

## Encyclopedia of Qur'anic Chapters In Simple Language

1- Al-A'rāf

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Prophet Muhammad (PBUH & HP)*

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*Reference Book of Religion*

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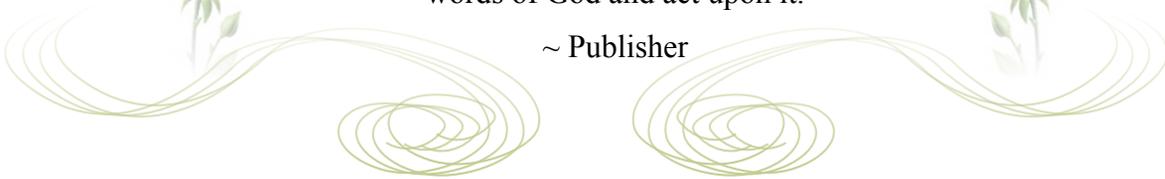


*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*



A gift to the diligent generation who ponder upon the  
words of God and act upon it.

~ Publisher





# Al-A'rāf

7  
Makki

## The Chapter at a Glance:

Sūrah “Al-A'rāf” is the 7<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Holy Qur'an. This Chapter was revealed to the Prophet (PBUH & HP) in Mecca and has 206 verses. The first verse of this Chapter begins with the disjoined letters<sup>1</sup> (Huruf Muqatta'āt) of “المص” and is pronounced as: “Alif, Lām, Mīm, Sād”.

## About the Name of the Chapter:

In the Arabic language the word “A'rāf” means an elevated place, and in the Qur'an, this is alluding to the borderland between Heaven and Hell. In verses 46-49 of Chapter Al-A'rāf, God speaks about this place and the people who will occupy it, hence why this Chapter was named A'rāf. The People of A'rāf are believers whom have stopped in a place between Paradise and Hell, and for some time will remain in A'rāf, because of some of the sins they have committed. The people of A'rāf will look at the Inhabitants of Paradise, wishing that they were in Heaven. Meanwhile, they will also look at the Residents of Hell and ask God not to place them in the Hellfire. Eventually, by the grace of God, this group of people will go to Heaven, and will be told: “Enter Heaven, you shall have no fear, nor shall you grieve.”

## General Contents of the Chapter:

Chapter Al-A'rāf, begins with briefly speaking about theology, and resurrection (Al-Ma'ad). Then it narrates the story of Adam's creation and the fate of his children. Thereafter, it recounts the fate of some of the predecessors, and provides a glimpse of the life of Noah (Nūh), Lot (Lūṭ), Jethro (Shu'aib), and Moses (Mūsā). In the end, it reiterates the topics of theology, and resurrection.

## Excerpts from the Chapter

### Wasting is Prohibited!

Wasting means neglecting God's blessings. For example, if someone leaves the water running, or throws away their half-eaten fruit, they have wasted. Using the blessings of God is a meritorious deed. However, wasting it is forbidden!

In verse 31 of Chapter Al-A'rāf, God says: “Eat and drink but, do not waste. God dislikes those who waste.”

### Dialogue between the Inhabitants of Paradise and Hell

In the Hereafter, the dwellers of Heaven will be in green and lush gardens, while the dwellers of Hell will be in the scorching fire of Hell. Neither will the People of Paradise be harmed by the Hellfire, nor will the People of Hell benefit from the blessings of Heaven. These two groups will reside in two separate locations. However, according to various Qur'anic verses, it can be concluded that in the Hereafter, sometimes these

<sup>1</sup>-29 Chapters of the Qur'an begin with “disjoined letters”. Six of them: Al-Baqarah, Āl 'Imrān, Al-Ankabūt, Ar-Rūm, Luqmān and As-Sajdah, begin with the letters “Alif, Lam, Meem”. Commentators have pointed to a variety of possible explanations for these letters, but they cannot come up with a definite answer. We may be able to say that these letters are codes between God and His Messenger.



two groups will converse together.

For example, in verse 44 of Chapter Al-A‘rāf, the dialogue between the Inhabitants of Paradise and Hell is mentioned. In this verse we read: *“And the inhabitants of Paradise will call to the Inhabitants of Hell, and say: ‘We have found what our Lord promised us is true; have you, too, found what your Lord promised about the torments of Hell is true?’ In response, the People of Hel will say: ‘Indeed, Yes’.”*

### **Bal‘am Bā‘ūrā**

During the time of Moses (PBUH), lived a scholar named Bal‘am Bā‘ūrā. He was so perfect in his servitude to God, that all his prayers were answered. Later, due to his friendship with Pharaoh, he eventually lost all his spiritual authority, becoming one of the opponents of Moses.

