

## Yunus (Jonah)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

### Introduction

From here we begin the third and the largest group of surahs according to the *Makkan-Madinan* division. The first group has one *Makkan* and four *Madinan* surahs, the second with two *Makkan* and two *Madinan* and the third group starting from this surah has fourteen *Makkan* surahs and only one *Madinan* surah i.e. surah *Al-Nur*. This group is further divided into sub-groups with three surahs in every sub-group. These are divided in such a way that each sub-group has two surahs that form a pair and a unique surah that does not form a pair with any other surah according to the subject matter.

We mentioned in the introduction of *Qur'an* that it is also divided into seven parts of approximately equal length, called *Manzil*. According to this division the second *Manzil* ended with surah *At-Tauba* and from this surah we are going to start the third *Manzil*, which has seven surahs in all.

This sub-group of the third *Makkan-Madinan* group has three surahs, *Yunus (Jonah)*, *Hud* and surah *Yusuf (Joseph)*. *Yunus (Jonah)* and *Hud* form a pair while surah *Yusuf (Joseph)* does not form a pair with any other surah. One of the similarities between surah *Yunus (Jonah)* and surah *Hud* is that they are named after Messengers of Allah (SWT) and both have a reciprocal relation to the subjects dealt in them.

Surah *Yunus (Jonah)* consists of 10 *rukus* with 109 *ayat*. It was revealed during the last stage of Prophet's stay at *Makkah* and it seems that it was revealed all at once, for the discourses are closely connected to each other from the beginning till the end. As far as its subject matter is concerned—the proof of the basic objectives of *Qur'an* and Islam, such as the Oneness of Allah (SWT), the mission of His Messenger (SAW) and the inevitability of the Hereafter—have been provided in this surah. Along with these subjects, some lessons and stories from the past generations have been introduced to warn people who do not pay heed to the signs of Allah (SWT).

(1) "Alif-Lam-Ra. These are the Ayat of the Book of Wisdom."

The surah starts with *huruf al-muqatta'at*, which have already been commented upon in surah *Al-Baqarah*. In the second part of this *ayah*, the Book mentioned refers to the Glorious *Qur'an* in which there is wisdom.

(2) *"Is it wonder for mankind that We have sent Our revelation to a man from among themselves (saying): "Warn mankind and give good news to those who believe that they shall have a footing of truth with their Lord." (But) the disbelievers say: "This is indeed an evident sorcerer."*

This *ayah* along with numerous similar ayaat in the *Qur'an* refutes the absurd idea of the disbelievers that a Prophet of Allah (SWT) cannot be a human being. But Allah (SWT) asks if it seem strange to the disbelievers that He entrusted a human being with the mission of warning the disobedient from His punishment and giving the good news to His obedient servants. In fact sending a Messenger from among themselves is perfectly intelligible. In reply the disbelievers have nothing to answer but to say that Prophet (SAW) and the message that he preaches is nothing but a manifest sorcery.

(3) *"Surely, your Lord is Allah (SWT) Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days and then rose over the Throne, disposing the affair of all things. No intercessor (can plead with Him) except after His Leave. That is Allah (SWT), your Lord; so worship Him (Alone). Then, will you not remember?"*

The day mentioned here does not refer to the day and night that we are familiar with, rather it means six long periods or epochs. Then Allah (SWT) stated that He rose over the throne directing the affairs of the universe i.e. He rose over the throne in a manner that suits His Majesty. After that it was stated that there is no intercession except after His permission, which means that unless He Himself gives the permission to intercede, no one even a Messenger can intercede before Him. Then, in the last part of this *ayah*, Allah (SWT) commands His servants to worship Him alone without any partners.

(4) *"To Him is the return of all of you. The Promise of Allah (SWT) is true. It is He Who begins the creation and then will repeat it, that He may reward with justice those who believed and did deeds of righteousness. But those who disbelieved will have a drink of boiling fluids and painful torment because they were unbelievers."*

This *ayah* describes in a nutshell the belief in the Hereafter. It has been asserted emphatically that there is nothing surprising about it that after this world has been eliminated, Allah (SWT) will once again bring everyone into being as He brought them about in the first place. This is for the sole purpose that those who believed in Him and performed righteous deeds be rewarded with His blessings and those who disbelieved in Him be subjected to severe punishment and humiliation.

