



MEMAHAMI AL-QUR'ĀN SECARA SISTEMATIS

Written by:

Dr. Omar ibn Abdullah Al-Muqbil

Associate Professor in the College of Shariah and
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الإخراج الفني

التصميم الداخلي: هداوان بن حسن العوضي

تصميم الغلاف: عوض الرضي محمد نور



الرياض - حي المغرقات

٠١١٤٥٤٤٧٦٣

malem@tdabbor.com

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Introduction

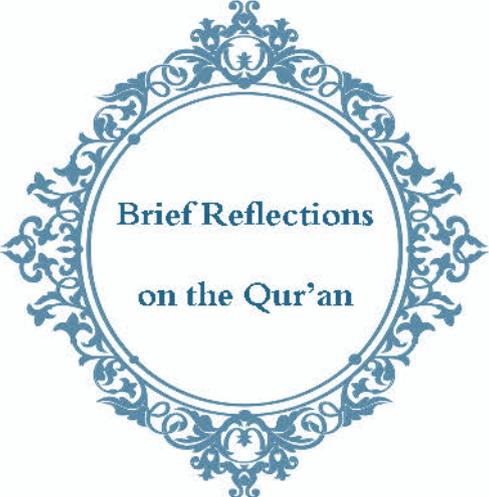
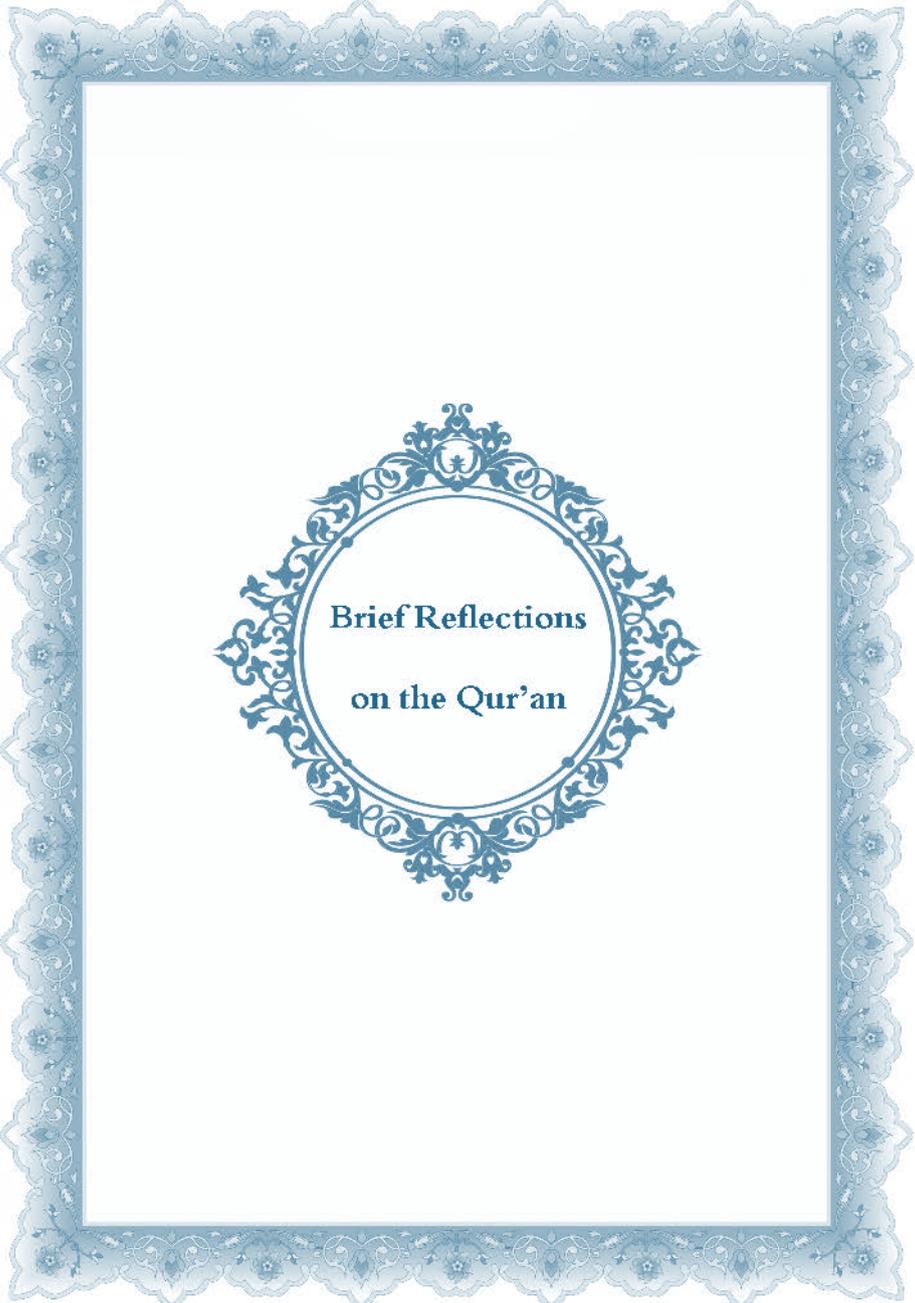
All praise is due to God, the Lord of all worlds, and may He grant peace and blessings to Prophet Muhammad, members of his household and all his companions.

In this book I briefly highlight the main points of interest the thirty parts of the Qur'an includes, outlining the main topics for my Muslim brothers and sisters, to enable them to understand these parts. I hope that my effort will open a window for understanding God's word, interact with it and provide guidance for our hearts and minds. This is one of the main objectives of the revelation of the Qur'an.

Readers may note that certain verses are placed under special light for educational or other purposes, or because they lay down certain rules, or for some other reason. This diverges from the main line of the book, which is making brief references.

I realise that a brief presentation of subjects tackled by literary figures who use a fine style of expression is very difficult. What would it be like when we are presenting the themes stated by God, whose expression is superior to all else. In fact, its superiority to the styles of people is of the same measure as His own superiority to His creation.

Umar ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Muqbil
Shaaban 1434 AH, June 2012



Brief Reflections
on the Qur'an

Part 1

1. Al-Fatihah, or the Opening, is the first and greatest surah in God's book. It includes several points:

- Praising God, the Mighty and Exalted. This takes up the first half of the surah.
- Offering worship purely to God and seeking help from Him alone.
- Explaining the nature of true guidance and the categories of those who are deprived of it.

Whoever recites or listens to al-Fatihah seventeen times every day, as a Muslim must do when he or she offers their obligatory prayers should never emulate unbelievers. It does not behove a believer to emulate their practices when he says this supplication: 'Guide us on the straight path, the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your favours, not those who have incurred Your wrath, nor those who have gone astray'. (1: 6-7)

2. The second surah, The Cow, is the longest in the Qur'an. Authentic reports mention that this surah has great merits. Its most important aims include training believers to submit to God's commandments and refrain from what He prohibits, even if they sound too many. It warns against emulating those Jews who failed when God tested them with the order to slaughter a cow. By contrast, the Prophet's companions passed their tests with high colours when this surah detailing their numerous duties was revealed. Hence, the surah concludes with a statement praising them: 'The Messenger believes

in what has been revealed to him by his Lord, and so do the believers. Each one of them believes in God, His angels, His books, and His messengers'. (2: 285)

3. At the beginning, the surah states that all people fall into three categories: believers, unbelievers and hypocrites. It discusses the attitude of each category to God's Messenger and His message, speaking of the third category, the hypocrites, at length. This is due to the fact that they represent the greater threat to the Muslim community, because they scheme in secret and they have access to the believers and the unbelievers.

4. We also have a detailed account about Adam and his wife, and how they are placed in charge of the earth. This is the first of the Qur'anic stories according to the final order of its surahs. The story gives mankind a clear and early message about their most avowed enemy whose hostility to mankind dates back to the days of the first man on earth.

5. We then have the first discourse about the Children of Israel, their reception of the Qur'an and their attitude to prophets generally and to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in particular.

6. We read a detailed story of the cow, imparting a clear message to Muslims. The sum of this message is a warning against any hesitation of accepting and acting on God's orders, as this leads to the hardening of people's hearts. It makes clear that a believer submits to God's command without hesitation. Therefore, God praises believers at the end of the surah, as we mentioned earlier.

7. The surah then mentions some aspects of how the Jews treated prophets and God's noble angels.

8. To prevent glorification of God in places of worship was an offence committed by some Christians. Whoever follows their example will face a grievous end.

9. The surah then mentions the Ka'bah: who built it and how it was built.

10. Religious leadership of mankind will never be assigned to wrongdoers. God makes this clear to Abraham (peace be upon him) as He says to him: 'My covenant does not apply to the wrongdoers'. (2: 124)

10. Good upbringing of one's children and urging them to do and maintain what is right never stops. It continues until a parent's last breath: 'Were you present when death approached Jacob? He asked his children, "Whom will you worship when I am gone?"' (2: 133)

11. At the end of this part of the surah God says: 'That community have passed away. Theirs is what they earned and yours is what you have earned. You shall not be questioned about what they did'. (2: 141) This clearly shows that having a good line of ancestry does not benefit man in his standing before God, even though a person is a descendent of Prophet Abraham or Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon both of them). What is most important is one's own work.

Part 2

1. The surah picks up its discourse about the Jews in Madinah and their criticism of the choice of the Kaabah as the place Muslims should face when they offer their prayer. It refutes their arguments, explaining that the Muslim community is the best of all human communities, as it is the one that submits to God in all its affairs.
2. To attend to self-purification and spiritual improvement is more important than determining which direction to face in prayer, although the latter is also important.
3. This part includes a clear advice to remain patient in adversity, and highlights ways and means to keep it up, stating its benefits. All this takes up no more than five short verses: 'Believers, seek strength in patience and prayer. God is with those who are patient. Do not say of those who are killed in God's cause, 'They are dead.' They are alive, although you do not perceive that. We shall certainly try you with a certain measure of fear and hunger, and with diminution of wealth, lives and crops. But give glad tidings to those who remain patient in adversity; who, when a calamity befalls them, say, 'To God we belong, and to Him we shall return.' On such people, blessings and mercy are bestowed by their Lord; Such people will be rightly guided'. (2: 153-157)
4. We also have a detailed discourse about fasting in Ramadan with an explanation of most of its rules. This is the only place in the Qur'an that discusses fasting. It is worth a careful study.

5. In this part we have details of what is required during the pilgrimage. The surah focuses on the practical aspects and the rules that govern them while Surah 22, The Pilgrimage, focuses on the mental duties and the faith aspects of the pilgrimage.
6. This part includes a long discussion of the family with legislation governing marriage, divorce and the breastfeeding of newborns. It relates all this to piety and the need to always do what pleases God. This represents a clear message showing how Islam takes care of all aspects of life, and that it regulates all our activities. This is contrary to what some hypocrites allege when they claim that Islam only focuses on worship.
7. The family rules outlined in the surah are clearly linked to the belief in the Day of Judgement, because it provides a strong motivation to implement these rules.
8. This part ends with the story of Goliath which provides a clear lesson of the need to remain patient and persevere. It states that victory is not always secured by larger forces.
9. The story emphasises that a believer must make sure to hold on to his faith, remaining firm even when he finds himself let down by many who had previously pledged support.
10. The penultimate verse of this part states one of the laws God has set in operation in human life: 'Had it not been for the fact that God repels one group of people by another, the earth would have been utterly corrupted. God is limitless in His bounty to all the worlds'. (2: 251)

Part 3

1. Verse 255 of this surah is the greatest in the Qur'an, known as the Verse of the Throne. Everyone should reflect on this verse and the names of God it mentions.
2. After this verse, the surah mentions three stories that are worth reflecting on: Abraham and the king called Nimrod, the man who passed by a destroyed town, and the story of Abraham and the four birds.
3. The surah encourages giving loans in a good manner as well as charitable donations. It explains that Satan tries to dissuade people from doing that, raising the prospect that it may lead to their poverty, while God promises to grant favours in plenty.
4. The surah warns against usury stating that usurers may face a war declared by God and His messenger.
5. Verses 282-283 lay down rules concerning loans. This is clear evidence of the care Islam takes of economic matters.
6. Surah 3, The Imrans, starts by stating that the Qur'an is the criterion that distinguishes truth from falsehood. It makes clear that God does not accept any faith other than that of complete submission to Him, which is the essence of Islam.
7. The surah mentions the story of Mary's mother. It makes clear that a good intention by the parent will lead to the child growing up following the right line, under God's care.