In verse 175 and 176 of Chapter Al-A‘rāf, Bal‘am is explicitly mentioned. His story teaches us that even the purest, and most faithful people are not safe from Satan’s temptations, and no one should think that they will never be deceived by Satan.

### **Taking Refuge in God**

Satan is very deceiving and cunning, but if we are wise, we will never be seduced by his temptations. When he tempts us to commit a wrong deed, we should seek refuge in God from him. Without a doubt, God will help us against the evils of Satan. When our hearts are engaged in the remembrance of God, it brings us peace, and gives us strength in the battle against Satan. In this case, Satan’s deceptions will be ineffective, empowering us to defeat his goal.

In verses 200 and 201 of Chapter Al-A‘rāf, we read: *“And if a temptation of Satan afflicts you, then seek refuge in God. Surely, He is All-Hearing, and All-Knowing. Verily, when the righteous are afflicted with Satan’s temptations, they remember God within their hearts, and by His blessing, they suddenly become alert and perceive clearly.”*

### **When Qur’an is Recited, Remain Quiet!**

When the Qur’an is being recited, some people talk, which is not a good action. Qur’an is the word of God. When Qur’an is being recited, it is as if God is speaking to us. It is deemed disrespectful to engage in a conversation while God is conversing to us.

In verse 204 of Chapter Al-A‘rāf, we read: *“When the Qur’an is being recited, listen to it, and remain quiet, so that you may receive God’s blessings.”*

Listening to the Qur’an, has the same blessings as reciting this Holy book. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH & HP) said: *“Whoever listens to the Book of God, they will be rewarded for each letter they hear.”*





# Al-Anfāl

8

Madani

## The Chapter at a Glance:

Sūrah “*Al-Anfāl*” is the 8<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Qur’an. This Chapter was revealed to the Prophet (PBUH & HP) in Medina and has 75 verses.

## About the Name of the Chapter:

The Arabic word “*Anfal*” refers to war spoils, forests, mines, seas, and other natural wealth and property that has no owner. This Chapter takes its name from its opening verse, in which God declares to whom these spoils rightfully belong. In this verse we read: “*They ask you about ‘Anfal’. Say: ‘Anfal’, belongs to God, and His Prophet...*”

Since verses 9-19 of this Chapter is about the “*Battle of Badr*”, this Chapter has also been entitled “*Badr*”.

## General Contents of the Chapter:

There are a wide variety of topics covered in this Chapter. A segment is dedicated to the spoils of war, and public properties such as forests, mines, etc. In another segment, the qualities of true believers, the story of the Battle of Badr, jurisprudence of Jihad (Striving in the way of God) and Khums (one fifth of gain) are expressed. In several verses, the importance of migrating for the sake of God, and the story of the Prophet’s (PBUH & HP) migration to Medina is mentioned. This Chapter also contains verses about the conflict with the hypocrites, and the way the prisoners of war should be treated. Apart from what was stated, Chapter Al-Anfāl deals with other historical, intellectual, and moral issues.

## Excerpts from the Chapter:

### Sign of Faith

A true believer has certain signs, and one of the main signs is following the commandments of God and the Prophet (PBUH & HP). A true believer continuously seeks to attain the pleasure of God and His Messenger (PBUH & HP) in every deed they perform. Many people consider themselves as a true believer, however, when one looks at their deeds, their words do not align with their actions. They continue to lie, backbite, oppress, use foul language, and treat their parents badly.

In a segment of the 1<sup>st</sup> verse of Chapter Al-Anfāl we read: “*If you are believers, obey God and His Messenger...*”, meaning that without obeying God and His Messenger (PBUH & HP), we are not true believers.

### Assistance of Angels in the Battle of Badr

The “*Battle of Badr*”, was the first military confrontation between Muslims and the disbelievers. The small army of Muslims were outnumbered on the battlefield compared to the disbelievers’ army, which was three

times larger, and was equipped with more military equipment. The disbelievers' army consisted of 950 men, 700 camels, and 100 horses, whereas the Muslim army were only 313 soldiers, with very little military equipment. In this unequal battle, God assisted the Muslims, and with all their shortcomings, Muslims won victory over the disbelievers. God sent thousands of angels to assist the Muslim army, thus increasing them in number of forces.

In verse 9 of Chapter al-Anfāl the story of Battle of Badr is narrated, in which we read: *“Recall the Battle of Badr, which you asked your Lord for help, and He answered your prayers, and promised that He shall assist you with one thousand angels in succession.”*

### **The Past has Passed**

God's benevolence is infinite. Even if someone is a disbeliever for 50 years, but repents and embraces Islam, God will openly accept their repentance. His infinite mercy is ever in the waiting to receive repentance from even the sinful. It's interesting to know that when a disbeliever becomes a Muslim, they are not obligated to make up the prayers nor the fasts they have missed. God does not put burden on them. Just that they have embraced Islam, their past is forgiven.

