s perfect knowledge of it is an integral part of Islamic belief.

There exists an unseen world that is beyond our physical senses. Among these unseen elements are our souls, the angels, jinn, Paradise, Hell, to name a few. For example, there are angels, whom we are normally unable to see, hear, feel, or touch, and likewise, the jinn. Our knowledge, as the Qur’an tells us, is extremely limited – we do not even know the reality about our own souls. God has created seven heavens, which are also beyond human comprehension. The Qur’an informs us of the existence of many such elements. Believing in an unseen world is a real test of faith.

God Himself remains unseen to us. Believing in all of the unseen mentioned in the Qur’an is one of the foundations of the Islamic creed. The Qur’an informs us of a few unseen realities and guides us to use our reasoning and intellect to develop an understanding of the subject, and trust in the belief of the unseen. The Qur’an also emphasizes that full knowledge of the Unseen is with God only, and He shares portions of this knowledge with whomsoever He wishes.

In fact, God has disclosed some details of the unseen for our knowledge in the Qur'an. A few of them are listed below:

- “And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it. And no grain is there within the darkness of the earth and no moist or dry [thing] but that it is [written] in a clear record. And it is He who takes your souls by night and knows what you have committed by day. Then He revives you therein that a specified term may be fulfilled. Then to Him will be your return; then He will inform you about what you used to do. And He is the subjugator over His servants, and He sends over you guardian-angels until, when death comes to one of you, Our messengers take him, and they do not fail [in their duties]. Then they [His servants] are returned to God, their true Lord. Unquestionably, His is the Judgment, and He is the swiftest of accountants.” (6:59-62)

The Qur'an also mentions that we each have two angels who are observers, recording all of our actions and every word we utter:

- “And We have already created man and know what his soul whispers to him, and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein when the two receivers receive, seated on the right and on the left. Man does not utter any word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record].” (50:16-18)

The Soul

The soul is the non-physical core element of our existence. The status of our soul influences our character and personality. The Qur'an provides guidance on how to nourish the soul and elevate our status. It is through the soul that we know God and choose to be guided or to go astray. The Qur'an defines the soul as an affair about which only God has full knowledge. Human beings are given very little knowledge about the soul. When we die, it is only our physical body that dies; the soul never dies, but lives forever for those in Paradise, while those in Hell will neither live nor die. In this world, we need to work on our soul and nourish it with right guidance.

- “And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be aided.” (2:48)
- “And they ask you, [O Muhammad (Pbuh)], about the soul. Say, ‘The soul is of the affair of my Lord. And mankind have not been given of knowledge except a little.’” (17:85)
- “And it is He who takes your souls by night and knows what you have committed by day...” (6:60)
- “[To the righteous it will be said], ‘O reassured soul, return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him].’” (89:27-28)

More Qur'anic verses on the soul:
50:16, 50:21, 31:28, 85:4, 89:40

i) Life and Death

According to the Qur'an, a person's life on this Earth is a test. Humans are mortal and life is short. Death can come at any time, but we look forward to living in the hereafter forever. The time we have been granted on this Earth must primarily be spent preparing ourselves for a better and everlasting life in the Hereafter.

- “Blessed is He in whose hand is dominion, and He is over all things competent – [He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deeds – and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving.” (67:1-2)

Life

The Qur'an informs us that on the Day of Judgment, God will ask us, “How long did you stay on the earth?” Our answer will be “We stayed for a few hours or a part of the day.” This shows that our present life is of a very short duration, and we should better use it prudently to prepare ourselves for the never-ending life of the Hereafter. This can be achieved by leading our lives here on earth correctly and righteously and shunning all evil acts and atrocities.

- “[God] will say, ‘How long did you remain on earth in number of years?’ They will say, ‘We remained a day or part of a day; ask those (angles) who enumerate (count).’” (23:112-113)

Life has a purpose; it was not created by God in vain. Our purpose is to know our Creator, God, and to strive to please Him so that we may be granted His company in the eternal life of the Hereafter.

- “And We did not create the heavens and earth and that between them in play.” (21:16)
- “Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would not be returned?” So exalted is God, the Sovereign, the Truth; there is no deity except Him, Lord of the Noble Throne.” (23:115-116)

More Qur'anic verses on life:
6:32, 13:26, 28:60, 29:64, 10:62-64, 11:15-16

Death

Death is a reality about which there has been no disagreement throughout the history of mankind; we know that every living creature will die one day. The Qur'an says death is not the end; rather it is only a change in the phase of our existence. After death, we will be resurrected and we will spend our lives in heaven or hell according to God's judgment regarding our actions performed during our lives on earth.