8. The same story gives us an example of setting a high goal for one's children. Mary's mother wanted to dedicate the child she was bearing to the service of the temple in Jerusalem. Does a Muslim think of praying God to give him children so that they would serve the divine faith?

9. It is clear in this part of the surah that the faith preached by Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them) is based on God's oneness and associating no partners with Him. Whoever associates a partner with God does not follow any of these prophets.

10. We also have in this part a clear example of how to criticise communities. It shows that generalisation, even with enemies, is wrong. Consider the following verses: 'Among the people of earlier revelations there is many a one who, if you trust him with a treasure, will return it to you intact; and there is among them many a one who, if you trust him with a small gold coin, will not return it to you, unless you keep standing over him. For they say: "We have no obligation to keep faith with Gentiles." Thus they deliberately say of God what they know to be a lie'. (3: 75) 'They are not all alike. Of the people of earlier revelations there are some upright people who recite the revelations of God in the depth of the night, and prostrate themselves in worship'. (3: 113)

11. 'Devotion to God' is mentioned only in this surah. It describes scholars who educate people giving them the detailed points before the major ones, and remain patient as they explain and teach the divine faith to people: 'Be devoted servants of God, by virtue of spreading the knowledge of the Scriptures and your constant study of them'. (3: 79)

Part 4

1. We have a reference to the first building that was dedicated for worship, i.e. the Kaabah in Makkah. This is an evidence that the pilgrimage to this place is a duty.
2. Holding fast to the bond between man and God and remaining united are the most important factors of nations' strength.
3. Consider the following verse: 'You are the best community that has ever been raised for mankind; you enjoy the doing of what is right and forbid what is wrong, and you believe in God. Had the people of earlier revelations believed, it would have been for their own good. Few of them are believers, while most of them are evil-doers'. (3: 110) This verse and what comes before and after it in the surah provide a clear message about the importance of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. God mentions these ahead of believing in Him to make clear that this is an important quality of the Muslim community. It is indeed one of the main responsibilities of faith. It ensures that the religion remains clear and pure.
4. God gives this order to the believers: 'Believers, do not take for your intimate friends men other than your own folk. They will spare no effort to corrupt you. They love to see you in distress. Their hatred has already become apparent by [what they say with] their mouths, but what their hearts conceal is even much worse. We have made revelations plain to you, if you will only use your reason'. (3: 118) This verse and the ones that follow it give an early warning highlighting the danger represented in choosing bad people for close associates and advisers.

5. 'Remember when you set out from your home at an early hour to place the believers to their battle posts. God hears all and knows all'. (3: 121) This verse begins a long and detailed discussion of the Battle of Uhud. It is important to understand these verses in the light of the themes discussed in the surah, including the effect of disobeying God on the fortunes of the community. Among the worst of these are usury and the pursuit of worldly gains.

6. The surah highlights some of the qualities of pious people. These should be clearly understood so that we may endeavour to join such people. These qualities are included in the following verses: 'Hasten, all of you, to the achievement of your Lord's forgiveness, and a paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the God-fearing, who spend [in His way] in time of plenty and in time of hardship, and restrain their anger, and forgive their fellow men. God loves the benevolent. Those who, when they commit a gross indecency or wrong themselves, remember God and pray for the forgiveness of their sins - for who but God can forgive sins? - and do not knowingly persist in doing the wrong they may have done. These shall have the reward of forgiveness by their Lord, and gardens underneath which rivers flow, where they shall abide. Excellent is the reward for those who labour [well]. Many patterns have passed away before you. Go about the earth and see what was the fate of those who described the truth as lies. This is a plain exposition for mankind, as well as a guidance and an admonition for the God-fearing'. (3: 133-138)

7. 'Do not be faint of heart, and do not grieve; for you shall gain the upper hand if you are truly believers'. (3: 139) This verse gives believers a clear order not to lose heart or grieve when misfortune happens. Reversals and misfortune must never cause believers to feel humble and lose heart.

8. The surah gives further details about the Jews and their contradictions.
9. Reflect on the qualities highlighted in the Qur'an: 'Many a prophet has fought with many devout men alongside him. They never lost heart on account of what they had to suffer in God's cause, and neither did they weaken nor succumb. God loves those who are patient in adversity'. (3: 146) This verse gives a clear message to young people who are full of enthusiasm that striving for God's cause, i.e. jihad, should be preceded by instilling the right Islamic values and principles under the supervision of scholars who are totally devoted to God.
10. The last eleven verses of the surah start with: 'In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the succession of night and day, there are indeed signs for men endowed with insight'. (3: 190) This is a magnificent passage which the Prophet used to recite when he woke up. Every Muslim should reflect on the message the passage gives.
11. The fourth surah, Women, begins in this part. The surah emphasises many of the rights of vulnerable groups, such as orphans, women and those who are subjected to persecution.
12. God establishes a detailed system of inheritance which puts an end to family quarrels that are often centred around money and property.
13. Women are given their fair share of inheritance. The relevant verses that provide the details of the system of inheritance were revealed at a time when women were denied any share of inheritance. This is just one of the numerous examples of the care Islam takes of the rights of women.

14. This part concludes with a verse that specifically mentions relatives a man may not marry. These are seven relatives: 'Forbidden to you [in marriage] are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your aunts paternal and maternal, your brother's daughters and your sister's daughters'. (4: 23) This is followed by naming other women who are forbidden to marry, because of relationships of breastfeeding or marriage to a close relative.

Part 5

1. In this part we have a discourse about family relations, especially marital relations, and how to sort out disputes when they occur. The surah emphasises the concept of reconciliation.
2. Consider the following verse: 'Worship God alone and do not associate with Him any partners. Be kind to your parents and near of kin, to orphans, the needy, the neighbour who is related to you and the neighbour who is a stranger, the friend by your side, the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess.' (4: 36) It mentions ten rights due to God and to different kinds of people. We should reflect on these and consider what we need to do to fulfil them.
3. God's Messenger (peace be upon him) listened to the following verse and wept: 'How will it be [on Judgement Day] when We shall bring a witness from every community, and call you as a witness against these people? (4: 41) Should we not consider why he wept?
4. In this part some attitudes of the Children of Israel are exposed, such as their twisting of facts, lies and envy. Compare it to what happens these days.
5. God says: 'Do not covet the bounties God has bestowed more abundantly on some of you than on others' (4: 32) Some scholars point out that this is an order not to wish for what others are given. What could be said about those who deny all differences between men and women, calling for their abolition and making men and women equal?

6. The surah emphasises the importance of delivering to people what we hold in trust for them and to endeavour to do justice between people. He says: 'God commands you to deliver whatever you have been entrusted with to their rightful owners, and whenever you judge between people, to judge with justice. Most excellent is what God exhorts you to do. God hears all and sees all'. (4: 58) Everyone must consider what is entrusted to them, such as the upbringing of children, property and even one's own self, so as to do what is right by everyone. We must also be careful with our judgement of people, whether one is a judge, an arbiter between two people, or only considering what people say, even those who follow a different religion. God wants us to be fair to all.

7. The surah states a commandment to obey God, His Messenger and those who are in authority. It makes clear that when dispute arises, it should be settled in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

8. A clear trait of hypocrites is that they prefer arbitration according to man-made laws, turning away from the divine law.

9. Believers must always submit to the rule of God and His Messenger.

10. The surah censures those who recite the Qur'an but do not reflect on its teachings and do not put it in practice. God says: 'Will they not, then, try to understand the Quran? Had it issued from any but God, they would surely have found in it many an inner contradiction!' (4: 82)

11. The surah gives an order to be alert to what enemies may scheme. It urges rising in support of God's cause when there is reason for it and there is nothing to prevent one from joining it.
12. We are given a hint that Satan is keen to tempt us to commit sin, and warns against listening to his promptings.
13. To kill a believer unjustly is a very grave sin, and the surah warns of severe punishment for it.
14. Some of the rules relevant to shortening prayers when travelling are given, and some aspects of how prayer is conducted when we are in a state of fear are outlined.
15. In the fourth quarter of the surah we have a detailed discourse outlining some rules concerning marital relations, such as rebellious behaviour, fairness, separation, etc. In all these situations we must be keen to do what God bids us. A point to reflect upon.
16. Islam organises the family institution, outlining the different roles in the family. The responsibility for the family is mentioned in this surah, Women, which establishes women's rights. Is it conceivable that such responsibility in the family works to the detriment of women?
17. Further discussion of hypocrites is given, stating that they often side with God's enemies. Their approach to the fulfilment of God's orders is very lazy. The surah shows what happens to them on the Day of Judgement, and this should be a warning to us not to emulate them.

Part 6

1. In this part we have a discourse about the people of earlier revelations, what they said to Moses and their attitude towards Mary and Jesus (peace be upon them)
2. The surah warns against extremism, because it undermines faith, even though it has the appearance of strict religiosity.
3. Three quarters of this part are from the fifth surah, The Repast. It is one of the last surahs to be revealed in Madinah. It gives particular attention to contracts and covenants, whether made with people who are close to us or with others who are distant. Fulfilment of these is obligatory, even when they are made with unbelievers. A believer must always be mindful of this essential principle: 'Be true to your contracts'. (5: 1)
4. The surah includes eighteen rulings that are not mentioned anywhere else in the Qur'an. None of these is abrogated by a later ruling. Everyone should try to identify at least some of these rulings.
5. The surah starts with a detailed account of some forbidden food and an explanation of what is lawful to eat.
6. The surah includes a verse that gives the details of ablution, i.e. *wudhu*, before prayer, and some of the conditions that require it or require the grand ablution, i.e. *ghusl*.
7. The surah attaches special importance to bearing witness to the truth in all equity and to fairness with all, even with hated enemies.

8. To learn the nature of the attitude of the people of earlier revelations towards their Lord and their prophets is particularly important in how we deal with them.

9. The surah relates the story of how Moses called on his people to enter the Holy Land. It highlights the good quality of speaking out for the truth, encouraging people to do what is right. It shows how true reliance on God ensures safety and victory.

10. To kill anyone unfairly is a grave crime. The surah highlights this, as well as the gravity of spreading corruption. It praises giving life, in both the physical and mental senses.

11. This part mentions that God revealed books of guidance. It states in detail the position of those who do not judge in accordance with what God has revealed.

12. It is forbidden to take Jews and Christians for patrons. For scholars to condone or remain silent when God's law is violated is a serious matter indeed.

13. The arguments of Christians about Jesus' states are refuted. They are offered the chance to repent. All glory is due to God, the Ever Merciful Lord of the universe.

Part 7

1. This part begins with a statement of who is closest to us and who is furthest from us from among the people of earlier revelations.
2. A number of rulings are stated including atonement for oaths, the prohibition of intoxicants and gambling, the prohibition of hunting when one is in the state of consecration, i.e. *ihram*, and what reparation is due for any violation of this ruling, the will when death approaches, the number of witnesses necessary, and the ruling that applies if no Muslim witnesses are available.
3. A dialogue between Jesus and his disciples is related, showing their persistence in demanding a sign that motivates them to believe. This attitude testifies to the great merit of Prophet Muhammad's companions who were quick to implement God's orders and refrain from what He prohibited. This is contrary to the attitude of some followers of earlier prophets, as shown in this story and the story of the cow the Israelites were ordered to slaughter.
4. This dialogue emphasises the importance of patience for scholars and advocates of God's faith. Hard as they endeavour to set their followers on the right course, they may come up with strange questions and statements.
5. Surah 5, The Repast, concludes with the details of what God says to Jesus, making clear that Jesus made absolutely no claim to divinity. How strange for Christians to give him a divine status when he himself denied it.