In verse 38 of Chapter Al-Anfāl, God says: *“Tell those who disbelieve, if they leave corruptions, and repent, their past will be forgiven.”*

### **Steadfastness in the Spiritual Struggle**

One of the obligations of Islam, is *“Jihad”*. Jihad means striving in the path of God, to an extent that a person is willing to give his life in God's path! In Islam, jihad is different based on the various circumstances. For example, the jihad of a man is to strive to earn lawful sustenance and provide for his family. While a woman's jihad, is to treat their spouse with respect and show good manners. Another example of jihad is showing resistance to the attacks of enemies. Whether it's a military or cultural attack, what's important to bear in mind is that we are expected to spend our time and power for God and in defense of the Muslims!

In verse 45 of Chapter Al-Anfāl, God says: *“O those who have faith! When you encounter a host in a battle, then stand firm, and remember God much, so that you may be prosperous.”*

### **Unity Between Aws and Khazraj**

Aws and Khazraj were two important tribes in Medina, who fought each other for 120 years and were sworn enemies. Both

tribes carried in their hearts a grudge against the other, which led to long bloody battles. No one believed that one day these two tribes would reconcile and cease their hostilities. Eventually, by God's will, these two tribes put peace into each other's hands, forgot the past, settled their disagreements, embraced Islam, and pledged their allegiance to the Prophet (PBUH & HP).

In verses 62 and 63 of Chapter Al-Anfāl, God has mentioned this story. In these two verses we read: *“It is He who strengthened you with His help and with the support of the believers and caused affection between their hearts. Had you spent all that is in the earth, you could not have caused affection between their hearts, but God caused affection between them.”*





# At-Tawbah

9  
Madani

## The Chapter at a Glance:

Sūrah “*At-Tawbah*” is the 9<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Holy Qur’an. This Chapter was revealed to the Prophet (PBUH & HP) in Medina and has 129 verses. This is the only Chapter that does not begin with “*Bismillāh ar-Raḥmān ar-Raḥīm*”<sup>2</sup> ”.

## About the Name of the Chapter:

The Arabic word “*Tawbah*” means, “*Return*”. However, according to the Qur’an and the narrations of Ahlul-Bayt (Prophet’s Family), this term means “*Showing regret over sins, and the sinner’s return to God.*” This Chapter repeatedly speaks about the topic of repentance, hence why it was named so. For example, in verse 118 of this Chapter, we read: “*Verily God is the Accepting of repentance, and Merciful.*”

## General Contents of the Chapter:

An important segment of the Chapter is about the fight against the polytheists and how the hypocrites are dangerous. Another section is about the importance of striving in the way of God (Jihad). Some verses of this Chapter refer to the deviation of Christians and Jews from the true religion, and in other verses the necessity of the unification of the Muslim community is mentioned. Other topics such as Zakat (Purification of money by spending part of it in God’s way), necessity of acquiring knowledge, story of the Prophet’s (PBUH & HP) migration, and some rules of war are cited in Chapter At-Tawbah.

## Excerpts from the Chapter:

### The Chapter without Bismillāh

Chapter At-Tawbah, does not commence with the phrase “*Bismillāh ar-Raḥmān ar-Raḥīm*”!<sup>2</sup> This verse which is present in the beginning of all Qur’anic Chapters signifies the intensity of God’s benevolence and mercy. However, the phrase “*Bismillāh*” is absent, because the Chapter begins by a wrathful tone signifying God’s anger towards the idolaters. Along with the pagans being admonished in the beginning, God wanted to express the level of his anger, by not mentioning the verse of Mercy.

Yet, there are still a total of 114 Bismillāh’s in the Qur’an, same number as the Qur’anic Chapters, because Chapter An-Naml has two Bismillāh’s.

### Pleasures of this World, Forgetting the Hereafter

During the Prophet’s time (PBUH & HP), there was a poor man named “*Tha’labah*”, who continuously participated in the congressional prayers. He loved attending the Mosque and participating in the

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2 - Please read the reason for this in the section “*Excerpts from the Chapter*”.



congressional prayers. Tha'labah would repeatedly tell the Prophet (PBUH & HP), "*O' Messenger of God! Pray so that God grants me wealth.*" The Prophet (PBUH & HP) would respond: "*Being grateful of the small wealth you have, is better than not rightfully using your immense wealth*". Tha'labah would reply: "*I swear to God, if I am granted wealth, I will remit considerably in the way of God.*"

At Tha'labah's insistence, the Prophet eventually prayed for him, and he became rich. He became so drowned in the pleasures of this world, that he neither participated in the congressional prayers nor in the Friday prayers. His heart was so much attached to worldly pleasures that he even failed to give in charity and adhere to the promise he made to the Prophet. This story is cited in verses 75-78 of Chapter At-Tawbah.