- “Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your [full] compensation on the Day of Resurrection. So he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has attained [his desire]. And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion.” (3:185)
- “Wherever you may be, death will overtake you, even if you should be within towers of lofty construction.” (4:78)
- “[It will be said to them], ‘And you have certainly come to Us alone as We created you the first time, and you have left whatever We bestowed upon you behind you.’” (6:94)
- “God is the one who created you, then provided for you, then will cause you to die, and then will give you life.” (30:40)
- “Say, ‘God causes you to live, then causes you to die; then He will assemble you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt, but most of the people do not know.’” (45:26)
- “O my people, this worldly life is only [temporary] enjoyment, and indeed, the Hereafter - that is the home of [permanent] settlement.” (40:39)

More Qur’anic verses on death:

3:185, 6:61, 6:93-94, 7:34, 21:34-35, 32:11, 39:42, 62:8

j) Hereafter

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the Hereafter is one of the major focal points of the Qur’an. According to the Qur’an, success in the Hereafter is the ultimate goal, and so the Qur’an encourages us to lead our lives with a firm eye on the Hereafter. We can appreciate the importance of this theme from the fact that there is hardly any page in the Qur’an where this theme is not present in one form or the other. Discussion of the Hereafter takes various forms as mentioned below.

Doomsday

There are vivid descriptions of Doomsday in the Qur’an. On that day, everything on this earth and in the sky will perish. The people who obeyed the laws of God in this world will be at ease on that fateful day, whereas those who choose to disbelieve and ignore His Book will be in a pathetic and sorry situation.

- “O mankind, fear your Lord. Indeed, the convulsion of the [final] Hour is a terrible thing. On the Day you see in it every nursing mother will be distracted from that [child] she was nursing, and every pregnant woman will abort her pregnancy, and you will see the people [appearing] intoxicated while they are not intoxicated; but the punishment of God is severe.” (22:1-2)
- “When the Inevitable Event takes place, then no one can deny it has come. It will debase ‘some’ and ‘elevate’ others. When the earth will be violently shaken, and the mountains will be crushed to pieces, becoming scattered particles of dust.” (56:1-6)

More Qur'anic verses on Doomsday:

20:102-112, 21:104, 54:6-8, 75:1-13, 80:33-42, 81:1-14

Resurrection

The Resurrection will occur soon after the doomsday (When the life on this earth will come to an end). All of us will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment in our actual, physical bodies and we will be gathered before our Creator for the final judgment. The Qur'an provides various powerful descriptions of it. Belief in the Resurrection is a key characteristic of the believers God favors, while disbelief in it is closely associated with kufr; disbelief itself.

- “And they say, ‘When we are bones and crumbled particles, will we [truly] be resurrected as a new creation?’ Say, ‘Be you stones or iron. Or [any] creation of that which is great within your breasts.’ And they will say, ‘Who will restore us?’ Say, ‘He who brought you forth the first time.’ Then they will nod their heads toward you and say, ‘When is that?’ Say, ‘Perhaps it will be soon. On the Day He will call you and you will respond with praise of Him and think that you had not remained [in the world] except for a little.’ (17:49-52)
- “And they used to say, ‘When we die and become dust and bones, are we indeed to be resurrected? And our forefathers [as well]?’ Say, [O Muhammad (Pbuh)], ‘Indeed, the former and the later peoples, Are to be gathered together for the appointment of a known Day.’ (56:47-50)

More Qur'anic verses on Resurrection:

16:38-40, 22:5, 23:15-16, 25:25-29, 69:13-16

The Day of Judgment (Recompense)

Upon our resurrection, we will face Judgment. On this day, all the people and jinn who were ever created will be gathered before God. He will judge us by our deeds. Any injustice done by a person to another person will also be settled at this time.

The main points emphasized in the Qur'an about the Day of Judgment is that it will surely take place at the appointed hour, and that every person will be rewarded for his or her good deeds or, conversely, punished for their bad deeds. This is a significant incentive for keeping our behavior in check.

God will ask us on this Day of Judgment, “How long did you live in the world?” Our answer will be, “A part of a day”. This suggests that our life on this earth is very short compared to that in the Hereafter.