(5) *“It is He Who made the sun a shining thing and the moon as a light and measured out its (their) stages, that you might know the number of years and the reckoning. Allah (SWT) did not create this but in truth. He explains the revelations in detail for people who have knowledge.”*

This *ayah* mentions some signs that Allah (SWT) has created, which prove His perfect power and His great might. He created the two sources of light, the sun and the moon and then determined ideal measures of their movement, so that His creatures can calculate the time for their convenience. Then in the end Allah (SWT) said: *“Allah (SWT) did not create this but in truth. He explains the revelations in detail for people who have knowledge.”* i.e. Allah (SWT) did not create all this in vain but with a definite purpose and these signs are proofs for people who understand.

(6) *“Verily, in the alternation of the night and the day and in all that Allah (SWT) has created in the heavens and the earth are signs for those people who fear Him much.”*

This *ayah* gives the proofs of the oneness of Allah (SWT) in the heavens and on this earth. There are galaxies and planets in this vast universe and rivers, mountains, trees, deserts and different kinds of animals on the planet earth, and the sun causing the alternation of day and night with the rotation of the earth. All these are clear signs and proofs of Allah’s Oneness for those who are intelligent, have sound comprehension and are God-fearing.

(7) *“Verily, those who hope not for their meeting with Us, but are pleased and satisfied with the life of the present world, and those who are heedless of Our revelations.”* i.e. those who do not pay heed to the signs of Allah (SWT) and disbelieve in the meeting with Him i.e. in the Hereafter. They do not even recognize their own souls and thus do not feel the urge to discover for what reason had Allah (SWT) blessed them with

intelligence, reason and commonsense in a degree much higher than the animals. Instead, they prefer to live their lives at the level of common animals and are pleased with it.

(8) *“Those, their abode will be the Fire, because of what they used to earn.”* i.e. this is their punishment for the evil that they used to commit in this world.

(9) *“Verily, those who believe and do deeds of righteousness, their Lord will guide them through their Faith; under them will flow rivers in the Gardens of delight.”*

On the other hand, Allah (SWT) promises good reward for those who recognized their Lord through His signs and revelations and performed righteous deeds. As a return for their belief, He will make them enter into Paradise, a place of unimaginable and limitless bliss.

(10) *“Their way of request therein will be ‘Glory to You, O Allah (SWT)!’ and ‘peace’ will be their greetings therein (Paradise)! and the close of their request will be: All the praises and thanks are to Allah (SWT), the Lord of Worlds.”*

This *ayah* mentions the condition of the people of Paradise, they will glorify their Lord in their initial prayer, in response to which they will receive the greeting of *Salam* from their Lord. Then they will praise their Lord for the increasing blessings and bounties that He has bestowed upon them.

(11) *“And were Allah (SWT) to hasten for mankind the evil as He hastens for them the good then their respite would already have expired. So We leave those who expect not their meeting with Us, in their insolence, wandering blindly in distraction.”*

This *ayah* means that if Allah (SWT) would have willed to hasten for human beings the punishment, he would have done so. But in His infinite Wisdom, He prefers not to do so. In other words, if He would have answered their wish to have evil or punishment sent upon them just like He hastens to answer their prayers for good, then they would have been destroyed by now. In the end of this *ayah* Allah (SWT) said that those who do not pay heed to the signs of Allah (SWT) and disbelieve in the Hereafter, He gives them respite and lets them increase in their arrogance and deviation even further.

(12) *"And when affliction touches man, he invokes Us, lying down on his side, or sitting or standing. But when We have removed his harm from him, he passes on his way as if he had never invoked Us for a harm that touched him! Thus it seems fair to the transgressors that which they used to do."*

This *ayah* admonishes those who when afflicted with troubles and calamities, invoke Allah (SWT) for help repeatedly lying, sitting or standing. But as soon as He removes distress from them, they show ingratitude to Him and forget that they had ever invoked Him for help and they act as if nothing had ever happened. Therefore, Allah (SWT) says that the foul deeds of such transgressors and extravagants are made fair-seeming to them.

(13) *"And indeed, We destroyed generations before you, when they did wrong while their Messengers came to them with clear proofs, but they were not such as to believe! Thus do We requite the criminals."*

This refers to the people of Hud (AS), the people of Salih (AS) and the people of Noah (AS), who were completely destroyed because of their rejection and disobedience of the Messengers and the clear signs and proofs that these Messengers brought to them. This is how Allah (SWT) recompense the criminals.

(14) *"Then We made you vicegerents on earth after them, so that We might see how you behave!"* i.e. after the destruction of the previous generations We made you vicegerents on this earth in order to see how you would act and to test your obedience to Him and His Messenger.