### **Dealing with the Hypocrites**

The Messenger of God (PBUH & HP) had asked for the help of Muslims for the Battle of Tabuk, and wealthy Muslims remitted their wealth in the way of God. While those who did not possess much wealth helped the Muslim army in any way possible. Some of them even worked during night to donate part of their income to the Prophet.

Meanwhile, the hypocrites ridiculed both groups. They mocked the wealthy by saying "*These people are wasting their wealth by helping the Prophet.*" Regarding the poor, they said: "*Can you even equip an army with their small donations? How will their small donations be beneficial?*"

It was after this incident that God revealed verse 79 of Chapter At-Tawbah, in which God threatened the hypocrites and criticized their misdeed of mocking the believers.

### **Traits of Abraham (PBUH)**

Abraham (Ibrāhīm) had two important traits, he was compassionate and patient. He was so sympathetic that nothing stopped him from guiding people to the right path, saving them from idolatry. Abraham (PBUH) did not like people to go astray and enter the Hellfire. Day and night, he thought about the guidance of his people, and never felt exhausted. He was patient in the face of struggles, never saying anything against the wrongdoings, and insults of idolaters.

In the Holy Qur'an, God has remembered these two exceptional characteristics of Abraham (PUBH). In verse 114 of Chapter At-Tawbah, we read: "*Verily, Ibrāhīm (PBUH) was compassionate and patient.*"





# Yūnus

10

Makki

## The Chapter at a Glance:

Sūrah “Yūnus” is the 9<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Holy Qur’an. This Chapter was revealed to the Prophet (PBUH & HP) in Mecca and has 109 verses.

## About the Name of the Chapter:

Jonah (Yūnus) is the name of one of the prophets of God. The Chapter’s name is derived from verse 98, in which the story of Jonah’s Nation is narrated. His Nation never believed in him and preserved in worshipping the idols, being cruel, ignorant, and ungrateful. So, Jonah was disappointed that his Nation would not become believers and invoked God’s wrath. However, upon seeing the signs of God’s torments, they repented, and God accepted their repentance. In verse 98 of this Chapter, a segment of the story of Jonah’s tribe is stated.

## General Contents of the Chapter:

In the beginning, the Chapter addresses the topic of revelation and expresses the status of the Prophet (PBUH & HP). Furthermore, it speaks about the wonders of creation, and refers to the life of this transient world, and the importance of paying attention to the everlasting abode. In the midst of these topics, some verses pertain to the life of Noah (Nūh), Moses (Mūsā), and Jonah (PBUT). Lastly, the stubbornness of idolaters, the presence of God in the world, warnings to sinners, and glad tidings to benefactors are among other topics mentioned in this Chapter.