6. Surah 6, Cattle, begins with a statement of God's oneness and the facts of prophethood and resurrection after death. It re-emphasises these concepts at the end, stating: 'Say: My prayers, my worship, my living and my dying are for God alone, the Lord of all worlds. He has no partner. Thus have I been commanded, and I shall be the first of those who surrender themselves to Him. Say: 'Am I, then, to seek a lord other than God, when He is the Lord of all things?' Whatever wrong any human being commits rests upon himself alone. No one shall be made to bear the burden of another. In time, to your Lord you all must return; and then He will tell you the truth of all that over which you were in dispute. (6: 162-164)

7. There is clear harmony between the beginning of Surah 6, Cattle, and the conclusion of Surah 5, The Repast, as the latter concludes with a dialogue that establishes that worship is due to God alone, with no partners.

8. There is strong admonition to those who turn a blind eye to God's signs and those who deny the true faith. They are warned that they may have the same fate as befell earlier communities of unbelievers.

9. Abraham's debate with his people is one of the most important in establishing the true faith with material proof and logical argument.

10. Confirming faith through contemplation of creation and the universe at large gives a sense of God's infinite majesty.

Part 8

1. This part outlines some rulings that are closely related to faith. Prominent among these are the mention of God's name when slaughtering an animal for food and forbidding eating of the meat of animals if God's name is not mentioned at the time of their slaughter, let alone those where the names of deities of unbelievers are mentioned.
2. In matters of guidance and error, man's heart is subject to God. Therefore, we appeal to God to enlighten our hearts with His guidance.
3. The surah includes some acts of worship Satan persuaded unbelievers to practise, and those unbelievers accepted them. The surah says: 'Thus have the partners they associate [with God] made the killing of their own children seem goodly to many idolaters, seeking to bring them to ruin and to confuse them in their faith. Had God willed otherwise, they would not have done so. Leave them, then, to their false inventions'. (6: 137) The surah then refutes their false inventions.
4. Ten varied orders are stated towards the end of Surah 6, Cattle. They address different aspects and practices. They should be learnt, understood, reflected upon, practised and taught to our children.
5. Consider this verse: 'Say: My prayers, my worship, my living and my dying are for God alone'. (6: 162) It shows the type of way of life Muslim should lead. There is no time in a Muslim's life or death that may be dedicated to anyone other than God. Our Lord, let us be among these whose life and death are for You alone.
6. Surah 7, The Heights, begins with a long dialogue between God and Satan. It shows how Satan seduced our first parents, Adam and Eve, and how he was keen to expose the parts of their bodies that should remain covered. Should we not be mindful of what Satan

does to tempt us, and realise that exposing our bodies is one of the shortest ways by which he leads us into error?

7. Satan reveals his plan to lead man into error: 'I shall most certainly fall upon them from the front and from the rear, and from their right and from their left; and You will find most of them ungrateful'. (7: 17) This is a clear and concise statement of Satan's design in this life. We better beware, lest we become his victims.

8. Following Adam's story with Satan, God addresses us four times as 'Children of Adam'. We will do well to pay heed.

9. The surah adds: 'Say: My Lord has only forbidden shameful deeds, be they open or secret, and all types of sin, and wrongful oppression, and that you should associate with God anything for which He has given no authority, and that you attribute to God anything of which you have no knowledge'. (7: 33) Scholars say that this verse includes the essence of all forbidden things in all divine religions.

10. The surah includes various dialogues between the dwellers of Heaven and the people destined to Hell, as well as those who stand on the Heights [with their destiny not mentioned yet]. Try to imagine yourself with one of the first two groups.

11. In the story of the people of the Heights we see a scene of the grace God bestows on His servants.

12. Those who were hostile to God's messengers used foul language in describing them. Noah's people said to him: 'We certainly see that you are in obvious error'. (7: 60) And Hud's people said to their prophet: 'We clearly see that you are weak-minded, and, truly, we think that you are a liar'. (7: 66) Such attitudes clearly show that they simply hurled abuse on their messengers, relying on no evidence to support their claims. What basis did they have in support of their accusations?

13. This part concludes with five stories of earlier prophets. These stories invite us to reflect on the causes for the punishments received by communities which stubbornly opposed God's messages.

Part 9

1. The story of Moses is the longest story in Surah 7, The Heights. It speaks about the Children of Israel and their schemes and designs. It is thus related to people in the Muslim community who follow in their footsteps, be they scholars or laymen. Moreover, it comforts Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) because of the numerous similarities between the Muslim community and that of the Children of Israel.

2. Moses suffered much from both Pharaoh and the Children of Israel. The greater his suffering the more he appealed to God for help and guidance. God never let him down.

3. Reflect on the great honour given to Moses as detailed in this verse: 'We wrote for him on the tablets all manner of admonition, clearly spelling out everything, and (said to him): 'Implement them with strength and determination, and bid your people to observe what is best in them'. (7: 145) The honour represented in granted revelations is not enough on its own to raise anyone's status with God, unless he implements such revelations with strength and call on people to do likewise.

4. When his people felt that the trial they were going through was too hard, Moses advised them to seek God's help and show patience. He told them that the whole earth belonged to God and that the ultimate triumph belongs to those who are God-fearing. We need to reflect on this.

5. God's mercy encompasses everything. God mentions that He will assign it to a certain type of His servants. We should learn their particular qualities, so that we may join them.
6. The surah mentions the case of the township by the sea, and what happened to those who bid their people to do what is right and advised them not to deliberately do wrong, as also the destiny of those who transgressed the bounds.
7. Everyone should understand the moral of the story of the one who learnt God's revelations but he discarded them. God likens him to one of the least clean of animals. Yet he was earlier exalted by means of those revelations.
8. The surah speaks about the start of creation and makes clear that no deity to which worship is addressed can be of any help to anyone.
9. Surah 8, War Gains, starts in this part and begins with a question put by the Prophet's companions about these gains. However, the surah begins by directing them to what is more important, which is to remain God-fearing and to set relations within the Muslim community on the right basis. The answer to their question about war gains is given later, after forty verses of the surah: 'Know that one-fifth of whatever booty you may acquire in war is for God and the Messenger'. (8: 41)
10. The surah speaks in detail about the Battle of Badr, how the Prophet and his companions set out to meet their enemy and some situations showing the Prophet's companions' firm belief.

Part 10

1. Surah 8, War Gains, continues its discussion of the Battle of Badr, describing its location and the Prophet's dream which God made a source of reassurance for him.
2. Consider the following three verses: 'Believers, when you meet an enemy force, be firm, and remember God often, so that you may be successful. Obey God and His Messenger and do not dispute with one another, lest you lose heart and your moral strength. Be patient in adversity, for God is with those who are patient in adversity. Do not be like those who left their homes full of self-conceit, seeking to be seen and praised by others. They debar others from the path of God; but God has knowledge of all that they do'. (8: 45-47) They include six pieces of advice that will ensure, when heeded, the achievement and continuity of victory. They also refer to Satan's scheming to deny the believers victory. They further describe the cowardice of hypocrites.
3. This surah concludes with stating the strongest bond that unites Muslims, which is their common brotherhood in supporting God's message. Their brotherhood is not based on any other bond.
4. Surah 9, Repentance, opens with a notice setting a time limit for the treaties that were concluded between the Prophet and the unbelievers. This notice specifies the state of peace or war that will occur after the time set in that notice. This is a clear message that Islam honours all agreements and covenants concluded with unbelievers.

5. The surah speaks in its early part about honouring pledges and rulings concerning the violation of agreements and treaties. It also makes clear that unbelievers may not come near to the Sacred Mosque in Makkah, and that they may not be taken as patrons.

6. The surah mentions fighting the people of earlier revelations, when Muslims are able to do so, and subduing them. It also mentions some of their false beliefs.

7. This is the only surah that mentions tending and taking care of places of worship. The surah clearly relates this to belief in God and the Day of Judgement, which means that such actions must be done in total sincerity. Hypocrites do not earn this honour because they are not ones who either physically or mentally tend and frequent such places.

8. The proper calendar is the lunar one. The surah mentions the four sacred months: Rajab, Dhul-Qaadah, Dhul-Hijjah and al-Muharram. It also speaks about maintaining the right calendar and denounces the practice of the unbelievers who changed months so as to switch the sacred months.

9. The surah encourages Muslims to promptly respond to the call to join Muslim forces fighting for God's cause when such a call is made by a true Muslim ruler.

10. The surah specifies the eight categories of beneficiaries of zakat, as it says: 'Charitable donations are only for the poor and the needy, and those who work in the administration of such donations, and those whose hearts are to be won over, for the freeing of people in bondage and debtors, and to further God's cause, and for the traveller in need. This is a duty ordained by God, and God is All-knowing, Wise'. (9:

60) Perhaps the reason is that money and property are frequently mentioned in this surah as it speaks of the hypocrites who always covet money and property. They would take it from any source and will not pay what is due to God. The same was the case with many rabbis and priests who did not only withhold due zakat payments, but also used their wealth to turn people away from God's message.

11. The surah criticises the hypocrites who are unwilling to join true believers in battle, seeking false excuses to justify staying behind.

12. The characteristics of both hypocrites and believers are explained. The surah also adds warnings to the hypocrites and a description of the reward believers are promised to have in the life to come. Everyone should look deep in one's heart to find out to which group one belongs.

13. The Prophet is given orders not to allow hypocrites to join any campaign of jihad. They add nothing except weakening the Muslims and undermining their morale and confidence. The Prophet is also told not to pray for their forgiveness and not to offer the funeral prayer for them when they die.

14. God says: 'It is those hypocrites that taunt the believers who donate freely, as well as those who have nothing to give except what they earn through their toil, and deride them all. God derides them, and painful suffering awaits them'. (9: 79) This verse highlights one of the worst characteristics of hypocrites, which is taunting people who give charitable donations. Those hypocrites give no donations, but taunt others who give what they can. Today's believers should be comforted by the fact that even the Prophet's companions, who were the best people after prophets, were not immune from such taunts.

Part 11

1. Surah 9, Repentance, continues its discussion of the status of hypocrites, then mentions bedouins, some of whom were good believers and others were not. It then speaks of the Prophet's companions who migrated with him, the Muhajirin, and those who gave them support, the Ansar. It seems like a categorisation of the different groups that formed the Madinah society.

Consider the word '*al-sabiqoon*', which means the ones to the fore leading the way, as it occurs in the following verse: 'As for the first to lead the way, of the Muhajirin and the Ansar, as well as those who follow them in [the way of] righteousness, God is well-pleased with them, and well-pleased are they with Him. He has prepared for them gardens through which running waters flow, where they shall abide forever. That is the supreme triumph'. (9: 100) The same word occurs in Surah 56, The Inevitable Event: 'And there are those to the fore, who shall be foremost. These will be brought nearest to God, in gardens of bliss. A good many of them are from earlier times and a few from later generations'. (56: 10-14) We better exert every effort to join this small group.

2. The surah mentions the mosque built by hypocrites to be a base for wicked conspiracy. God ordered the Prophet never to pray there. The surah describes the type of mosque that deserves to be frequented for sincere worship. This highlights the truth that actions must be taken for the right purpose. They are not evaluated on the basis of how they appear.