(15) *"And when Our Clear revelations are recited unto them, those who hope not for their meeting with Us, say: Bring us a Qur'an other than this, or change it. "Say: It is not for me to change it on my own accord; I only follow that which is revealed unto me. Verily, I fear the torment of the Great Day if I were to disobey my Lord.""*

This *ayah* again emphasizes the importance of having belief in the Hereafter. Those who believe in the coming of the *Last Day* along with other articles of faith, they are surely guided, but those who deny their meeting with Allah (SWT) do not pay any heed to His signs and revelations. Instead they bring up nonsensical questions like the idolators of *Makkah* used to ask the Prophet (SAW). They asked him to either change this *Qur'an* as it was too rigid for them

to follow and bring another one which is easy for them to follow i.e. something to suit their own desires, or change it altogether. But Allah (SWT) commanded the Prophet (SAW) to tell them that it is not in my power and authority to change it, for I only follow what is revealed to me and if I do not do so then I fear the punishment that falls on those who disobey their Lord.

(16) *"Say: "If Allah (SWT) had so willed, I should not have recited it to you nor would He have made it known to you. Verily, I have stayed amongst you a life time before this. Have you then no sense?""*

Allah (SWT) further commanded the Prophet (SAW) to proclaim that if He had willed, I would have not recited this *Qur'an* to you nor would He let them know about that, for I brought this *Qur'an* only with His permission and not according to my own will. Further the Prophet (SAW) challenged the disbelievers to prove that he had fabricated this Book himself, for he has spent 40 years amongst them and they are fully aware of his truthfulness and honesty. So don't they have any sense to judge what is right and what is wrong.

(17) *"So who does more wrong than he who forges a lie against Allah (SWT) or denies His revelations? Surely, the criminals will never be successful!"*

This is one of the several occasions where this *ayah* is mentioned. For details, refer to *ayah* 21 of surah *Al-An'am*.

(18) *"And they worship besides Allah (SWT) things that hurt them not, nor profit them, and they say: "These are our intercessors with Allah (SWT)." Say: "Do you inform Allah (SWT) of that which He knows not in the heavens and on the earth?" Glorified and Exalted be He above all that they associate with Him!"*

This *ayah* indicates that the pagan Arabs did not disbelieve in Allah (SWT). Rather if they were asked as to who is the creator of the heavens and the earth, they would reply, it is Allah (SWT). But at the same time they also believed in other false deities which they thought would intercede to Him on their behalf and thus they worshipped them besides Him. Similarly, most of the 'so-called' Muslims today have devoted some parts of their worship to other than Allah (SWT) like Prophets or saints and believe that they will intercede to Him on their behalf. In the last part of this *ayah* Allah (SWT) asked His Prophet (SAW) to tell

them if they inform Allah (SWT) of what may not happen in the heavens and in the earth. This means that to pretend that there are other deities besides Allah (SWT) is to invent lies against Him, for there is nothing in the heavens and the earth that He does not know. Then the Prophet (SAW) was asked to Glorify Him and announce that He is far above the *Shirk* that they themselves have concocted.

(19) *"Mankind were but one community, then they differed (later), and had not it been for a Word that went forth before from your Lord, it would have been settled between them regarding what they differed."*

Allah's (SWT) *Deen* is one. Yet men differ among themselves, each interpreting the divine religion his own way, so that it may fit in the way they themselves see it. In this way different sects, all claiming allegiance to one divine religion, came into existence. But in the beginning there was only one *Deen* and humans began their life in full light of divine truth. When Allah (SWT) created Adam (AS), He showed him the right path i.e. Islam, and all were one community submitting to Him. But after Adam (AS), people started to sway away from the right path and developed differences of opinion among themselves. In the end Allah (SWT) stated that if He had not given respite to His creatures for an appointed time, then He surely would have judged between them in what they differed.

(20) *"And they say: "Why is it not a sign sent down to him from his Lord?" Say: "The unseen belongs to Allah (SWT) Alone, so wait! Verily I am waiting with you."*

This refers to the *Quraysh* of *Makkah* who demanded the Prophet (SAW) to show them a miracle, as we already read in surah *Al-A'raf* and *Al-An'am*. But Allah (SWT) commanded His Prophet (SAW) to say to them that the knowledge of Unseen belongs to Him alone. Thus it is only in His Power and authority to show miracles whenever and wherever He wills. Therefore, if you do not believe in the miracles that He has already shown to you, with this *Qur'an* being the greatest of all miracles, then wait for Allah's judgment for me as well as for yourselves.