## Excerpts from the Chapter:

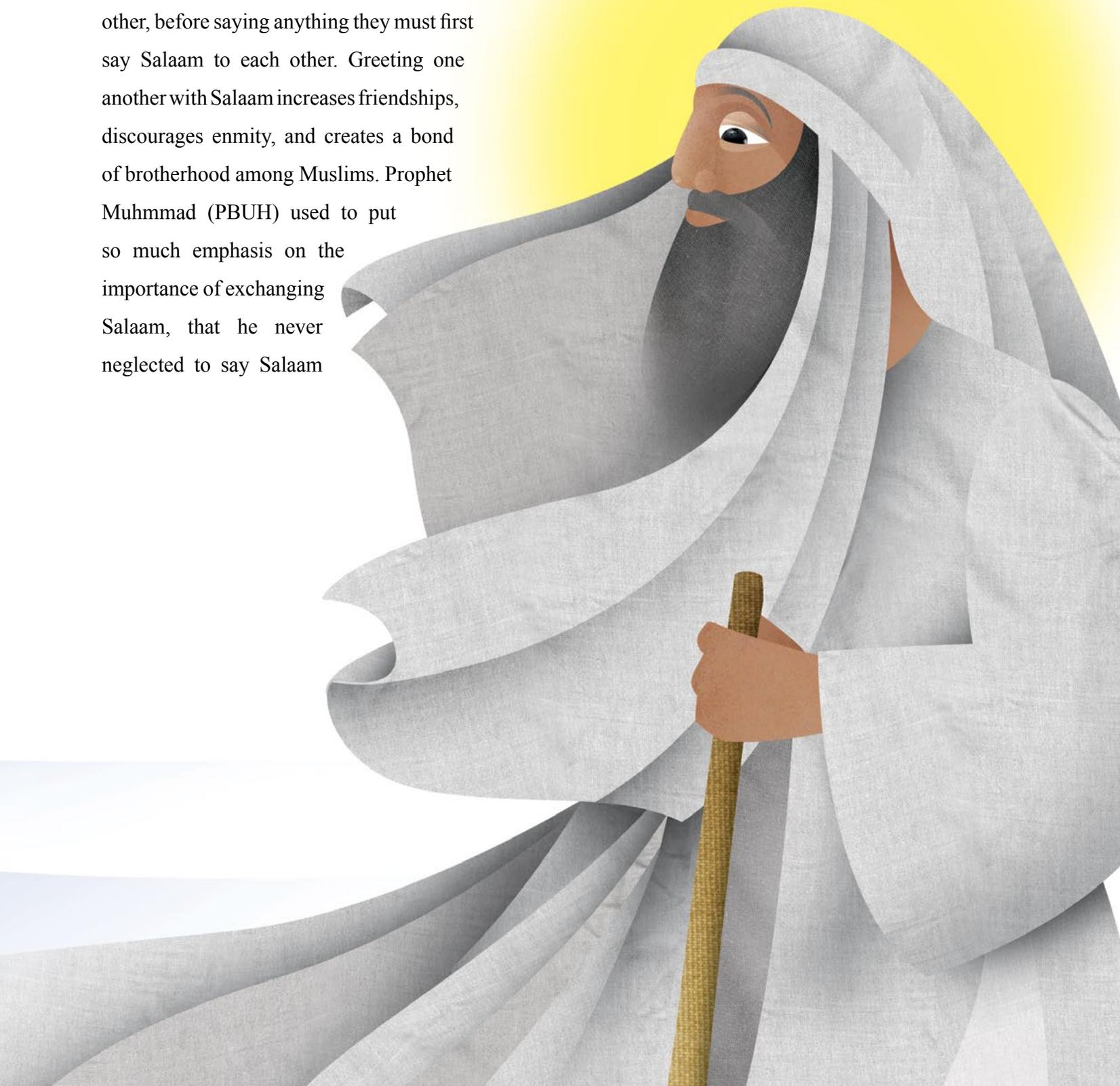
### A Celestial Calendar

The lunar and solar calendar are widely used around the world. The lunar calendar is based on the phases of the moon, in contrast to the solar calendar whose cycles are based on earth’s orbit around the sun. In the lunar calendar, each month commences with the sighting of the crescent moon. That means the new month begins when the moon is visually sighted. Then the new moon gradually grows larger, until it becomes a bright shiny circle in the sky. Thereafter, it grows smaller, until it vanishes, signaling the completion of that month. Therefore, one can adroitly determine the days of the month based on moon’s phases. The lunar month has slightly shorter days (29.53), compared to the average standard month (30.44 days). One known lunar calendar is the Islamic calendar, which Muslims use to determine religious festivals. A feature of the Islamic calendar is that a year always has 12 months, causing the lunar months to cycle through all the seasons. Each solar year the months drifts 11 to 12 days, coming back to the position it had in relation to the solar year every 33 Islamic years. This feature of the lunar year allows people around the world to celebrate

Ramadan in different seasons. Another feature of the lunar year is that it's easy to determine the beginning and the end of the month for many around the world. If the conditions permit, people can peek at the sky and determine if the new month has begun or not, and approximately what day of the month it is. In verse 5 of Chapter Yūnus, God has referred to this advantage of the moon and said: *“And God prescribed for the moon stations, so that you may determine the number of the years and the reckoning of your time.”*

### **Salaam in Paradise**

One of the most important Islamic etiquettes is giving Salaam. When two Muslims meet each other, before saying anything they must first say Salaam to each other. Greeting one another with Salaam increases friendships, discourages enmity, and creates a bond of brotherhood among Muslims. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to put so much emphasis on the importance of exchanging Salaam, that he never neglected to say Salaam



even to children. The righteous act of exchanging Salaam is not only done in this world. In Paradise, believers will also greet each other with Salaam when meeting one another. In verse 10 of Chapter Yūnus, we read: *“In Paradise, the Residents will say Salaam (Peace be upon you) as their greeting.”*

### **The Faces of the Residents of Heaven and Hell**

On the Day of Judgment, the faces of the Residents of Heaven and Hell will look distinctively different. The faces of the Residents of Hell will be dark and gloomy, covered with abasement and disgrace. Conversely, the faces of the Residents of Heaven will be bright, with no trace of humiliation and disgrace evident on their faces. In numerous Qur’anic verses, God has described the faces of Residents of Hell and Heaven to better acquaint us with their circumstances.