3. The surah further adds a description of believers who pledge their lives for God's sake. The Prophet and the believers are ordered not to pray for the forgiveness of unbelievers.
4. When a believer feels the scourge of a committed sin, he should remember the story of the Prophet's three companions who were left behind. This is a story worth contemplating.
5. At its end, Surah 9, Repentance, mentions people's different attitudes to the Qur'an. Everyone must study these attitudes so that we make sure not to join those who are losers.
6. In the early part of Surah 10, Jonah, God mentions several of His universal signs and sets several examples that prove God's existence and greatness.
7. The surah refutes all arguments advanced by the unbelievers, and it challenges them to produce anything similar to the Qur'an.
8. The best status that a human being can achieve is to be close to God. The question is how to achieve this: 'For certain, those who are close to God have nothing to fear, nor shall they grieve; for they do believe and remain God-fearing. Theirs are the glad tidings in the life of this world and in the life to come: there is no changing the word of God. This is the supreme triumph'. (10: 62-64) Whoever is devoid of these qualities yet claims to be close to God makes only false claims.
9. The surah mentions the story of Noah, then adds a part of the story of Moses and Pharaoh, highlighting the scene of Pharaoh's drowning, to make of him an example for later generations. The moral of the story is that to declare one's belief at the moment when death is closing in will be of no benefit.
10. The surah concludes with God's order to His messenger to remain steadfast, implement God's revelation and continue to be patient until God makes His judgement.

Part 12

1. Surah 11, Hud, begins with a discourse of God's greatness, infinite knowledge and the fact that He ensures that all His creation get their provisions.
2. One aspect of the infallibility of the Qur'an is that it challenges those who deny its being God's word. The challenge takes different forms on different occasions, such as to produce a similar Qur'an, or ten surahs like it, or even one surah. Although the Arabs at the time were most eloquent, they could not manage to produce anything like the Qur'an.
3. The surah relates the story of Noah, and gives a detailed account of the argument between him and his people. It mentions God's order to Noah to build the ark, before it gives the details of the floods. The story includes several important lessons for us to reflect upon. This is the longest account of Noah's history given in the Qur'an.
4. The dialogue between Noah and his son shows that the love of God felt by those who believe in His oneness is greater than any love, even the love of one's own children. The dialogue reflects the commitment to good manners when discussing matters with a relative who is an unbeliever, let alone a Muslim sinner. This attitude may encourage such a person to see the truth.
5. As told in this surah, the story of the Prophet Hud shows that seeking God's forgiveness is a source of physical and mental strength.
6. Hud's people accused him of lying, and that he was bewitched. He remained patient and placed his trust in God, so he was saved by God.

7. The surah presents accounts of several prophets and what they had to contend with in their efforts to call on people to believe in God's oneness. These stories show the prophets' love and compassion towards their peoples, but ultimately nothing is of benefit when prejudice takes hold of man's thinking.

8. Shu'ayb's story shows that Islam addresses the economic aspect of life and stresses the importance of organising it on the lines that earn God's pleasure.

9. The surah includes a brief outline of Moses' history with Pharaoh.

10. It adds an awesome scene of the Day of Judgement, showing the fate of those who will be miserable and the bliss enjoyed by the happy ones.

11. Surah 11, Hud, is concluded with a commandment to remain steadfast, continue to advocate God's message, regardless of what difficulties one faces. Should the advocates of Islam neglect these, they will stop their endeavours and end up losers.

12. Surah 12, Joseph, begins with a reference to dreams and they may be important, even if it is only a child's dream. It stresses the importance of listening to children.

13. Early on, the surah refers to the envy Joseph's brothers felt towards him, and that he was tried with beauty, but he was of firm belief. This ensured that in the end he was the winner.

14. Your enemies may try to harm you, and even to kill you, but you should remember God's words: 'If one remains God-fearing and patient in adversity, God will not fail to reward those who do good'. (12: 90)

15. The surah mentions the episode when the woman tried to seduce Joseph, highlighting what enabled him to resist, which was his sincere faith. How sincere are we to be able to resist temptation?

16. Joseph's story shows that when one is totally committed to the cause of God, he will continue to advocate it in all situations, even when he is in prison.

Part 13

1. Surah 12, Joseph, continues with his story, mentioning that his brothers came to him, but he required them to bring him their half-brother. This is for some good purposes including an increase in Jacob's difficulties so that his standing with God is enhanced.
2. Jacob urges his many sons not to enter the city in Egypt through the same gate, but to enter through several gates. This suggests that to avoid envious eyes is not wrong, provided that there is no exaggeration.
3. The surah portrays how Joseph's brothers were admitted before him, and mentions that the King's goblet was missing. It was part of Joseph's scheme to detain his full brother.
4. The surah adds an emotional description of Jacob's patience in adversity and his complete trust in God. Although everything around him was going wrong, his trust in God was never shaken. Soon, all would be clear. Qatadah said: Whenever Jacob met a calamity, his trust in God was sure to reduce its effect.
5. Knowledge of God, His names and attributes will ensure that we receive whatever misfortune occurs in our lives with full trust in God, as Jacob said: 'I know of God what you do not know'. (12: 86)
6. Joseph sums up the qualities that attained this status for him, highlighting fearing God and remaining patient in adversity. We should make sure of having such qualities: 'If one remains God-fearing and patient in adversity, God will not fail to reward those who do good'. (12: 90) This implies that these two qualities of fearing God and remaining patient in adversity are the most effective weapons to counter envy.

7. Joseph was exemplary in his patience, despite being subjected to hard trials. He was then given power and authority. This did not make him oblivious of his duty to thank God, acknowledge His favours, remain dutiful to his parents and pray to God to die believing in Him and submitting to Him.

8. Joseph's attitude to his brothers should be the one to emulate by all brothers in dispute. It was the Prophet's attitude towards his past enemies when he took over Makkah.

9. The surah concludes with a reference to some of God's universal signs and His sending of messengers. It urges us to understand the lessons implied in the stories related in the Qur'an. These are not mere stories for amusement, but to understand and implement.

10. Surah 13, Thunder, starts with a discourse about the universe and how it testifies for God's greatness and majesty. This takes up three consecutive verses that fill us with awe. This is followed by a reminder to address all worship to God alone. The surah then resumes outlining God's signs in the open universe and in man.

11. Reflect on this verse: 'Even if there should be a Qur'an by which mountains could be moved, or the earth cleft asunder, or the dead made to speak! For certain, God's alone is the command in all things'. (13: 31) What an awesome statement of the effect of the Qur'an on the hearts and minds of people who reflect on its meanings.

12. In the following five verses, ten qualities are mentioned. Whoever has them is sure to receive the reward of admittance into Heaven: 'Only those who are endowed with understanding keep this in mind: those who are true to their bond with God and never break their covenant; and who keep together what God has bidden to be joined; who fear their Lord and dread the terrors of the reckoning; who remain patient in adversity seeking the countenance of their

Lord, and attend to their prayers, and spend in charity, secretly and openly, out of what We provide for them, and who repel evil with good. Such will have the attainment of the [ultimate] abode: gardens of perpetual bliss, which they will enter together with the righteous from among their parents, their spouses and their offspring. The angels will come in to them from every gate'. (13: 19-23)

13. Surah 14, Abraham, begins with reference to Moses and to the fact that God sent messengers to their peoples. They were received with opposition and the infliction of harm, but they remained steadfast and persevered. Thus, they were victorious.

14. An awesome scene of the Day of Judgement is mentioned, showing how Satan dissociates himself from those who followed him in this present life. Beware, then, of the temptations of Satan, because following him in this life will mean that he will disown you in the life to come.

15. The surah gives comparisons of good and bad words, before enumerating some of the favours God bestows on man. It behoves everyone to be truly grateful for these.

16. Abraham's journey to Makkah includes great examples of placing one's full trust in God and feeling God's greatness.

17. At the end, the surah describes the destiny of the wrongdoers and the guilty on a day when the earth and the heavens are all altered. Woe to the wrongdoers: how will they fare on that day?

Part 14

1. Surah 15, al-Hijr, starts with the assurance that God will ensure that His book will be preserved intact. It comforts the Prophet by relating some events that happened to some earlier prophets.
2. The surah highlights the magnificence of God's creation in the universe, and it mentions the resurrection and its undoubted possibility.
3. The following verses are sufficient to dispel man's worry about his provisions. What matters is to exert one's effort and to place one's trust in God: 'We have spread out the earth, and placed on it firm mountains, and caused [life] of every kind to grow on it in a balanced manner. We have placed various means of livelihood on it for you, as well as for those whom you do not have to provide for. There is not a thing but with Us are its storehouses; and We send it down only in accordance with a defined measure. We send forth winds heavily loaded, then We send down water from the skies for you to drink. You are not the ones who store it up. (15: 19-22)
4. The surah gives details of the beginning of the creation of man and the jinn. It mentions the command given to Iblis to prostrate himself, but he disputed that and, as a result, he was expelled from God's grace because of his arrogance and envy. He decided to tempt us to indulge in all types of disobeying God's orders so that we would receive the same punishment he will receive. We should beware.
5. A believer may recite these two short verses: 'Tell My servants that I alone am much forgiving, ever merciful; and also, My punishment is indeed the most grievous suffering'. (15: 49-50) He will then take his way towards God, in awe and in hope. He will neither despair nor be complacent.

6. The surah gives some details of the story of Abraham, repeating the phrase of giving good news, despite the difficult situations. It does not become a believer to experience despair.
7. The story of the prophet Lot explains the consequences of indulging in gross misconduct which results in immorality and lack of modesty.
8. The end of the surah provides a cure for anyone who feels that things are weighing him down. The cure is to continue to glorify God and to worship Him. Reflect on the last two verses of the surah: 'We know that you are distressed by what they say. But extol your Lord's limitless glory and praise Him, and be among those who prostrate themselves before Him, and worship your Lord till the certainty [of death] comes to you'. (15: 97-99)
9. Surah 16, The Bees, is also called The Bounties. Reflect on these and express your gratitude to the One who has granted them. Although these are material bounties such as animals to ride, clothes, homes and shelter, etc. the surah refers to one of the greatest of these bounties, which is the revelation of the Qur'an. It is mentioned three times in the surah.
10. The surah provides numerous pieces of evidence confirming that Godhead belongs to God alone, and that all the arguments of the unbelievers have no solid foundation.
11. Having enumerated many of the bounties God has granted, the surah mentions the town that was ungrateful for God's favours and how He punished its people for their ingratitude. We should take heed and express our gratitude for God's favours and bounties so that we do not meet the same fate as that town.
12. The surah concludes with a strong recommendation to use wisdom and goodly exhortation when we call on people to follow God's guidance. We should also tolerate with patience whatever difficulty we may encounter in our way.

Part 15

1. Surah 17, The Night Journey, starts with a number of important facts about the Aqsa Mosque, the Children of Israel entry into the area and spreading corruption therein. It states that the ultimate victory will be for the better side.
2. The surah states that the Qur'an guides to that which is best in all matters, including worship, business transactions, social dealings, etc.
3. It speaks about this present life and the life to come, and how people seek advancement in one or the other. It says: 'As for those who care only for [the pleasures of] this fleeting life, We readily grant of it whatever We may please to whomever We will. In the end We consign any such person to hell, where he will burn disgraced and rejected. But those who care only for the life to come, strive for it as it should be striven for, and are true believers, are indeed the ones who will have their endeavours well rewarded. On all – these as well as those – do We bestow the bounty of your Lord. Indeed your Lord's bounty is not denied [to anyone]. See how We have bestowed more bounty on some than on others. But the life to come will be higher in rank and greater in merit'. (17: 18-21)
4. The surah outlines twenty important qualities related to the most important matters in morality and social dealings starting with: 'Your Lord has ordained that you shall worship none but Him, and that you must be kind to your parents' (17: 23) They are concluded with these verses: 'Do not walk on earth with an air of self conceit; for

you cannot rend the earth asunder, nor can you rival the mountains in height. All this is evil; odious in your Lord's sight'. (17: 37-38) It behoves everyone to consider which of these qualities one has.

