

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Short Introduction to Surahs

Surah al-Baqarah – Session 2



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Introduction

- Purpose: To gain familiarity with the contextual history of the Surahs of the Qur'an. To study particular verses of the Qur'an from given surahs.
- Goals: To understand relevant verses in our own personal and social context and to reflect on them.
- Outcomes: An intimacy with the Qur'an and daily and regular practice of reflecting on verses. Familiarity with Arabic.

Sources: *Tafsir al-Amthal* of Ayt. Makarem-Shirazi, *Tafhim al-Qur'an* of Mawdudi, Mir Ahmed Ali, & various Shi'a Tafasir

Context of Revelation

- Revealed in the first two years of the Hijrah in the city of Madinah. Contains regular features of Madani Surahs, including reference to the Jews, Christians, the people of the book, and the unschooled Bedouin Arabs.
- Severe against the Jewish community which held intellectual dominance in Madinah and presented a great challenge to Islam initially. Bani Israel are addressed directly. Nabi Musa is mentioned the most, along with Nabi Isa.
- Contains general concepts of tawhid, nubuwwah, aqeedah, akhirah, and purpose of mankind.

Naming of the Surah

- Named after the event of the Cow in verses 67-73.
- Background: Nabi Musa* pious man leaves a calf for his son* calf lives in wilderness* a rich man is killed by his nephew* Nabi Musa commands cow to be slaughtered and placed on dead body* Bani Israel are reluctant and question authority* find orphan's cow and offer gold* cow's tongue is placed on dead man who rises, points to his murderer, and dies*
- Reflection: miracles of God* obedience to Divine authority* concept of Raj'ah in this world.

Virtues of the Surah

■ Surah al-Baqarah contains some of the greatest verses from the Quran. The Prophet of Allah (s) was asked ‘which Surah is the best’ and he replied ‘al-Baqarah’ and again ‘which verse is the best?’ and he replied ‘Ayat al-Kursi’.

■ Imam al-Sadiq (a) said ‘everything has a peak and the peak of the Quran is Ayat al-Kursi. Whoever recites it when he leaves home will be protected’. Ayat al-Kursi is verse 255 of this Surah and described the greatness of Allah swt and it is the verse of the Throne, which is a symbol for His power and authority and knowledge that extends across the Heavens and the Earth.

Benefits of Reciting the Surah

- Reward of Worship: ‘whoever recites Surah al-Fatiha and the last verses of Surah al-Baqarah at bedtime will receive the reward of staying up at night in worship of Allah’
- Safety: ‘whoever recites the first 4 verses of this Surah, Ayat al-Kursi & the following 2 verses, and the last 3 verses of this Surah will never see anything unpleasant for his wealth & family & Shaytan will be removed from him’.
- Safety while traveling: Zurarah relates from Imam al-Baqir (a) that If we recite this verse when we sleep and when we travel, our neighbors are also protected along with our homes.
- Also recommended to recite Ayat al-Kursi in sajdah, and in the sajdah after the completion of salat. The reciter receives the reward of all the Anbiya for this act of worship.

Verses 40-120: Bani Israel

- يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِي أُوفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُونِ 40
- قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ 97
- أَمْ تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَسْأَلُوا رَسُولَكُمْ كَمَا سُئِلَ مُوسَى مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ 108

Verses 121-141: the Kaaba

- الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ أُولَئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ 121
- وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى ۖ وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَنَّ طَهِّرَا بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ 125
- وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ 127

Verses 142-152: Interfaith Relations

- سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّاهُمْ عَنْ قِبَلَتِهِمُ الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا ۚ قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ ۚ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ 142
- فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۚ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ 144
- الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ ۚ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ 146

Verses 153-251: The Law

- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ 153
- نَ الصِّفَا وَالْمُرُوَّةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ 158
- يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ 168

Verses 252-260: the Prophets

• كَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ ۖ وَرَفَعَ
بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ ۚ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ
الْقُدُسِ ۚ 253

■ Ayat al-Kursi verse 255; some traditions include 256 and 257.

Verses 261-283: Spend for God

- الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَّبَعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا أَذًى ۖ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ 262
- قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أَذًى ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَلِيمٌ 263
- وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ۖ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ 281

Verses 284 -286: Faith

- آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۚ كُلُّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ
وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ ۚ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۚ
غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ 286