- “In the name of God, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. [All] praise is [due] to God, Lord of the worlds - The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful, Sovereign of the Day of Recompense.” (1:1-4)
- “And what can make you know what is the Day of Recompense? Then, what can make you know what is the Day of Recompense? It is the Day when a soul will not possess for another soul [power to do] a thing; and the command, that

Day, is [entirely] with God.” (82:17-19)

- “‘When we have died and become dust and bones, are we indeed to be resurrected? And our forefathers [as well]?’ Say, ‘Yes, and you will be [rendered] contemptible.’ It will be only one shout, and at once they will be observing. They will say, ‘O woe to us! This is the Day of Recompense.’ [They will be told], ‘This is the Day of Judgment which you used to deny.’” (37:16-21)

More Qur’anic verses on the Day of Judgment:

7:51, 7:87, 11:103-108, 16:27, 16:77, 17:13, 17:97-98, 19:37-39, 19:19-95, 20:124, 21:47, 26:82, 38:78, 51:12, 56:56, 70:26, 74:46, 77:8-14, 82:14-15, 83:11-10

Salvation

This is the ultimate goal of every believer in every major religion. The Qur’an puts a basic condition upon salvation, which at its most basic includes making the declaration of faith (laa ilaha illa Allah Muhammad (Pbuh) Rasul Allah), which entails believing in God, His angels, His Books (the Torah and Gospels, and the Quran) and His Messengers, and worshipping God exclusively without ascribing any partners or associates with Him. After fulfilling these conditions, if a person does righteous things and pleases God, he or she will attain salvation by the bountiful mercy of God. Any believing person who has sinned but repented during his lifetime can hope for His mercy and salvation. The Qur’an exhorts each living person to work diligently to attain salvation.

- “God has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds [that] for them there is forgiveness and great reward.” (5:9)
- “Race toward forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and earth, prepared for those who believed in God and His messengers. That is the bounty of God which He gives to whom He wills, and God is the possessor of great bounty.” (57:21)
- “And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous.” (3:133)
- “Their reward is forgiveness from their Lord and gardens beneath which rivers flow [in Paradise], wherein they will abide eternally; and excellent is the reward of the [righteous] workers.” (3:136)

More Qur’anic verses on salvation:

3:191, 5:122, 6:16, 8:4, 14:23, 22:50, 23:102

Paradise and Hell

The life after death will be an unending life, we will dwell either in Paradise or in Hell.

Paradise

Paradise is a beautiful place full of eternal peace, comfort, and amenities. A

complete description of Paradise is beyond the capacity of human thought and language. The dwellers of Paradise will remain there forever in utmost comfort and luxury. Paradise is the place where a person will be paid the full measure and more of the rewards that person earned as reward for his or her efforts in this world.

- “But those who believe and do righteous deeds – We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide forever. For them therein are purified spouses, and We will admit them to deepening shade.” (4:57)
- “And no soul knows what has been hidden for them of comfort for eyes as reward for what they used to do.” (32:17)
- “And the forerunners, the forerunners, those are the ones brought near [to God] in the Gardens of Pleasure.” (56:10-12)

More Qur’anic verses on Paradise:

18:30-31, 36:55-58, 47:15, 52:17-20, 76:12-21

Hell

This place is prepared to punish evildoers. It is the place of extreme pain and anguish. It is full of fire, and it is a place where there will be harsh punishment and torment. Hell has several levels, with the lower levels being worse than the preceding ones. The bottommost level is reserved for hypocrites (Qur’an 4:145) and it the harshest for its inhabitants. We seek refuge in Allah from that for ourselves and all believers.

- “Indeed, those who disbelieve and commit wrong [or injustice] - never will God forgive them, nor will He guide them to a path. Except the path of Hell; they will abide therein forever. And that, for God, is [always] easy.” (4:168-169)
- “They will wish to get out of the Fire, but never are they to emerge therefrom, and for them is an enduring punishment.” (5:37)
- “But they have denied the Hour, and We have prepared for those who deny the Hour a Blaze. When the Hellfire sees them from a distant place, they will hear its fury and roaring. And when they are thrown into a narrow place therein bound in chains, they will cry out thereupon for destruction.” (25:11-13)

Some more Qur’anic verses on Hell:

18:29, 23:47-50, 67:6-8

5. Addresses and Challenges to Humans by God

Addresses to Humans by God

In the Qur'an, there are numerous captivating and thought-provoking passages addressed directly to humans in general. While these discourses melt the hearts of believers and keep them engaged with the Lord, for others these will serve as lampposts compelling them to comprehend deeply and profoundly.