5. The surah refutes all arguments made by the unbelievers, showing that the claim that God has partners is absolutely false. It mentions Satan's argument at the time when Adam was created, and it emphasises that he will continue to tempt humans to follow the wrong course. It makes clear that safety from his scheming is through sincere and complete submission to God: 'Over My servants you shall have no power'. (17: 65)

6. The surah adds God's directives to the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he must not incline, even a little, to the unbelievers. Instead, he must always seek God's support. It adds a rejection of the demands of the unbelievers and shows their arguments as false. It highlights some of God's universal signs.

7. As the surah comes to a close, it gives some comfort to the Prophet, mentioning how Pharaoh rejected Moses' message, despite the numerous miracles Moses showed.

8. Finally, the surah mentions some of the objectives of revealing the Qur'an, its effect on the hearts of believers, and the manners that should be observed when reciting it.

9. Surah 18, The Cave, includes a discourse about four matters that represent a test to human beings: religion, wealth, knowledge and power.

10. The test of religion is tackled in the story of the people of the Cave, which provides a clear example for every young person who wishes to follow the right course. It shows that staying on the right faith may require that a person abandons one's hometown and community. This may represent a trial for which one needs God's support.

11. The test of wealth is clear in the story of the man with two gardens who denies the resurrection with his friend who is poor, and their respective destinies. Passing such a test is through expressing gratitude to the One who grants such wealth and using one's resources in ways that please Him.

12. The test of knowledge is clearly seen in the story of Moses with al-Khadir. It presents clear lessons to those who seek knowledge that they must pursue their goal with diligence coupled with good manners. They should enjoin what is right and speak out against what is wrong. It is important that one should attribute knowledge to those who are versed in it, show respect of their teachers and must not precipitate results.

Part 16

1. The test of power appears in the story of Dhul-Qarnayn, which sets an example of those who use their power to establish justice in their societies.
2. Surah 18, The Cave, is concluded with scenes of the Day when people stand before God and mentions the respective destinations of believers and unbelievers.
3. The word *rahmah*, which means ‘mercy’, and its derivatives occur eighteen times in Surah 19, Mary. It is worth looking for the aspects of mercy the surah mentions and identifying its causes so that we may benefit by it.
4. The surah indirectly mentions five benefits of being God-fearing. It is useful to try to identify these.
5. Mary’s story begins with the mention of Zacharia and God’s free will. He gives Zacharia a son after he had attained to old age, despite his wife being barren. Need anyone experience despair, seeing that this could happen?
6. A detailed account is given of Mary giving birth to Jesus, his clear speech when still a newborn, stating that he is God’s servant and messenger. How can any follower of Jesus claim that he is God’s son or allege that he is the Lord?

7. The surah relates how Abraham argued with his father about the worship of idols and how he adhered to the gentle approach, addressing his father, who was an unbeliever, by his status as father. This sets a clear example for believers to address their parents with gentility when they call on them to follow the truth.

8. Brief accounts of some prophets are given, highlighting some special characteristics of each prophet, which are well worth emulating, such as being true to their promises and enjoining their families to attend to their prayers and pay their charity as mentioned in the case of Ishmael.

9. This is followed by a number of scenes of the resurrection which make believing hearts tremble, followed by refuting the arguments of those who allege that God has a son.

10. Surah 20, TaHa, begins with a detailed account of Moses' birth and upbringing and God's support during his youth and in times of weakness. It speaks of how God granted him protection, answered his prayers and gave him means of strength in delivering his message.

11. The transitory feelings of fear that Moses experienced when he was sent to Pharaoh and when he challenged the sorcerers disappeared as God was closely watching him and supported him with his brothers and with clear signs. If we are sincere and true to God, we will experience no worry.

12. Pharaoh's sorcerers were unbelievers in the morning and believers in the evening. Reflect on how quickly their belief left a clear mark on them.

13. The surah mentions God's favours bestowed on the Children of Israel as they left Egypt and went into Sinai, on their way to Palestine. God drowned Pharaoh and his army as the Children of Israel were looking on, giving them a great relief.

14. Al-Samiri made the calf tempting the Israelites to worship it during Moses' absence. He clothed this falsehood with a good appearance of the calf so as to persuade the weak-minded to accept his claims. This serves as a warning to us to beware of the people of falsehood, however they may fashion their falsehood or give it an appealing guise.

15. Towards the end of the surah, those who turn away from the truth are shown as they appear on the Day of Judgement, covered by humiliation and facing the horrors that occur on that day.

16. The surah reminds people of Satan's enmity to mankind as it relates Adam's story and how Satan tempted him. We must beware of the schemes of the enemy of our first father.

17. The surah concludes with comforting the Prophet and strengthening his resolve to deliver his message. It tells us that attending regularly to prayer in the way that pleases God is the most important factor that helps us to stand firm against our enemies assault.

Part 17

1. Surah 21, The Prophets, starts with a warning about the resurrection and that it is inevitable, stating that it is drawing close. How ready are we for it?
2. Honour and glory are all achieved in following and implementing the Qur'an: 'We have now revealed for you a Book bringing you respect. Will you not, then, use your reason?' (21: 10)
3. This is followed by a detailed discourse stating the principle of God's oneness and that all messengers delivered the same message, which is the belief in God's oneness.
4. The surah states logical arguments and shows material evidence confirming God's oneness.
5. Only a brief touch of God's punishment is sufficient to make man forget all past experience of comfort and happiness. Reflect on this verse: 'If they were to experience but a breath of your Lord's punishment, they are sure to cry, "Oh, woe betide us! We were wrongdoers indeed".' (21: 46)
6. Abraham's story of destroying the idols provides a good example of planning and wisdom, along with complete trust in God.
7. The surah includes stories of many prophets and how God punished their opponents and gave support and status to the believers.
8. The surah includes some fine examples of the strong bond prophets had with God, and how He saved them when they faced difficulties.

9. In conclusion, the surah mentions the destiny of the unbelievers and their deities, calling once more to believe in God's oneness.

10. Surah 22, The Pilgrimage, starts with warning mankind about the great hardship they will face when the Last Hour arrives, warning them also against following Satan.

11. The surah debates with the unbelievers who deny the resurrection. It cites as evidence how man is created and the way God quickens a barren land.

12. A detailed account of how the pilgrimage was made obligatory, adding a number of its essential duties and recommended practices. Particular attention is given to mental aspects.

13. Attending to the practices that have been made symbols set up by God, such as the sacrifice, is an aspect of glorifying God. Such practices are no longer considered habits, but they become acts of worship.

14. The surah mentions how the early Muslims were driven out of their hometown and follows this with the conditions required for giving people power.

15. This is followed by the mention of some of the communities who denied the messages of their prophets, touching on some of the schemes of Satan and the temptation he sets up.

16. Another discussion of the evidence testifying to God's power and the resurrection shows the fallacy of the unbelievers' arguments.

17. The surah concludes with urging people to strive for God's cause, attend to their obligatory worship and hold on to their bond with God.

Part 18

1. When we recite the qualities of believers, stated at the beginning of Surah 23, The Believers, do we ask ourselves: how many of them do I have?
2. Reflect on the story of Noah and remember that God reminds him to praise Him for having saved him from the wrongdoer folks.
3. The surah touches briefly on the histories of some prophets to reassure Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).
4. The surah portrays a scene of the termination of life with death, the blowing of the Trumpet, the destiny of those who deny God's signs and how they are rebuked in Hell.
5. The surah starts with a verse that says: 'Truly, successful shall be the believers'. (23: 1) At the end it says: 'Most certainly, the unbelievers shall never be successful'. (23: 117) What a huge gulf between the two!
6. Surah 24, Light, starts with an outline of the mandatory punishments for adultery and a false accusation of adultery. It adds a detailed ruling on the case when a person accuses his spouse of adultery, having no witnesses to prove the accusation. These rulings serve as solid fences to prevent the spread of promiscuity in society.
7. The surah then refers to the 'story of falsehood', giving us clear lessons on the need to be certain of the veracity of what we say and not to be involved in spreading rumours.

8. This story highlights the great character of Aishah, the Mother of the Believers. Therefore, we should never listen to those who hold views that are contrary to what the Qur'an says.

9. The surah gives a stern warning against spreading indecent conduct among believing men and women, as it has a serious corrupting effect on society.

10. An order is given to pardon those who might cause us some harm, particularly if such a person is a relative.

11. Clear orders are given to seek permission before entering other people's homes, to lower one's gaze and to maintain one's chastity.

12. People are advised to get married, and this is coupled with a statement that God will provide for them. If one does not have the means to get married, one should continue to maintain one's chastity. The surah makes clear that adultery and prostitution are strictly forbidden.

13. Reflect on the example God gives of His own light and pray to Him to guide you to it. Then study the example God gives of those who are deprived of God's light and pray to Him for safety. Many are those who are deprived of God's light despite having top academic qualifications.

14. The surah adds some characteristics of hypocrites and highlights rejection of God's rulings.

15. God promises believers to establish them in power on earth when they fulfil three conditions: 1) regular attendance to prayer; 2) payment of the obligatory charity, i.e. zakat; and 3) enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong.

16. The surah gives details of the rulings on the need that children should seek permission before entering private rooms. It mentions what elderly women should wear. All such rulings are part of the measures taken to protect morality which this surah outlines. It follows this with rulings on eating in relatives' homes.

17. In conclusion, the surah tells believers that they must observe good manners when they address the Prophet.

18. Surah 25, The Criterion, starts with blessings of the One who revealed the Qur'an, which is called here the 'criterion'. Everyone should consider how much of the blessings of the Qur'an one has.

19. The surah refutes all the false claims the unbelievers made about the Qur'an and the Prophet.

Part 19

1. Surah 25, The Criterion, portrays scenes of the Day of Judgement, and highlights the danger of associating with bad friends. Everyone should take care, lest one finds oneself in deep regret.
2. The surah mentions some examples of how God destroyed past communities of unbelievers. It warns the unbelievers of the Quraysh that the same destiny could befall them if they persist with their conduct.
3. God's oneness is proven by using the evidence provided by some of His signs in the universe. We better read in this universal book so as to strengthen our faith.
4. When you recite the verses that mention the qualities and characteristics of God's servants at the end of Surah 25, what thoughts do you have? Do you resolve to do like them?
5. Surah 26, The Poets, begins with comforting the Prophet in the face of the opposition he received from his own people.
6. The surah relates several stories, all of which are intended to strengthen the Prophet's resolve. All of these stories repeat in conclusion the verse that says: 'Indeed it is your Lord who is the Mighty One, the Ever Merciful'. However, few of the unbelievers will believe. God is Mighty and able to punish them. At the same time, He is most merciful to His messengers. He is bound to give them victory over their enemies.
7. In Moses' story, firm reliance on God, even in the darkest of hours, is highlighted. He says with full confidence: 'No indeed! My Lord is with me and He will guide me'. (26: 62) How admirable such certainty is!

8. A sound heart is the one which benefits a person on the Day of Judgement. Should we not examine our hearts to know whether they are sound or not?
9. When Noah called on his people to believe, they threatened him with stoning to death. Today, we feel aggrieved at a bad word said to us.
10. The Prophet Hud reminded his people of the favours God bestowed on them, and he also reminded them that the best way to show gratitude for such favours was to be God-fearing.
11. In the story of the Prophet Salih, emphasis is given to the need to disobey corrupt people who indulge in excesses. Beware of their temptations.
12. It is wrong to approve evil deeds, even if one does not practise them. Consider the fate of Lot's wife.
13. The Prophet teaches us: 'Worship God as if you see Him. If you cannot see Him, He sees you'. This is clear in the story of the Prophet Shu'ayb. Towards the end of the surah, a verse says in reference to God: 'He sees you when you stand'. (26: 218)
14. The surah concludes with a statement of the high status of the Qur'an and the order to advocate God's message.
15. At the outset, Surah 27, The Ants, mentions that the Qur'an provides guidance and brings good news to those who have certain qualities. Look for these.
16. In Moses' story with Pharaoh we note how arrogance and injustice lead to denying God's signs.
17. Reflect on the hoopoe's honesty, belief in God's oneness and refusal to be impressed by the luxuries enjoyed by the unbelievers. Belief in God's oneness is part of the nature of all animals, as well as humans.
18. The story of the prophet Solomon and the Queen of Sheba shows how kingship may be used in obedience or disobedience of God.
19. The story of the people of the prophet Salih shows that unbelievers may devise any scheme, but God has his own schemes which will be fulfilled with the unbelievers unaware.