(21) *“And when We let mankind taste of mercy after some adversity has afflicted them, behold! They take to plotting against Our revelations! Say: “Allah (SWT) is more Swift in planning!” Certainly, Our Messengers record all of that which you plot.”*

Allah (SWT) states that whenever a person is afflicted with tribulations and calamities, he forgets about all other deities and invokes Allah (SWT) alone for help. But as soon as Allah (SWT) bestows His mercy on him and removes his distress, he instead of showing gratitude to Him and obeying His Messengers, begins to plot against His revelations. Therefore, Allah (SWT) commanded His Messenger (SAW) to tell such disbelievers that His plan is much swifter than their plots and they will be taken to task suddenly and that His angels are recording all their plans and plots which they will present it before Him on the *Day of Reckoning*.

(22) *“It is He Who enables you to travel through land and sea, till when you are in the ships and they sail with them with a favorable wind, and they are glad therein, then comes a stormy wind and the waves come to them from all sides, and they think that they are encircled therein, they invoke Allah (SWT), making their Faith pure for Him Alone, saying: “If You deliver us from this, we shall truly be of the grateful.””*

This *ayah* again describes the situation of the idolators who in normal situation ascribe partners to Allah (SWT) and invoke their false deities besides Him. But when they are afflicted with some calamity, they forget about their deities and idols and only invoke Allah (SWT) with sincere devotion making promises to Him that if You deliver us from this affliction we will surely show our gratitude worshipping You alone and will not ascribe any partners unto You.

(23) *“But when He delivered them, behold! They rebel in the earth wrongfully. O mankind! Your rebellion is only against your ownelves, a brief enjoyment of this worldly life, then unto Us is your return, and We shall inform you that which you used to do.”* i.e. as soon as Allah (SWT) delivers them from their troubles, they return to their evil habits and idol-worship as if they had never experienced any distress or difficulties. But Allah (SWT) says that their rebellion in fact is against themselves, for they will be raised again after this transitory life and shall taste the consequences of this transgression and disobedience.

(24) *“Verily the likeness of worldly life is as the water which We send down from the sky, so by it arises the intermingled produce of the earth of which men and cattle eat until when the earth is clad with its adornments and is beautified, and its people think that they have all the powers of disposal over it, Our Command reaches it by night or by day and We make it like a clean-mown harvest, as if it had not flourished yesterday! Thus do We explain the revelations in detail for the people who reflect.”*

In this *ayah* Allah (SWT) gives a similitude of the life of this world as of a field. He sends down rain which mingles with the soil and brings out from the earth plant and vegetation which are a means of food for both men and animals. The land was dead and barren but Allah (SWT) gave life to it by sending down rain from the sky and then makes it beautiful and attractive by growing different kinds of flowers and plants therein. At this time the growers of the land become happy and think that they are able to cultivate it. But then, because of their disobedience, Allah (SWT) sends down a punishment that destroys their field as if nothing had existed here. This is also the state of this worldly life which looks attractive but will vanish suddenly destroying everything in it. This is how Allah (SWT) explains His revelations in detail so that people take a lesson from this example and know that all that will be left of this world is dust and ashes.

(25) *“Allah (SWT) calls to the home of peace and guides whom He wills to a Straight Path.”* i.e. Allah (SWT) encourages His servants to seek Paradise, the eternal abode of peace, for there is neither sorrow nor miseries in it. Then Allah (SWT) said that He guides whom He wills to a straight path. In other words, it means that He guides those who seek guidance i.e. obey His commandments and follow His Messengers.

(26) *“For those who have done good is the best and even more. Neither darkness nor disgrace shall cover their faces. They are the dwellers of Paradise, they will abide therein forever.”* i.e. those who perform good deeds in this world will have a good reward in the Hereafter which will be far more in proportion to their merits. And their faces will be bright and neither darkness nor disgrace will touch their faces, for they will be the inhabitants of Paradise and they will dwell in it forever.

(27) *"And those who have earned evil deeds, the recompense of an evil deed is the like thereof, and disgrace will cover them. No defender will they have from Allah (SWT). Their faces will be covered, as it were, with pieces from the darkness of night. They are dwellers of the Fire, they will abide therein forever."*

On the contrary, this *ayah* describes the state of the people of Hellfire, who will dwell therein forever. It states that those who had earned evil in the life of this world will have an equal return for their evil, without any increase in it. They will be covered with humiliating disgrace with their faces covered with darkness as if there were layers upon layers of darkness of night, and they will not find any protector who can save them from His punishment.