For example, in verses 26 and 27 of Chapter Yūnus, God says: *“For those who do good, in the Day of Judgment there will be a goodly reward, and more than this. Neither dust nor abasement shall ever spread their faces. They are the Residents of Heaven and will be there forever. But for those who have committed sins, they shall be punished based on their evil deed. The dust of shame and disgrace will cover them. Nothing will protect them from God’s torment. It is as if their faces had been covered with pieces from the darkness of night. They are the Inhabitants of the fire and will be there forever.”*

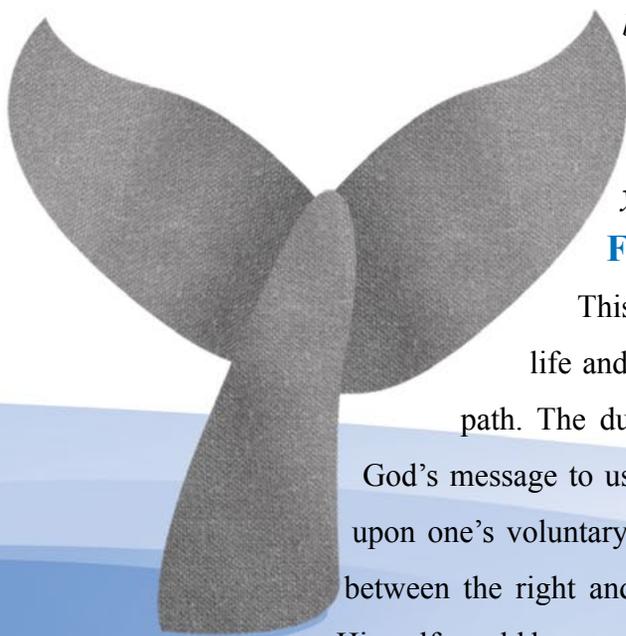
### **Time of Repentance**

Until our last breath, we can repent of our sins, and return to God. However, when death comes, our repentance is no longer accepted. Repentance at the time of death, is ineffective and out of desperation. Pharaoh also sought forgiveness at the time of his death, but God rejected his repentance.

In verses 90 and 91 of Chapter Yūnus, we read: *“When Pharaoh was about to drown in the Nile, he said: ‘I believe that there is no God but He in Whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of those that surrender to Him’. But we said to him: ‘You believe now?! While before this you disobeyed and were among the corruptors?’”*

### **Faith and Authority**

This world is a place of trials. God bestows us a few years of life and allows us to freely select between the right and wrong path. The duty of the prophets is only to compassionately convey God’s message to us. They never forced people to believe, because faith is upon one’s voluntary choice. In this world, people have the right to choose between the right and wrong path. If compulsive faith was beneficial, God Himself would have compelled people to accept faith. God has allowed mankind to be free and voluntarily choose the righteous path. In verse 99 of Chapter Yūnus, we read: *“And if your Lord had willed, He would have compelled the people till they become believers.”*





# Hūd

11

Makki

## The Chapter at a Glance:

Sūrah “*Al-Hūd*” is the 11<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Holy Qur’an. This Chapter was revealed to the Prophet (PBUH & HP) in Mecca and has 123 verses. The first verse begins with the disjointed letters<sup>3</sup> (Huruf Muqatta‘āt) of "ألر" and is pronounced as: “*Alif-Lām-Rā*”.

## About the Name of the Chapter:

Hūd was one of the prophets of God who was sent to guide the “People of Ād”. The Chapter is named after Prophet Hūd whose story has been narrated in verses 50-60.

## General Contents of the Chapter:

In this Chapter, great attention is devoted to the life of Noah (Nūḥ), who strived in the way of people’s guidance. Other sections of this Chapter narrate the life of other prophets such as Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Abraham (Ibrāhīm), Jethro (Shu’aib), Lot (Lūt), and Moses (Mūsa). This Chapter also focuses on the three important issues of resurrection (Al-Ma’ad), the fight against idolatry, and the truth of Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH & HP) message. In this Chapter, God repeatedly summons the believers to remain steadfast in His way, giving them the glad tidings of a promising future.

## Excerpts from the Chapter:

### Noah’s Stand Against the Rich Disbelievers

Noah (PBUH) invited his people to worship the One God for many years, but only a small group believed in him who were mostly the poor, and deprived people of the community.

