

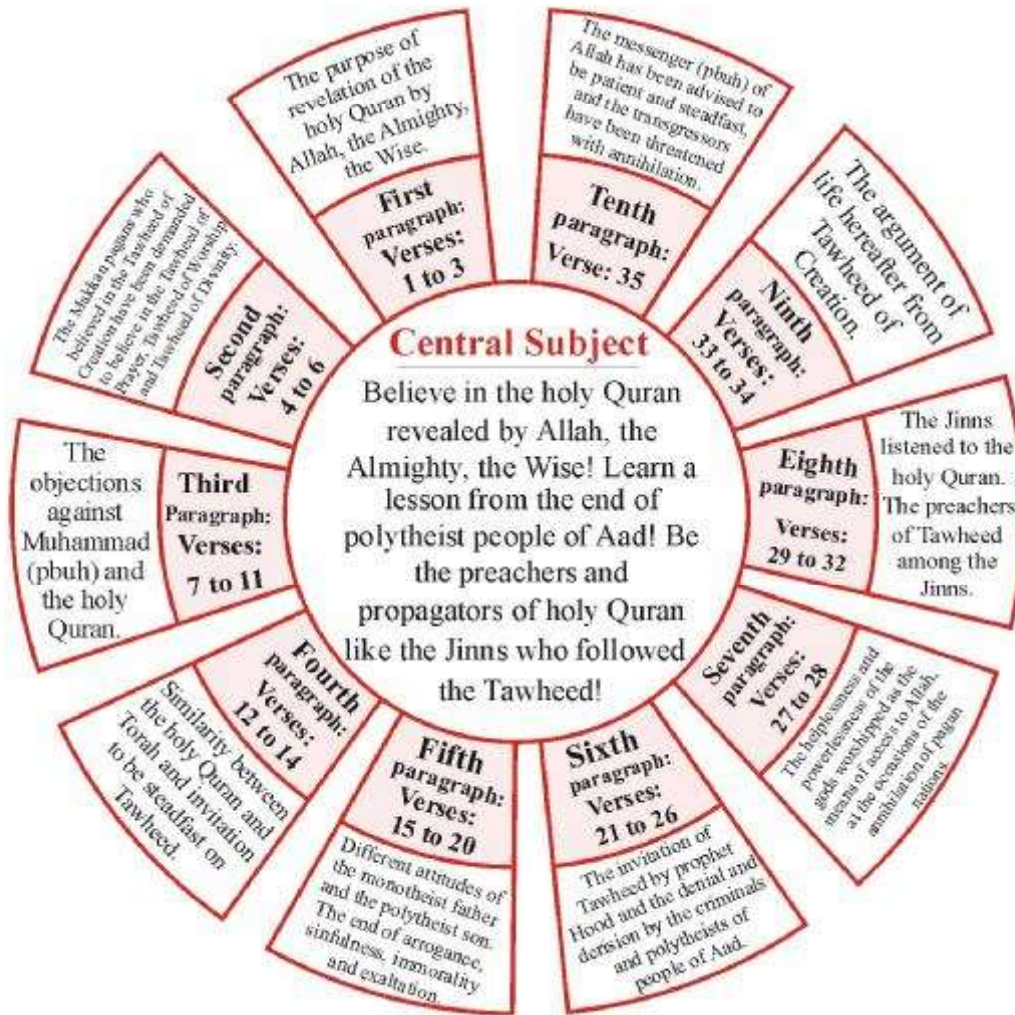
Flow Chart of Macro-Structure of Soorah Al-Ahqaaf

46 - Soorah Al-Ahqaaf

Makkan

Verses: 35

Paragraphs: 10



• The period of revelation and the background

Soorah Al-Ahqaaf was revealed, probably along with soorah Al-Jinn on return from the journey of Taa'if, at Nakhlah, three years before the migration to Madinah, in 10 prophet-hood when the allegations of magic and fabrication against the messenger (pbuh) of Allah were resounding. This is the seventh and the last of the soorahs which begin with the letters Haa-Meem according to the arrangement of the Book.

Relationship of soorah Al-Ahqaaf with the Book

- 1- In the previous soorah (Al-Jaathiyah), the causes of denial and arrogance were highlighted that these were atheism, love of this world and blind following of the desires. Here, in soorah Al-Ahqaaf, it has been explained through the arrogant and negative attitude of the people of Aad.
- 2- Here, in this soorah (Al-Ahqaaf), the direct annihilation by Allah is mentioned. In the next soorah (Muhammad) which is Madeenan, the Muslims have been ordered to do Jihad (fighting) against the Quraish. Thus Allah, sometimes, ruins the unbelieving nations indirectly.

Important Key words and Subjects

1- Refutation of the creed of mediation in soorah Al-Ahqaaf:

There is establishment of Tawheed, refutation of Shirk, clarification of the position of prophet-hood and categorical refutation of the creed of mediation and intercession held by the Quraish. The helplessness of their intermediary gods has been shown. These intermediary gods do not come to their help when the pagan nations are annihilated. ﴿فَلَوْلَا نَصْرُهُمُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ذُرِّيَّتًا آلِهَةً﴾
 “Then why did not those whom they had taken for gods besides Allah, as a means of access to Him, help them?” (Verse: 28)

2- The principles of the annihilation of nations as described in soorah Al-Ahqaaf:

It is an awe-inspiring soorah. The annihilation of the people of Aad who lived in the valley of Ahqaaf is mentioned in it and the principles of annihilation of nations are mentioned as well. The Makkan pagans have been threatened with the end of the people of Aad to prevent them from Shirk and arrogance. They have been threatened with annihilation in the last verse.