Part 20

1. The story of the prophet Lot shows that their evil conduct may lead unbelievers to refuse to allow good people who purify themselves to settle in their midst.
2. Surah 27, The Ants, states five questions that establish the principle of God's oneness and explain the truth to all people with sound minds. We should reflect on these.
3. The surah concludes with scenes of the Day of Judgement that make hearts tremble.
4. Surah 28, The Story, begins by reassuring believers who are subjugated that their future will be better as God will establish them in their land. This is clearly seen in the story of the birth of Moses and his subsequent custody, breastfeeding and upbringing in Pharaoh's own palace.
5. The surah refers to women's role in serving God's cause, speaking of certain situations in which women played an important role: Moses' mother, his sister and the woman who advised her father to hire Moses as a shepherd.
6. The surah mentions the event when Moses killed an Egyptian. However, he did not boast about what he did. On the contrary, he acknowledged his error and sought God's forgiveness.
7. One woman came to see Moses, 'walking shyly'. What does this suggest? Modesty is life's perfume. When a woman is deprived of it, her loss is great indeed.

8. Moses travels with his family, going back to his people. He is strengthened by his brother, and this serves as an indication that a person who advocates the divine message is in need of others to help. A situation may arise when he has no support except from God. Splendid is God as our Lord Supreme and the One who gives us support.

9. The unbelievers are required to believe in Muhammad (peace be upon him) as God's Messenger, as he related to them the details of the history of the Children of Israel which he did not witness.

10. The surah highlights the power of God's creation as manifested in the succession of day and night. Had He willed, He could have made either one permanent, lasting until the Day of Judgement. Had He done so, people's life would not function.

11. The story of Korah, or Qarun, shows that when a wealthy person does not fulfil what is due to God in his wealth, it turns to be a great misfortune for him.

12. At the end of the surah there is a clear reference to how Moses had to flee from his home town but then returned to it. The Prophet is given a subtle reference that he would return to his home town in full triumph.

13. Surah 29, The Spider, begins by highlighting some of the tests that may be faced by a person who advocates God's message. These include his family, personal affliction, worldly temptation and his sense that the road ahead is very long. Implied in the surah, particularly at the end, is a demarcation of the way out of such difficulties: 'As for those who strive hard in Our cause, We shall most certainly guide them to paths that lead unto Us. God is indeed with those who do good'. (29: 69)

14. In quick succession, the surah mentions several examples of the punishment inflicted on earlier communities. This should motivate us to always consider that we are not safe from such punishment.

Part 21

1. This part starts with God's order to all Muslims that if they argue with the people of earlier revelations, they must do it only in the best manner. What can we say about arguing with other Muslims?
2. Surah 29, The Spider, concludes with an invitation to contemplate different aspects of creation in the universe. It clearly states that continuous striving for the truth will ensure receiving guidance.
3. Surah 30, The Byzantines, begins with the mention of a defeat suffered by the Byzantines and foretells that they would be victorious. It states that victory is granted by God to whomever He wills.
4. Reflect on God's denunciation of the unbelievers for being oblivious of the life to come. To concentrate on the life of this world and forget the hereafter is certainly a wrong attitude.
5. The surah mentions many signs that God has set in the universe, such as man's creation, the succession of day and night, rainfalls, etc. calling on people to contemplate these.
6. The surah also encourages us to stick to the natural choice, Islam. It tells us that the increase of pollution in land and sea is due to what people perpetrate. We must not add to it.
7. The surah then resumes speaking about God's signs in the universe and concludes with encouraging believers to remain patient in adversity.
8. Surah 31, Luqman, starts with a description of the those who do well and the reward that awaits them. It follows this with the mention of those who show great interest in idle talk to the extent that they pay for it, and what awaits them.

9. Luqman gives his son sound advice, starting with urging him to believe in God's oneness and associate no partners with Him. It follows that with the advice to be dutiful to one's parents and to bear company with them in all kindness, even though they may be unbelievers. We note that Luqman's advice started with the need to have the right faith before doing acts of worship. We should understand this clearly and link it to what is mentioned in the surah of the evidence confirming God's oneness. It states that unbelievers will appeal to God when they are facing difficulty, but then revert to associating partners with Him when things are again easy.

10. The surah concludes with an advice to get ready for the Day of Judgement and a reference to the different aspects that are known only to God.

11. Surah 32, Prostration, starts with a reference to the beginning and end of creation and that the destiny of all mankind is either to Heaven or to Hell.

12. The surah mentions some qualities of believers and the most important qualities that attains a status of leadership in religion. These are patience in adversity and unshakable faith.

13. The surah concludes with an invitation to contemplate God's signs and to dissociate oneself from stubborn rejecters.

14. Surah 33, The Confederates, begins by calling on the Prophet to be God-fearing. Yet some people get angry when they are told to do so.

15. The special status of the Prophet's wives, Mothers of the Believers, is highlighted, and the surah makes clear that none may marry them after the Prophet, just like no one may marry his own mother.

16. The surah draws vivid images from the confrontation with the Confederates, showing how Muslims and hypocrites behaved in very hard circumstances.

Part 22

1. This part mentions at the outset what the Prophet's life with his wives was like, and God's order to them to remember the grace God has bestowed on them as divine revelations were given in their homes. We should remember that our own homes increase in goodness by the recitation of the Qur'an and the implementation of the Sunnah, which is the Prophet's guidance.
2. The surah stresses the high status of the members of the Prophet's household, and the status of Muslim men and women generally.
3. The surah mentions some rulings that are related to divorce, and the hijab of the Mothers of Believers. May God bestow grace on every woman who emulates them.
4. There is clear emphasis on hijab and manners related to it. It is linked to submission to God's orders. The surah also warns about the hypocrites and their machinations. When the hijab is mentioned in a surah of the Qur'an, the hypocrites are also mentioned.
5. At the end of Surah 33, The Confederates, the destiny of the unbelievers and their followers is mentioned. The conclusion adds a reminder of the trust man has been given. It behoves everyone to consider whether they are among those who are faithful to this trust.
6. Surah 34, Sheba, starts with a refutation of the claims that God has partners and that no resurrection will take place.

7. Prophets received God's favours and bounties and expressed their gratitude. Yet many are those who are totally ungrateful.
8. The surah mentions the argument between society leaders and their followers. This argument emphasises the importance of taking the right decision when choosing whom to follow, so that we may not end up in regret.
9. The surah concludes with calling on the unbelievers to rethink their position. They are warned against reaching a time when belief will no longer be of any benefit.
10. Surah 35, The Originator, starts with reminding people of God's mercy and favours, warning them against conceit and following Satan. It adds a reminder of God's greatness and that all creation are in need of Him.
11. One rule of faith that imparts contentedness and heart certainty is mentioned at the beginning of the surah. It should always remain in front of our eyes, so that our hearts will always look up to God and to no one else. God says: 'Whatever grace God opens up to man, none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds, none other than Him can release'. (35: 2)
12. The surah presents the different categories of people who received God's book and shows the different sorts of requital received by believers and unbelievers. Everyone should try to have a good position among those who have received the book, the Qur'an, which God has vouchsafed to His Messenger (peace be upon him).
13. As the surah draws to its conclusion, it silences the unbelievers by its forceful argument. It finishes by stating a general Qur'anic rule that 'Evil scheming shall engulf none but its authors'. (35: 43)

14. Surah 36, Ya Sin, speaks at the outset about the Qur'an and the address the Prophet made to the unbelievers.
15. The surah mentions the case of those people of the township who rejected the message of God's messengers.
16. There is a wonderful account of a certain believer whom Ibn Abbas has named as Habib, the carpenter. He is very compassionate towards his people, and he is admitted into Heaven. This is the only time this case is mentioned in the Qur'an.
17. The most important lesson we learn from Habib's story is his great kindness towards his people and his fear for them. This continued even after he was admitted into Heaven. God says: 'He was told: "Enter paradise". He said: "Would that my people knew how my Lord has forgiven me my sins, and has placed me among the highly honoured!"' (36: 26-27) May God bestow mercy on Qatadah who said: 'A believer will always have a sincere advice for you. You shall never find a true believer who cheats you. When this man beheld the great favour God was bestowing on him, he expressed his wish that God would inform his people of such honour and favours'.

Part 23

1. This part starts by drawing attention to God's signs in the universe and calling on unbelievers to believe. It warns against worshipping Satan.
2. It concludes with a reaffirmation of God's power to create and bring the dead back to life.
3. Surah 37, Ranged in Ranks, starts by affirming God's oneness on the basis of the evidence that He created varied and extensive creation which is so great that it cannot be fashioned by anyone else.
4. The surah speaks of bringing the dead back to life and their requital, highlighting the blissful life of the believers in the hereafter while the unbelievers will receive painful punishment.
5. The surah adds an example of the discussion between the people of Heaven and the dwellers of Hell, explaining the serious risk one takes by having bad associates.
6. God always responds generously to the prayers of His servants. Persistent supplication will give good response. Consider what God says: 'Noah cried to Us, and We are the best to answer prayer'. (37: 75)
7. Abraham and Ishmael submitted to God's order in a way that gives us the best example of the great effect of good upbringing and its ultimate great results.
8. The surah concludes by refuting some of the arguments advanced by unbelievers. It makes clear that God's troops will always be victorious.

9. Surah 38, Sad, speaks about some types of disputes on earth and in Heaven. Let us try to reflect on these and who triumphs in the end.

10. The surah gives comfort to the Prophet, inviting him to follow in the footsteps of earlier prophets who remained patient when they were tested by adversity.

11. Consider how God placed at Solomon's disposal certain forces that no one else could master. This did not lead him to conceit. On the contrary, he was full of gratitude to God and used these favours in ways that earned God's pleasure.

12. Consider how prophets address their supplication to God in perfect politeness: 'Remember Our servant Job who cried out to his Lord: "Satan has afflicted me with weariness and suffering!"' (38: 41)

13. The surah describes the places to which the God-fearing and the transgressors shall return. It then presents Iblis's story and how he refused to prostrate himself before Adam motivated by his arrogance. This is constant behaviour of this enemy of man. We must make sure not to behave in the same manner of arrogance in any situation.

14. Surah 39, The Throngs, is focused almost entirely on the question of sincerity and true devotion. We should make sure that our worship fulfils this requirement.

Part 24

1. The start of this part is a continuation of the discussion of sincerity in the belief in God's oneness. It adds a warning to the unbelievers who have undermined sincerity in their actions and thus these actions were ruined. Hence, they ended up losers.
2. No one should despair of receiving God's mercy. God forgives all sins, no matter how grave they may be. We better hasten to repent, as this is the most important duty in a person's life.
3. Have you visualised the scene of the unbelievers being driven to Hell in throngs, while the God-fearing are conducted in throngs to Heaven? Let us do what God-fearing people do in the hope that, by the grace of God, we will be in their throngs.
4. Surah 40, The Forgiving, mentions at the outset some attributes of God: His forgiveness, acceptance of repentance and His severe punishment of those who are hardened sinners.
5. The surah refers to argument, be it right or false.
6. It also gives good news to those who repent of their sins. It is a great honour that angels pray for their forgiveness.
7. It gives a captivating discourse about the Day of Judgement and God's total and absolute authority on that day.
8. The story of the member of Pharaoh's own household who is a believer gives us an example of a spokesman for the truth who gives good counsel to his people. He puts his argument based on clear and irrefutable evidence and proofs. Sentiment is insufficient on its own.

9. The surah speaks in detail about many of God's favours and blessings, adding an explanation of the destiny of those who dispute God's revelations.