(28) *"And the Day whereon We shall gather them all together, then We shall say to those who did set partners in worship with Us: "Stop at your place! You and your partners." Then We shall separate them, and their partners shall say: "It was not us that you used to worship.""*

On the *Day of Resurrection*, Allah (SWT) will gather all of mankind together and will command the idolators and those who they worshipped besides Him to wait at their own place, so that they are separated from the believers. Then Allah's 'so-called' partners will say that certainly we were not aware of their worship and will claim their innocence from them. Whether it be the Prophets of Allah (SWT) or *Aulia* Allah (SWT), all will announce their immunity in His presence, from all those who worshipped them in this world.

(29) *"So sufficient is Allah (SWT) for a witness between us and you, that we indeed knew nothing of your worship of us." i.e. the 'so-called' associate-gods will make Allah (SWT) as their witness between them and those who worshipped them that they never called these idolators to worship them and that we were certainly unaware of their worship.*

(30) *"There! Every person will know what he had earned before, and they will be brought back to Allah (SWT), their rightful Lord, and their invented false deities will vanish from them." i.e. they know what they have earned for the hereafter, when they will be taken to their true Lord, the Only one worthy of worship, and the false deities that they used to invoke besides Allah (SWT) will disassociate themselves from them leaving them in the lurch.*

(31) *"Say: "Who provides for you from the sky and from the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who plans the affairs?" They will say: "Allah (SWT)." Say: "Will you not then be afraid?""*

This *ayah* is an evidence against the idolators who recognized the Oneness of Allah (SWT) and His Lordship through His signs and creations but refused to admit it openly. This *ayah* states that when it is asked from the idolators as to Who provides for you provisions and food from the earth when it is given life with water from the sky, and Who controls your hearing and your sight in that you hear and see what He wills and Who brings the living from the dead such as the plants and trees from soil and Who brings the dead from the living by His power and grace and Who regulates the universe, then they will answer that surely it is none other than Allah (SWT) Who created all these things and governs them. The fact is that everything is governed and regulated by Allah (SWT) and none has the power or authority to do anything, if He does not give him power to do it. A person can only intend to act upon something and he will be rewarded accordingly, but the decision for all actions rests with Allah (SWT) alone. In the end of the *ayah* Allah (SWT) instructed the Prophet (SAW) to ask the idolators that Why do you not fear Allah's punishment and believe in His Oneness, when you know that all this is created and governed by Him.

(32) *"Such is Allah (SWT), your Lord in truth. So after the truth, what else can there be, save error? How then are you turned away?"* i.e. once you have found the truth that Allah (SWT) is the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists then all other that you worship besides Him is nothing but falsehood and look from where are you allowing yourself to divert from.

(33) *"Thus is the Word of your Lord justified against those who rebel that they will not believe."* i.e. in the Oneness of Allah (SWT) and in Muhammad (SAW) as His Messenger.

(34) *"Say: "Is there of your partners one that originates the creation and then repeats it?" Say: "Allah (SWT) originates the creation and then He repeats it. Then how are you deluded away?"* The Prophet (SAW) asked the idolators, "Is there any of your false deities that you worship besides Allah (SWT), who can create all that He has created and then

repeat the process of creation?" Then he was asked to tell them that it is Allah (SWT) Who does this without the help of any partners and associates. So look how you are misled from the right path.

(35) *"Say: "Is there of your partners one that guides to the truth?" Say: "It is Allah Who guides to the truth. Is then He, Who gives guidance to the truth, more worthy to be followed, or he who finds not guidance unless he is guided? Then, what is the matter with you? How judge you?"*" i.e. ask them O Prophet (SAW) if any of their false gods can guide them towards the truth, then say to them (i.e. if they do not answer) that it is only Allah (SWT) Who guides to the truth, so what is the matter with you, why don't you use your brains and think that Allah (SWT) is more worthy of your worship, Who guides you to the truth and not those false gods of yours who cannot guide anyone but they themselves are in need of guidance. Every creature is in need of guidance from Allah (SWT), whether it is the Prophets, the angels or the *Aulia*. Therefore, how can they guide anyone else to the right path on their own, unless they are guided and instructed by Him?

(36) *"And most of them follow nothing but conjecture. Certainly, conjecture can be of no avail against the truth. Surely, Allah (SWT) is All-Aware of what they do."* i.e. they only follow their own surmise which can be of no use to them as it cannot take the place of truth and surely Allah (SWT) knows their actions and will reward them accordingly in the Hereafter.