

Summary of Juz 26

Surat al-Ahqaf - The Sand Dunes

Juz 26 starts with Surat al-Ahqaf, it was revealed before the migration of the Prophet ﷺ to Madinah. A group of Jinn visited him on his return from Taif. The opening describes the helplessness of the idols and contrasts it with the creative power of Allah. Then explains how Allah communicated with humanity through His messengers, so the coming of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was nothing odd. In fact, his coming was forecast by Musa عليه السلام in the Torah and Isa عليه السلام in the Gospels. The Quran comments on the suspicious mind of the disbelievers: "The disbelievers say to the believers, "If this religion was any good then you wouldn't have believed in it before us" (11).

The next section encourages the development of parent-child relationships. The mother bears the child, suckles and rears it until s/he becomes strong and mature. Just as we should be grateful to our parents and appreciative of what they have blessed us with, we should be thankful to Allah, our Lord and Creator.

The Surah warns the Makkans of the demise of the People of the Sand Dunes because they were rebellious. Finally, the story of a band of Jinn who visited the Prophet is related as encouragement.

Surat Muhammad

Juz 26 continues with Surat Muhammad, which was revealed in Madinah, before the Battle of Badr. In the second year of Hijra, Muslims were given permission to take up arms against their oppressors. "Permission to fight is given to those who were attacked and oppressed" (Surat al-Hajj: 39). Muslim scholars believe war is permissible in defence only. Offensive invasions are not permitted. This marks the new era of hostility. The Surah opens by describing the continual conflict between truth and falsehood and urges the believers to be steadfast. Never surrender to oppressors and stand up against oppression. War is necessary to defend people's rights and freedoms, and to defeat evil. This is followed by images of the luxuries of Paradise; "There are rivers of water with never-changing taste and smell; rivers of milk whose taste never changes; rivers of wine that give pleasure to their drinkers; and rivers of pure honey; for them are all kinds of fruits" (15).

There were many new Muslims in Madinah, some were unsure and confused, even hostile. The following sections expose their plots and cynicism about the Prophet ﷺ. They were terrified of having to fight for the truth. Just as the Surah opened by highlighting the human tendency to war, it closes by encouraging the faithful to be ever-vigilant, willing and prepared to fight tyranny. This is a costly business, so they are urged to spend in the path of Allah. Selfishness and self-centeredness are sternly condemned.

Surat al-Fath - The Victory

Juz 26 continues with Surat al Fath. It was revealed in the sixth year of Hijra, after the Treaty of Hudaibiya. The Prophet ﷺ had a dream that he was performing the Umrah. The next day he informed his disciples. There was a lot of excitement, and preparations began for the sacred journey. Nearly 1400 devotees participated, with their sacrificial animals marked on their flanks, and garlands around their necks. When the Makkans heard of the coming of the Muslims, they were suspicious. They faced the dilemma of whether to violate the time-honoured Arabian custom of allowing anyone to enter Makkah or to stop them. The Muslims were stopped at Hudaibiya, eight miles outside the city. This was an unprecedented move in their history.

In the meantime, the Prophet ﷺ also dispatched his envoy, Usman ibn Affan, to seek the Quraysh's permission to perform the Umrah. Usman made it clear that the Muslims came only to perform their religious duty and were not armed nor prepared to fight. However, the Quraysh refused to listen and

held him captive. During this tense period of negotiation, a rumour spread that he had been martyred. The Prophet ﷺ took a pledge of loyalty to die for the blood of Usman. A few days later, however, the rumour proved to be false, and Usman returned safely.

The Quraysh realised their mistake and agreed to a peace treaty. The two parties would not engage in any kind of warfare for the next ten years and the Muslims would be allowed to do Umrah the following year. This Surah was revealed during the return journey and pronounced a great victory.

Surat al-Hujarat - The Living Quarters

Juz 26 continues with Surat al-Hujarat. This Medinan Surah was revealed in the ninth year of Hijra, following two events: a delegation of new Muslims from the Bedouin tribe of Bani Tamim visited the Prophet ﷺ and began shouting for him to come out of his living room. The Surah disapproved of their behaviour and laid out simple rules for respecting the leader. The second event concerned the misinformation given to the Prophet ﷺ by one of the Zakat collectors about the tribe of Bani Mustaliq. He informed the Messenger ﷺ that the tribe was unwilling to pay the Zakat but this turned out to be untrue. This was condemned by the revelation.

This Surah offers moral guidance about living in a community and how to develop trust and overcome suspicions. In verse 13, the unity of humanity is stressed, uprooting any kind of discrimination based on colour, creed and caste. It points out our common origin: Adam and Eve. It teaches that honour and nobility are achieved through being Allah-conscious, mindful of Him and having a strong character. This is the foundation that creates equality and fairness in society. It is these values that lead to peace and trust among people.

The last passage of the Surah returns to the ill-mannered Bedouins and seeks to clarify the difference between true faith and ritual formalities of the religion, urging them to acknowledge Allah's favour. Faith is a special favour of Allah.

Surat Qaf

The last Surah of Juz 26 is Surat Qaf. A Makkan Surah that argues for the truth of Resurrection and Divine Judgement. The sceptics are flabbergasted by the idea of life after death. The Quran responds to them by providing visible evidence from nature. The creation of the heavens and the Earth and the mountains and date groves from which they eat. Then evidence from human history: the ruins of previous rebellious nations. The Surah eloquently asks, "Has the first creation tired Us out? Not at all, but they are doubtful about the possibility of a new creation" (15).

The next section is: "We created the human being, and We know exactly what his desires are urging him to do; in fact, We are nearer to him than his jugular vein" (16). This verse highlights human whims, desires and lusts but warns that everything humans say and do is accurately recorded for, on Judgement Day, this will lead either to Paradise or Hell. Here, the Surah vividly paints contrasting scenes of Paradise and Hell. Towards its close, it reminds the reader of Allah's creative power and how easy it is for Him to create. Man is advised to celebrate the glory and praise of Allah. The Prophet ﷺ is prompted: continue to remind people but you can't force religion into people's hearts.