10. Surah 41, Clearly Expounded, speaks about the Qur'an and the case of those who stubbornly reject it. They are rebuked because, weak as they are, they give no positive response, while the great heavens and earth submit to God's order.

11. The surah explains that bad companions could land a person in great trouble. They may persuade their friends to disbelieve and do what is wrong.

12. The surah clearly states that unbelievers try hard to prevent people from listening to the Qur'an, because they are sure that it influences people. In our present time, they are even more wicked in their designs. Reflect on the verse that says: 'The unbelievers say: "Do not listen to this Qur'an, but drown it in frivolous talk, so that you may gain the upper hand".' (41: 26)

13. The surah also touches on some issues of the best approaches in the advocacy of God's message, and good manners and morality. These should be reflected upon.

14. The surah gives clear warnings to those who distort the meanings of God's revelations. It states the true nature of the Qur'an and explains that it provides guidance and healing.

15. At the end, the surah calls on people to contemplate God's signs within themselves and on the wide horizon. This is sure to show the truth to anyone who sincerely seeks it.

Part 25

1. Surah 42, Consultation, begins with the mention of the Qur'an and that it gives warning to the Mother City, Makkah, and its surrounding area, giving notice to mankind about the Day of the Gathering.
2. God chooses whomever He wills to deliver his messages. The messages of all prophets are essentially the same, but they differ in some detailed legislation. There is nothing unusual, then, in the fact that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was given essentially the same message as earlier prophets.
3. The surah establishes the principle of consultation as one of the essential qualities of Muslim society.
4. The surah speaks about pardoning others. This is a good principle if it leads to good results. Otherwise, it need not be considered.
5. There is a reference to God's oneness and His will to do what He wants. One such area is that he gives children of different genders to whomever He wills and leaves others without children.
6. The surah concludes with a statement that the Qur'an is a spirit that gives life to people's spirits. Everyone needs to find out how the Qur'an revives their hearts.
7. Surah 43, Gold, begins by stating the high status of the Qur'an before refuting the arguments of the unbelievers. It then speaks about following our ancestor's footsteps without considering whether they were right or wrong. Should we not consider the negative effects of blind imitation?
8. Never worry about your life and provisions. God has determined people's different standards of living and raised some people above others. He says: 'It is We who deal out to them their livelihood in the life of this world, and raise some in rank above others'. (43: 32)

9. Rather than wish for a way to get rid of a bad companion when it is too late, try not to associate with one in the first place.

10. In Moses' story, Pharaoh cites the fact that he was the king of Egypt to prove that he was better than Moses. We must never be too impressed with worldly fortunes, because God gives these to everyone, whether He loves them or not.

11. Look carefully at the scene shown towards the end of Surah 43, Gold, describing the appeal of the dwellers of Hell to Malik, its keeper. Imagine the sorrow and grief of those who are destined to Hell.

13. At the outset, Surah 44, Smoke, speaks about the revelation of the Qur'an in such a blessed night. The Qur'an, then, is a blessed book, revealed on a blessed night, in a blessed month. We should seek its blessings.

14. What is there in an unbeliever's life beside play, frivolities and doubt? It is wrong to emulate their practice.

15. Reflect, how arrogance leads people to turn away from the truth.

16. Surah 44, Smoke, concludes by showing the destiny of sinners: 'The fruit of the Zaqquq tree will be the food of the sinful'. (44: 43-44). The surah also shows the destiny of the righteous people: 'The God-fearing will certainly be in a safe position, amid gardens and fountains'. (44: 51-52)

17. At the outset, Surah 45, Kneeling Down, draws attention to the great universe and follows this by a description of the punishment meted out to the arrogant who are too proud to worship the One who has dominion over the whole universe. It then speaks about the ones who ridicule God's revelations.

18. The pursuit of one's desires may lead a person to make of them a deity he worships, although he may remain unaware.

19. The surah concludes with a vivid description of the horrors of the Last Hour and the loss felt by those who embrace falsehood. It also speaks about the reward gained by the believers and the punishment awaiting the unbelievers.

Part 26

1. At the outset, Surah 46, The Sand Dunes, cites the clear perfection of the creation of the heavens and earth as clear evidence that Godhead belongs solely to God.
2. The surah adds a discourse about the truth of the revelation of the Qur'an and the one who delivers it.
3. It urges kindness to parents and warns against showing displeasure with them.
4. In the story of the Sand Dunes we are told that God's punishment may come in the guise of some favour. Hud's people thought that the approaching clouds would bring rain, but what it rained was their destruction.
5. A point for reflection: the jinn listened to the Qur'an one time and they understood Islam and its message. Should we ask ourselves about its influence on us when we have listened to it on many occasions?
6. In conclusion, the surah calls on us to reflect on the creation of the universe, reminds us of the day when we will stand before God, and calls on us to follow prophets' example, remaining patient when we face adversity.
7. Surah 47, Muhammad, begins by encouraging believers to fight the unbelievers and mentions the respective destinies of both sides.
8. The surah describes Heaven and its bliss, as well as Hell and the suffering of its dwellers so that the one who does well is eager to go to the first while the one who does ill may be deterred.

9. The surah adds several descriptions of the hypocrites, calling on them to cure their heart disease by reflecting on the Qur'an and understanding it.

10. Surah 47, Muhammad, is concluded with clear advice to Muslims, and the most important aspect of this advice is to adhere to the truth at all times and in all situations. Unless they do, God will replace them by other people.

11. Surah 48, Victory, begins with giving the Prophet and the believers the good news that the peace treaty he concluded at al-Hudaybiyah was certain to bring good results. It describes this peace treaty as a clear victory, even though it appeared to be not so.

12. The believers are reassured and their grief is dispelled. The surah tells them that evil will encompass the hypocrites and unbelievers from all sides. Therefore, believers should never give way to despair.

13. The surah mentions the pledge given by the believers to the Prophet at al-Hudaybiyah, stating that those who gave that pledge earned a high status, while those who stayed behind remained low and they were not allowed to join the Muslims when they conquered Khaybar.

14. The surah clearly states that God was pleased by those who gave their pledges under the tree, at al-Hudaybiyah. Those who speak ill of the ones who earned God's pleasure commit a grave error.

15. The final verse in Surah 48, Victory, explains the special qualities of the victorious community which inherited the divine message. This verse says: 'Muhammad is God's Messenger; and those who are with him are firm and unyielding towards the unbelievers, full of mercy towards one another. You can see them bowing down, prostrating in prayer, seeking favour with God and His good pleasure. They bear

on their faces the marks of their prostrations. This is how they are pictured in the Torah. And in the Gospels, they are like a seed that brings forth its shoot, strengthens it, grows thick and stands firm on its stem, delighting the sowers. Through them God will enrage the unbelievers. To those of them who believe and do righteous deeds God has promised forgiveness and a rich reward'. (48: 29)

16. Surah 49, The Private Apartments, provides a great set of manners and moral values. We should identify these and make sure to implement every good value the surah highlights and refrain from every bad behaviour it condemns.

17. The surah mentions that believing rumours without checking them may lead to consequences that cause regret and sorrow. It behoves us to make sure of what we report, particularly in our times when the media broadcast all sorts of reports, without carefully checking them.

18. The surah establishes the general rule of brotherhood that is based on faith. Any flaw that occurs in it should be repaired without delay.

19. The surah then mentions some of the manners and aspects of good behaviour that every believer should adopt.

20. People earn their positions with God on the basis of piety and how God-fearing they are, not on their ancestry or social status. We should never rely on what is of little or no use.

21. Whatever good occurs to a believer, and whatever good action he finds himself doing is due to God's guidance and help. The surah says: 'They think that they have bestowed a favour upon you by having embraced Islam. Say: "Do not count your embrace of Islam a favour to me. It is indeed God who bestows a favour upon you by showing you the way to faith, if you are men of truth".' (49: 17)

22. Surah 50, Qaf, begins by mentioning that the idolaters used to deny the Prophet and his message. It then proves the truth of the resurrection by citing signs that we clearly see as proofs of God's limitless power.

23. Do you carefully watch what you say? Do you remember that two angels are assigned the task of recording every word you say: 'Every word he utters is noted down by an ever-present watcher'. (50: 18)

24. The surah's description of the throes of death leaves a clear effect. It is followed by a description of scenes of the Day of Judgement when Hell asks for more dwellers. It describes the people of Heaven who include everyone who abides by the limits set by God and turns to Him in repentance for any fault or sin committed.

25. At its end, the surah picks up again the theme with which it started, confirming the resurrection and proving it by the clear magnificence of God's creation.

26. Surah 51, The Scattering Winds, begins with the confirmation of resurrection and the recompense given to everyone. It mentions the destiny of the unbelievers and the believers.

27. Do you worry about your livelihood? God states an oath by Himself that your livelihood is determined in Heaven, just like the fact that you are given the faculty of speech.

Part 27

1. Although Lot's people were not the first community, they are mentioned first in this surah to indicate that the unbelievers of Makkah had something in common with Lot's people. The surah describes the Makkan unbelievers as 'steeped in error, heedless of the truth'. (51: 11) The Qur'an describes Lot's people as follows: 'They were reeling in their drunkenness'. (15: 72)
2. The surah adds strong criticism of the idolaters, mentioning some earlier communities which were destroyed because of their rejection of the truth. The unbelievers are thus warned that unless they accept the truth, they expose themselves to a similar fate.
3. God commands His Messenger to turn away from those who stubbornly reject his message, but He orders him to continue to remind the believers.
4. In Surah 51, God says to the Prophet: 'Go on reminding all. Such a reminder will benefit those who believe'. (51: 55) This implies that the more a person benefits by reminders the stronger is his faith, and the reverse is also true.
5. Have we fulfilled the objective stated in the following verse: 'I have not created the jinn and mankind to any end other than that they may worship Me'. (51: 56)
6. At the beginning, Surah 52, Mount Sinai, includes a warning to the unbelievers who deny the divine message. One of the sternest aspects of this warning is that the angels will be forcefully dragging them: 'On that day they will be irresistibly thrust into the fire of Hell'. (52: 13)

7. The surah speaks about the happy state of the God-fearing believers. It quotes them: 'When we were still living with our kinsfolk, we were full of fear, and so God has been gracious to us, and warded off from us suffering through the scorching wind'. (52: 26-27) Are we in the same state, so that we may hope to be protected from the scorching wind?

8. The surah sets fifteen questions in quick succession. These questions take us from one state to a totally different one, making us think of the present and what may eventually happen to us. These very questions led Jubayr ibn Mut'im to believe in Islam.

9. Surah 52, Mount Sinai, concludes with the mention of patience and worship. Do we fulfil both qualities?

10. Surah 53, The Star, starts with stating the Prophet's good qualities and confirms his purity and infallibility. It confirms that the Qur'an is a revelation from God through the angel Gabriel. It indicates that a person who will not follow divine guidance pursues nothing but his own desire.

11. The surah makes clear that the deities claimed by the unbelievers are false, and whatever they say about them is also false. They are no more than delusion that has no reality.

12. The surah warns against making such matters subject to unfounded assumption.

13. The surah ends with a reminder to the unbeliever of what happened to past communities which were similarly unbelievers. They are warned against a calamity that could soon happen to them.

14. Surah 54, The Moon, starts with a warning to the unbelievers that the Last Hour draws near, and that they will face great hardship when they are resurrected.

