

Surah Al-Baqarah, Chapter 2, Introduction

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Surah Al-Baqarah

(The Cow)

No.2 (286 Verses)

Contents of the Surah

This Surah contains 286 verses, rendering it the longest Surah in the Holy Qur'an. It is indisputable that this Surah was not revealed all at once, but partially and in increments as necessitated by the various Islamic social circumstances and conditions found at different times in Medina.

But, the fact is that the inclusiveness of this Surah from the point of Islamic doctrine in Faith and many practical issues (social, political, economic, and religious) is not deniable, for, there are various subjects discussed in it, including the followings:

1. There are some discussions about Monotheism and gaining knowledge of *Allah*, especially by way of studying the mysteries of creation.
2. There are many statements about the Resurrection and life after death with a few tangible examples, like the story of Abraham (as) and how the birds became restored to life, and the story of Ezra.
3. There are some facts about the inimitability of the Qur'an and the significance of this Heavenly Book.
4. There are long discussions and explanations concerning the Jews and hypocrites and their peculiar positions against Islam and the Qur'an, evidenced by their various mischievous hindrances against them.
5. There are some narrations about the history of the Great Prophets, including Abraham (as) and

Moses (as) in particular.

6. There are some passages that contain a few Islamic rules related to varying subjects, such as: prayers, fasting, Holy War on the path of *Allah*, the pilgrimage to Mecca, the change of the Qiblah (the direction of prayer) from Jerusalem to Mecca, marriage and divorce, commerce, debt, and a great many of the ordinances concerning usury.

Donation for the sake of *Allah* is abundantly discussed. The problem of retaliation, the banning of different kinds of forbidden meat, and also gambling and wine drinking are discussed, in addition to a few other ordinances related to the subjects of writing wills, testaments, and the like.

The appellation '*Al-Baqarah*' (the Cow), the title of this Surah, is taken from the story of the Israelites' Cow, mentioned in verses 67 to 73 of this Surah, whose description will be explained later in this very (on pages 208 to 213).

The Virtue of Studying this Surah

There are some significant traditions and narrations on the virtue of studying this Surah, cited in Islamic literature, including the followings:

The Late Tabarsi has so cited in *Majma'ul-Bayan* that once the Prophet (S) was asked: "*Which Surah of the Qur'an is the best?*" He (S) answered: "*Al-Baqarah*". They asked: "*Which verse of the Surah (is the best)?*" He replied: "***Ayat-ul-Kursi, the Verse of the Throne', (verse 255)***". [1](#)

The superiority of this Holy Surah is, apparently, due to its comprehensiveness, and the preference of the '***Verse of the Throne'***, (verse 255) is because of its special monotheistic content, which will be dealt with later in this .

It is not contrary to the fact that some other Suras of the Qur'an are considered superior in other aspects. All the Suras of the Qur'an have been considered from different points of view.

Again, it is narrated by Ali ibn al-Husayn (as) that the Prophet (S) said:

*"He who recites the first four verses of Surah Al-Baqarah, the '**Verse of Throne'** (verse 255) with its next two verses (256,257) together with the last three verses of the Surah, will not meet any trouble in himself; in his family members, and in his wealth; and Satan will not approach him, and he (having paid attention to the Qur'an in his life) will not forget the Qur'an".* [2](#)

Also, 'Ubayy ibne Ka'b quotes from the holy Prophet (S) thus:

"He who recites this Surah (Al-Baqarah) will be encompassed by the bounties of Allah and His Mercy; and He will reward him as much as that of a person who has fought fearlessly on the path of Allah for one year". [3](#)

Then, the Messenger of *Allah* (S) added that Muslims should study this Surah, know it, and do it accordingly in order to be benefited by the Mercy of *Allah* in this world and the next.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) is narrated to have said:

"He who recites Al-Baqarah and 'Al-i-Imran, these two Suras will come above his head on the Day of Judgement like two clouds similar to two umbrellas, (and will protect him from the heat of That Day) ". [4](#)

Here, it is necessary to mention the important fact that those rewards, virtues and significant compensations that have been cited for studying the Qur'an or some special Suras and verses of the Qur'an never meant that one simply should be contented with the fact that one has recited them as invocations.

On the contrary, the recitation of the Qur'an is for understanding, and understanding is for contemplation, and contemplation is for action.

As a matter of fact, every virtue, which is mentioned for a Surah or a verse, corresponds very much with the contents of that Surah or verse. For example, among the virtues of reciting Surah An-Nur, No.24, we see that it says that *Allah* may protect the person and his children from committing adultery and slander when he perseveres in studying it.

This consequence is because the contents of Surah An-Nur contains some important instructions on resisting sexual deviations; i.e. the instructions advising single persons to hasten to marriage; the instructions about 'cover' (hijab); the instructions about refraining from ogling and desirous aoks; the instruction that forbids spreading any rumours and accusations about others; and, finally, the instruction on executing the punishment for fornication and adultery upon any perpetrators: be they men or women.

It is obvious that when the content of this Surah be observed by the members of a society or a family, the iniquity of adultery will not appear therein. It is the same concerning the verses of Surah al-Baqarah, mentioned above.

They are all related to the subject of Monotheism, belief in '*Qayb*' (the Invisible), knowing *Allah*, and resisting evil temptations. So, if a person recites them and observes the instructions in them carefully and from the depths of his soul, he will certainly obtain those virtues.

It is certainly true, however, that the recitation of the Qur'an deserves rewards, but, besides the original and essential rewards given by *Allah*, its effects on personal behavior will exist only when this recitation is a premise for contemplation and action.

[1.](#) Nur-uth- Thaqaalayn, vol. 1, p. 26; & Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 32

[2.](#) Thawab-ul-A'mal (according to the citation of Nur-uth-Thaqaalayn vol. 1, p. 36).

[3.](#) Minhaj-us-Sadiqin, vol. 1, p. 120; & Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. 1, p. 32

[4.](#) Al-Burhan Fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, vol. I, p. 52

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