The rich disbelievers would tell Noah (PBUH): “*Why should we believe in you, while those who have believed in you are simple minded and worthless?*” The disbelievers were referring to the poor of Noah’s Tribe as simple-minded and worthless. The wealthy disbelievers anticipated that Noah (PBUH) would leave behind this group of believers and treat them differently than the rich. However, Noah (PBUH) never did such a thing. In fact, the prophets of God never made any distinction between rich or poor, and treated all people equally. The ultimate value of a person is not determined by their wealth, but rather by their faith and morals.

Noah (PBUH) told the rich of his Tribe: “*I will never drive away the poor who believed in me.*”

The conversation held between Noah and the conceited rich disbelievers is narrated in verses 27-29 of Chapter Al-Hūd, and verses 111-115 of Chapter Ash-Shūrā.

3 - “Disjointed letters” are explained briefly in the beginning of Chapter Al-A‘rāf.

## Punishment of Noah's Son

One of those who disobeyed and never believed in Noah was his own son! Even when the devastating storm descended, Noah's son persisted in following the deviated path. While Noah (PBUH) was in the ship, he called out to his son: *“O my son! Embark with us and not be left with the disbelievers.”* However, Noah's son responded: *“I will soon take refuge in a mountain that shall save me from this storm.”*

Noah (PBUH) said: *“Today, nothing can protect you from God's punishment but His mercy.”*

Yet again, Noah's son refused to accept his father's advice. At this time, a wave came between them drowning Noah's son. In Qur'an, God has narrated the story of Noah's son to depict that even the children of the righteous can deviate from the right path. God does not have any kinsman. Even if a child of a righteous person goes astray, God will punish them in this world and the Hereafter. The story of Noah's son has been mentioned in verse 42 and 43 of Chapter Al- Hūd.



## Torment for the People of Hūd (PBUH)

Hūd (PBUH), like the other prophets, guided his Nation away from practicing polytheism and infidelity. He said to his Nation who were called “Ād”: *"O my People!" Worship God that there is no God other than Him. It is wrong for you to worship the idols. O People! I ask you no reward for propagating the message of God, for He will reward me. O People! Ask your Lord for forgiveness and repent to Him; so that He sends down from the sky abundant rain and increases your strength. Do not go astray from the truth like the wrongdoers."*

Instead of accepting the compassionate words of Hūd (PBUH), his people said: *"O Hūd! You have brought us no clear proof for your words. We shall not abandon our gods with these words, nor will we believe in you. In our opinion, our gods defeated you and took away your wisdom!"*

Hūd, who had lost hope in guiding his people, said: *"Now that you do not accept the truth, know that I have completed the mission that I had, and conveyed God's message. God will destroy you and make another group of people replace you."*

Finally, a divine punishment was descended upon the People of Ād, destroying everyone except Hūd (PBUH) and a few people who had embraced his message.

The conversation of Hūd (PBUH) with his People is mentioned in verses 50-57 of the Chapter.

## Cries of the Inhabitants of Hell

The sufferings of Hell make sinners continuously scream and moan, which depicts their endless sorrows. Due to these cries, the atmosphere of Hell is dreadful, increasing the discomfort of the inhabitants of Hell. In Chapter Al-Hūd verse 106, God explains the fate of the ones in Hell and refers to their painful screams. In this verse, we read: *"As for those who are wretched in the Hereafter, will be in the fire of Hell, where they will groan and shout."*

## Prayer, the Cleanser of Soul

One of the benefits of prayer is that it cleanses sins. According to a narration by the Prophet (PBUH & HP), someone who prays five times a day, it is as if he goes in a river five times and washes himself. This means that every day, five times, he purifies himself from his sins. Chapter Al-Hūd verse 114, refers to this same subject. In this verse, after God invites us to offer prayers, He says: *"Surely goodness destroys evil"*, which means, every good deed, especially prayer, destroys sins, purifying the polluted soul.





# Yūsuf

12

Makki

## The Chapter at a Glance:

Sūrah "Yūsuf" is the 12<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Holy Qur'an. This Chapter was revealed to the Prophet (PBUH) in Mecca and has 111 verses. The first verse of the Chapter begins with the disjointed letters<sup>4</sup> (Hurūf Muqatta'āt) of "الر" and is pronounced as: "Alif-Lām-Rā"

## About the Name of the Chapter:

Joseph (Yūsuf) was one of God's prophets and the son of Jacob (Yā'qub). Likewise, Jacob (PBUH) was one of the prophets of God and from the descendants of Abraham (Ibrāhīm). Almost the entire Chapter is about the life of Joseph (PBUH), and hence why this Chapter was named after him. His life story begins from verse 4 and continues until verse 101. This Chapter is also known as "Ahsan-ul-Qasas" (Best of Stories).