- “O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear God, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed, God is ever, over you, an Observer.” (4:1)
- “O mankind, there has to come to you instruction from your Lord and healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers. Say, ‘In the bounty of God and in His mercy – in that let them rejoice; it is better than what they accumulate.’ Say, ‘Have you seen what God has sent down to you of provision of which you have made [some] lawful and [some] unlawful?’ Say, ‘Has God permitted you [to do so], or do you invent [something] about God?’ And what will be the supposition of those who invent falsehood about God on the Day of Resurrection? Indeed, God is full of bounty to the people, but most of them are not grateful.” (10:57-60)
- “Do not strut arrogantly about the earth. You will certainly never split the earth apart nor will you ever rival the mountains in height.” (17:37)
- “O People, if you should be in doubt about the Resurrection, then [consider that] indeed, We created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot, and then from a lump of flesh, formed and unformed – that We may show you. And We settle in the wombs whom We will for a specified term, then We bring you out as a child, and then [We develop you] that you may reach your [time of] maturity. And among you is he who is taken in [early] death, and among you is he who is returned to the most decrepit [old] age so that he knows, after [once having] knowledge, nothing. And you see the earth barren, but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers and swells and grows [something] of every beautiful kind.” (22:5)
- “O mankind, what has deceived you concerning your Lord, the Generous, Who created you, proportioned you, and balanced you? In whatever form He willed has He assembled you. No! But you deny the Retribution. And indeed, [appointed] over you are keepers, noble and recording; they know whatever you do.” (82:6)

More Qur'anic verses on addresses to humans by God:

2:21-24, 4:132-134, 4:174-175, 7:3-5, 7:158, 17:22-39, 22:1-8, 56:57-74

Challenges of God to Humanity

Sometimes in the Qur'an, God challenges mankind in unique ways. Pondering over these challenges will unearth, God willing, the treasures of wisdom and true light of divine guidance.

- “Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would not be returned?” (23:115)
- “But they have taken besides Him gods which create nothing, while they are created, and possess not for themselves any harm or benefit and possess not [power to cause] death or life or resurrection.” (25:3)
- “Is He [not best] who responds to the desperate one when he calls upon Him and removes evil and makes you inheritors of the earth? Is there a deity with God? Little do you remember. Is He [not best] who guides you through the darkness of the land and sea and who sends the winds as good tidings before His mercy? Is there a deity with God? High is God above whatever they associate with Him. Is He [not best] who begins creation and then repeats it and who provides for you from the heaven and earth? Is there a deity with God? Say, ‘Produce your proof, if you should be truthful.’ Say, ‘None in the heavens and earth knows the unseen except God, and they do not perceive when they will be resurrected.’” (27:62-65)

- “Or do they say, ‘He has made it up’? Rather, they do not believe. Then let them produce a statement like it, if they should be truthful. Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators [of themselves]? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they are not certain. Or have they the depositories [containing the provision] of your Lord? Or are they the controllers [of them]? Or have they a stairway [into the heaven] upon which they listen? Then let their listener produce a clear authority.” (52:33-38)
- “Then why, when the soul at death reaches the throat, and you are at that time looking on, and Our angels are nearer to him than you, but you do not see – then why do you not, if you are not to be recompensed, bring it [the soul] back, if you should be truthful?” (56:83-87)
- “Does man think that he will be left neglected? Had he not been a sperm from semen emitted? And made of him two mates, the male and the female. Then he was a clinging clot, and [God] created [his form] and proportioned [him]. Is not that [Creator] able to give life to the dead?” (75:36-40)

Further Qur'anic verses on the topic:
2:21-24, 17:22, 56:57-74, 75:36, 59:21

Conclusion

I hope this brief overview will prepare you to start your journey of enlightenment with the Qur'an. Do not read the Qur'an as an outsider, nor as a religious book only for Muslims, but as a manual of Life given by our Creator. It is my sincere hope that this guide to structured reading of the Qur'an will furnish insights and enrich your life in this world and hereafter.

All praise belongs to God, Lord of the Worlds, and may His blessings be upon prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), his family, his companions, and all Muslims who believe in his Glorious Book.