15. The unbelievers are reminded of what happened to past unbelieving communities. Those contemporary unbelievers were not better than the unbelievers of past communities.
16. The surah frequently repeats the fact that the Qur'an has been made easy for people to recite, memorise and understand. The problem is summed up in this repeated question: 'Will anyone take heed?'
17. Surah 55, The Lord of Grace, is 'the bride of the Qur'an', as it is described in a hadith. It enumerates many of God's blessings, and the first one it mentions is teaching the Qur'an. Let everyone of us ask oneself: how much of the Qur'an have I learnt, not merely recited?
18. The surah ends with a description of the bliss enjoyed by the dwellers of Heaven. A successful person is the one who works hard to attain it by the grace of God.
19. Surah 56, The Inevitable Event, has an awesome opening which we do well to ponder for a while, trying to visualise the scene it paints.
20. On the Day of Judgement, people are divided into three categories, on the basis of their deeds in life. Their reward is also based on the same lines. Everyone should take care not to join the category that fails the test and ends up loser.
21. The surah presents some clear evidence that we see around us, confirming that resurrection is true and to deny it is wrong.
22. The surah closes with a description of the last moments when a person dies, adding the status of the three categories mentioned at the beginning of the surah.

23. Surah 57, Iron, starts by stating God's greatness, His perfect knowledge and absolute power.

24. The outcome of the description of God's greatness is the belief in Him and spending what He has given us to serve His cause.

25. The surah mentions the light given to believers when they are in the plain where people stand on the Day of Judgement, and how the hypocrites feel as they are denied any light.

26. Reflect on this verse to see where we stand in relation to what it says: 'Is it not time for believers that their hearts should feel humble at the remembrance of God and the truth that has been bestowed from on high'. (57: 16)

27. The surah describes this present life as nothing more than fleeting enjoyment. It calls on us to hasten to earn God's forgiveness and admittance into Heaven. We should follow the guidance of the Prophet mentioned in the last part of the surah.

28. Light is mentioned twice in the surah: once when it is given to the believers in their hands when they are standing on the Day of Judgement, and another time at the end of the surah. A person who has not acquired the light of faith in this present life will not have it there.

Part 28

1. Surah 58, The Pleading, gives the rulings relevant to the case of *zihar*, when a man declares that his wife is forbidden to him as his own mother. The surah mentions that God Himself listened to a woman as she pleaded her case. Grossly mistaken are those who allege that Islam is unfair to women!
2. The surah includes a detailed discussion of secret conversations between people, setting out the manners believers should observe when they speak or remain silent.
3. The surah clearly describes God's perfect knowledge of everything, and that He reckons all people's deeds. How should this affect us at heart?
4. It exposes some of the tricks hypocrites use when they attend occasions of worship. They are physically present, but their minds and hearts remain elsewhere. Reflect on this and what Surah 9, Repentance, says about the hypocrites.
5. The surah explains the Islamic ruling of maintaining close relations with God's enemies, even if they happen to be one's own relatives.
6. Surah 59, The Gathering, speaks about the encounter between the Muslims and the Jewish tribe of al-Nadir. It shows some of God's signs as it describes the victory God's Messenger and his companions achieved, by God's grace, against those Jewish enemies.

7. The surah details the rulings about *fay'*, which refers to gains made by Muslims when no fighting takes place.
8. The surah mentions the merits of the Prophet's companions, the Muhajirin and the Ansar. It praises the subsequent generations who love them, feeling no grudge towards them. On the contrary, keeping their hearts clean of any ill feeling. Woe to everyone who hurls verbal abuse on them.
9. We then have a statement that exposes the reality of the hypocrites who colluded with that Jewish tribe. God calls them brethren of each other. God describes those hypocrites as brothers of those unbelievers.
10. The surah tells us how great the Qur'an is. Were it to descend on a mountain, the mountain would humble itself and break asunder for fear of God.
11. The surah concludes with a list of some of God's names and attributes, which incorporate an implicit warning to the Jews and their idolater and hypocrite friends. It also gives believers much needed reassurance.
12. Surah 60, Women Tested, states some of the rulings relevant to allegiance to believers and dissociation from unbelievers.
13. This religion of Islam distinguishes between combatants and non-combatants in its treatment of unbelievers. This is an aspect of its greatness.
14. The surah discusses the case of women who migrate to join the Muslims. It explains how they pledge their allegiance and adds some other relevant rulings.

15. Surah 61, The Ranks, warns against words that are left uncredited by action. It urges Muslims to fight for God's cause.
16. The surah mentions the addresses of Prophets Moses and Jesus, so as to alert us to the fact that these two prophets had numerous followers who let them down, except for those God had strengthened. This sends a message to Muslims never to let down Prophet Muhammad. They must always support him and beware of people who profess much and do little.
17. The surah states that doing a deal with God is always a truly profitable enterprise.
18. Surah 62, Friday, stresses God's majesty and denounces the Jews who do not implement what they had learnt.
19. Everyone who tried to flee death ultimately died. We should be ready for it.
20. The surah gives a warning to believers: they must not be preoccupied with trade, business or other pleasures of life so as to neglect the greatest duty towards God, which is Friday Prayer.
21. Surah 63, The Hypocrites, mentions nearly fifteen of the hypocrites' characteristics. We should be mindful of these and steer away from whatever leads to any of them.
22. The surah gives strong admonition not to take the way that leads to utter loss, making us too preoccupied with our property and children to remember God and attend to our duties towards Him.
23. Sur 64, Mutual Loss and Gain, explains God's power and knowledge, and warns against what happens on the Day of Judgement.

24. The surah's title mentions mutual loss and gain, as there will be much loss on the Day of Judgement. Everyone should make sure not to end up on the losing side.

25. The surah states a rule that is related to belief in God's will. It says: 'No calamity can ever befall anyone except by God's leave. He will guide the heart of anyone who believes in Him. God has full knowledge of all things'. (64: 11)

26. The surah warns against failure in the trial represented by spouses and children. It gives the general order to donate for God's cause. It urges us to remain God-fearing in all this.

27. Surah 65, Divorce, complements the rulings concerning divorce. Some rulings are given in surah 2, The Cow, and surah 4, Women. All these are clearly related to fearing God and doing things well. The surah then mentions past communities which disobeyed the orders of God and His messengers.

28. This surah stresses the importance of fearing God when going through the process of divorce and the effect of such fear on the fulfilment of the rights of both parties. It warns both man and wife against neglecting this essential condition because of what they may be experiencing during this difficult period.

29. The effect of fearing God will be clearly apparent as its blessing will be experienced by the pregnant divorcee and her divorcing husband who pays her maintenance, as God will facilitate things for them, giving them an easy way out of difficulty. Its good effect will be clearly felt by everyone who goes through some stressful time.

30. Surah 66, Prohibition, speaks against prohibiting what is lawful in order to please any person. It teaches wives not to irritate their husbands much.
31. The surah highlights the approach to be followed in marital life, as it speaks of how the Prophet showed his wife that he was aware of her action: 'He spoke of a part of it and passed over a part'. (66: 3)
32. The greatest thing a father gives his family is to steer them away from anything that may condemn them to Hell.
33. At the end, the surah gives two examples so that we may study them and take heed. We must in no way emulate the two unbeliever women and we must follow the example of the two believer women. What an honour for women that Muslim men and women are ordered to follow the suit of two goodly women.

Part 29

1. Surah 67, Dominion, shows some manifestations of God's universe. When we contemplate these, our feelings of awe and God's majesty are heightened.
2. The surah includes some threats to the unbelievers. How can a human being associate partners with God, when the universe and all it contains are merely some manifestations of His greatness?
3. Surah 68, The Pen, includes much emphasis on personal manners and values. It praises Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) for his sublime character. It also shows a clear example of bad manners as reflected by one of the leading unbelievers.
4. The surah relates the story of the owner of a garden. The story shows that misers end up losers.
5. Surah 69, The Inevitable Truth, gives a graphic description of the end met by some communities that rejected God's messengers. This should be a lesson for all generations.
6. The surah also gives an awesome description of the horrors of the Day of Judgement. It also gives some description of God's magnificent throne.
7. The surah concludes with an emphatic statement that the Prophet's message is undoubtedly true, and that to describe the Prophet as a poet or sorcerer reflects self-contradiction by the one who makes such description and it is totally unbecoming of any rational person.
8. Surah 70, Ways of Ascent, shows some of the horrors of the Day of Judgement that should be reflected upon.
9. The surah describes some qualities of the people of Heaven. These start with attendance to prayer and finish with it.

10. Surah 71, Noah, describes his long advocacy of his message and his tireless efforts in varying his style and approaches. Yet his people remained exceedingly stubborn.

11. The surah includes a clear reference to the need to seek God's forgiveness and its result, as well as praying for one's parents.

12. Surah 72, The Jinn, mentions the story of how a number of the jinn embraced Islam. It states that some of the jinn are believers and others are unbelievers.

13. The surah gives clear warnings to the unbelievers and shows that fortune telling and claims of knowing things from the world beyond are all false.

14. Surah 73, The Enfolded One, makes clear that worship, particularly voluntary night worship, coupled with patience in adversity are the most important factors that help believers to successfully go through any hardship they face in their advocacy of God's message.

15. Surah 74, Wrapped in Cloak, stresses the duty of advocating God's message, mentions a particular example of its opponents and the destiny of such opponents.

16. surah 75, Resurrection, describes the Day of Resurrection as well as what happens before and after it. It behoves everyone to prepare for it.

17. The word *insan*, which means 'human being', is mentioned six times in Surah 75, Resurrection. This is certainly significant and we need to reflect on its significance.

18. Surah 76, Man, only briefly mentions the suffering of the unbelievers in the life to come, but gives a very detailed account of the bliss enjoyed by the believers.

19. Surah 77, Sent Forth, confirms the resurrection using several types of evidence. Hence it repeats the warning to those who deny it: 'Woe on that day betide those who deny the truth'.

Part 30

1. Many of the surahs in this part mention events that will take place on the Day of Judgement. Look, for example, at Surah 78, The Tiding, the ending of Surah 79, The Pluckers, and surah 80, He Frowned, as well as Surah 81, The Darkening, and Surah 82, Cleaving Asunder.
2. There is much discussion of manners and morality, good and bad, in this part, as we see in Surahs 83, 89, 90, 92, 93 and 107. These need to be studied.
3. The Qur'an is highlighted in various surahs, with a stress on its truth manifested in a variety of styles. Consider, for example, the ending of Surahs 81, 84 and 86.
4. There are in this part several oaths by different creatures, such as the sun, the moon, the night and day, the morning hours, etc. The longest oath in the Qur'an is included in Surah 91, The Sun, (composed of eleven oaths), to stress a clear issue, which is man's success or failure: 'Successful is the one who keeps it [i.e. the soul] pure, and ruined is the one who corrupts it'. (91: 9-10)
5. Stories of various past communities are referred to in this part. They are also mentioned in earlier parts except for the story of the people of the pit in Surah 85, The Constellations, and the story of the people of the elephant in Surah 105. The Elephant.
6. This part invites us to reflect on life and the end faced by mankind. This should encourage us to exert greater effort and to follow the right way.

7. This part includes the first surah of the Qur'an to be revealed. This is Surah 96, The Germ-Cell. It opens with the order to read. The best writing to read is God's book. It should be understood and implemented. When we do that, we have the best proof of the abundance of favours God bestows on mankind.

8. Surah 102, Rivalry in Worldly Gain, speaks of a social ill that ruins both this life and the life to come for many people. That is coveting what is best in this life: children, wealth, etc. We better be careful.

9. The last three surahs in this part are recommended to recite at bed time, as they stress the strong bond with God, the Exalted, and disclaiming any personal power.

10. When the last two surahs were revealed, the Prophet used them, frequently repeating them. They appeal for protection against all common and special evils, and they praise God acknowledging Him as the Master, Owner and Creator of the universe and all it contains. They serve to strengthen man's bond with God.

God knows best. Peace and blessings to Prophet Muhammad, his household and all his companions.

For comments and suggestions:
omar@tadabbor.com

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هدايات الأجزاء
باللغة الإنجليزية



الكتاب، متوفر باللغات: الفرنسية، الإسبانية، الإندونيسية، والأوردية



Qassim - AlMethnab 
0163423838 
mfateh1437@gmail.com 



Riyadh - AlMogharrazat Dist 
0114544763 
malem@tdabbor.com 
0557261999 