## General Contents of the Chapter:

Except the first and last few verses, this Chapter covers the beautiful life story and teachings of Joseph. The story of Joseph (PBUH) begins with a dream and continues until he becomes the Minister of Egypt.

## Excerpts from the Chapter:

### The Story of a Dream

The Qur'an starts the story of Joseph with a dream. In childhood, Joseph (PBUH), told his father, Jacob, that he had a dream where eleven stars, the sun, and the moon prostrated before him. Joseph (PBUH) had eleven brothers. Jacob (PBUH) was able to interpret dreams. After he heard the dream, he knew that Joseph (PBUH) had a bright future ahead of him and would be able to reach an exalted status. He said to Joseph (PBUH): "Son! Do not share your dream with your brothers for they will make an evil plan against you." Joseph (PBUH) did not share his dream with his brothers, but they found out through other means. Joseph's (PBUH) brothers were always jealous of him, but the dream made them more envious. The story of Joseph's (PBUH) dream is mentioned in verse 4 of Chapter Yūsuf.

### Dishonest Brothers

One day, their envy boiled over, and the brothers threw Joseph in a well. They returned to their father, Jacob (PBUH), falsely claiming that: "Joseph was devoured by wolves". To convince their father of their lie, they showed him Joseph's bloody shirt, but Jacob (PBUH) did not believe them. Joseph's (PBUH) shirt was in good condition. Was it even possible for someone to be devoured by wolves and their shirt not to be torn? This sign was enough to reveal the lies of the brothers of Joseph (PBUH).

4 - "Disjointed letters" are explained briefly in the beginning of Chapter Al-A'rāf.



In verse 18 of Chapter Yūsuf, God refers to the blood stain on Joseph’s (PBUH) shirt as “*false blood*”, indicating that it was not real blood.

### **From Well to the Palace**

After Joseph’s (PBUH) brothers threw him in the well, a caravan stopped at the well to get water. When the members of the caravan threw their buckets down in the well, Joseph clung to the rope of the bucket and came up. The people of the caravan were pleased to see Joseph (PBUH). They took Joseph to Egypt and sold him to the ‘Aziz of Egypt as a slave for a small fee. Potiphar (‘Aziz of Egypt) was a high-ranking member of Pharaoh’s government. Potiphar took Joseph (PBUH) to his house. Potiphar’s wife was Zulaikha. She became extremely happy once she saw Joseph (PBUH). Potiphar and Zulaikha did not have any children. Therefore, they made Joseph (PBUH) a member of their family, providing all amenities for a comfortable life. Eventually this is how God rescued Joseph from the well and placed him in the palace of Potiphar. This section of Joseph’s (PBUH) life is mentioned in verses 19-21.

### **The Healing Shirt**

After the brothers of Joseph (PBUH) threw him in the well, their father, Jacob (PBUH) was caught up in great sorrow. Jacob (PBUH) wept so much while grieving for Joseph (PBUH) that he lost his eyesight. He was blind for some time until he regained his eyesight with a miracle. When the brothers of Joseph (PBUH) found him in Egypt, Joseph (PBUH) gave them his shirt and said: “*Take my shirt and lay it over my father's face for him to recover his sight.*” The brothers of Joseph (PBUH) took the shirt to Canaan and placed it on Jacob’s face. By the will of God, the eyes of Jacob (PBUH) were healed, and he regained his sight. This event is mentioned in verses 93-96 of the Chapter.

### **Interpretation of Joseph’s (PBUH) Dream**

After the various tribulations that happened to Joseph (PBUH), he came to assume the position of prime minister, reaching a high status within Pharaoh’s government. After coming to power, Joseph never took revenge on his oppressive brothers and never punished them, but rather forgave them. He even invited them to return to Canaan and return with Jacob (PBUH) and other family members to Egypt. When Joseph’s parents and his eleven brothers came to Egypt and arrived at his palace, respecting him, Joseph’s childhood dream (PBUH) came to reality. In his palace he told his father: “*O father! This is the interpretation of my past dream that my Lord brought to reality*”. This sentence uttered by Joseph is mentioned in verse 100 of this Chapter.





*The Qur'an is a captivating book, containing God's words and His lessons for us! It might be hard to believe, but in His book, God speaks about various life related issues, and guides us to the correct way of life! This book is a mirror image of the Qur'an. It introduces all the Qur'anic Chapters in sequence, and describes some of the lessons of each Chapter in a concise and practical manner. Indeed, whoever reads this book will become acquainted with many Qur'anic lessons.*