- (a) The sinful nations are annihilated. ﴿فَهَلْ يُهْلَكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ﴾ “Shall any be destroyed except the transgressors.” (Verse: 35)
- (b) Those who considered the self-made gods as the source of getting closer to Allah, have been told clearly that their self-made gods are helpless at the time of their annihilation and they cannot save them. (Verse: 28)

(c) The people of Aad were a criminal nation and they denied the revelations of Allah. They were destroyed by a severe wind.

﴿قَالُوا هَذَا عَارِضٌ مُّطِيرٌ نَّادٍ بَلْ هُوَ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ بِهِ رِيحٌ فِيهَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾

“They said: ‘This cloud will bring us rain.’ ‘Nay! It is what you were asking to hasten, a fierce wind bringing you a woeful torment.’” (Verse: 24)

3- Description of the Jinns accepting Islam and inviting towards it:

The envy of mankind has been excited that the Jinns are better than them. They not only became Muslims when they heard the Quran, but they became the preachers and propagators of Islam as well. The leaders of the Jinns who accepted Islam said to their nation:

﴿يَقَوْمَنَا أَجِيبُوا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ وَآمِنُوا بِهِ يَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ آلِيمٍ﴾

“O our people, answer the one who is calling you towards Allah and believe in him! Allah will forgive you your sins and save you from a painful punishment.” (Verse: 31)

4- The description of special features of Quran in soorah Al-Ahqaaf:

- (a) It has been revealed by Allah the Wise, the Almighty. (Verse: 2)
- (b) The Makkan pagans alleged that the holy Quran was plain magic and that it was fabricated by the messenger (pbuh) of Allah. (Verse: 7)
- (c) The Makkan pagans alleged that the invitation of holy Quran was an old lie. (Verse: 11)
- (d) There is similarity between the Quran and the Torah. Both were revealed as a mercy, for the guidance of mankind. (Verse: 12) A reasonable person from the Israelites gave up the Judaism and accepted Islam, but the Quraish are hindered by their pride. (Verse: 11)

5- The mention of negative attitude of the Makkan pagans in soorah Al-Ahqaaf:

- (a) The Makkan pagans have been contended in this soorah and their creed has been refuted. They have been advised to accept Tawheed like the Jinns.
- (b) The Makkan pagans have rejected the Quranic invitation of Tawheed. They have adopted the attitude of escape and evasion. (Verse: 3)

(c) Shirk in prayer has been refuted. The self-made gods cannot answer their prayers till the Doomsday.

﴿وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن يَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَنْ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُمْ عَنِ دُعَائِهِمْ غٰفِلُونَ﴾

“And who could be more astray than the one who invokes those deities besides Allah who cannot answer him till the Day of Resurrection - who are not even aware that they are being invoked?” (Verse: 5)

(d) The Makkan pagans blamed the prophet (pbuh) for fabrication. (Verse: 8) Its answer was given that the messenger (pbuh) of Allah was not giving a new invitation. (Verse: 9) He is the last of messengers and all the messengers gave the same invitation.

(e) The prayers of the forty years old monotheist father for his parents and children and the reaction of unbelieving son have been mentioned and the Quraish have been invited to use their mind and ponder over the invitation of Tawheed instead of following the traditions of their forefathers. (Verses: 15 to 20)

(f) greatest hindrance in the way of Makkan pagans in accepting Islam is their pride and arrogance for which they will have the punishment of hellfire. A scholar from the Israelites has accepted Islam but you have shown arrogance. ﴿وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى مِثْلِهِ فَأَمَّا وَأَنْتَ كَبِرْتُمْ﴾ “When a witness from the children of Israa'eel has also testified to its similarity (with earlier scriptures) and has believed, while you are showing arrogance.” (Verse: 10) The arrogant people will be given a humiliating punishment on the Day of Judgement. “Today you shall be recompensed with a punishment of humiliation because you behaved with arrogance for which you had no right during your life on earth.” (Verse: 20)

Macro-structure of soorah Al-Ahqaaf

Soorah Al-Ahqaaf consists of ten paragraphs.

1- Verses: 1 to 3: In the first paragraph, the purpose of revelation of holy Quran by Allah, the Almighty, the Wise has been told and man has been informed of the purpose of creation of the universe and the Day of Judgement.

The purpose of revelation of Quran is to inform the human beings of the

wisdom behind the creation of the universe and the Day of Judgement. The heavens and the earth have been created for an appointed time with truth which means that they have been created with a purpose. Man has been made the caliph to test him in the authority given to him but the unbelievers adopt the attitude of evasion and escape when they are warned.

﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَمَّا أُنذِرُوا مُعْرِضُونَ﴾ “Yet the unbelievers give no heed to Our warning.”
(Verse: 3)

2- Verses: 4 to 6: In the second paragraph, the Makkan pagans who believed in the Tawheed of Creation, were asked to accept the Tawheed of Prayer, Tawheed of Worship and Tawheed of Divinity.

The polytheists were asked to tell what was created in the heavens and the earth by their gods other than Allah? Can they show any heavenly book which provides any argument for Shirk? Their gods other than Allah cannot answer their prayers till the Doomsday. They are unaware of their prayers. On the Day of Judgement they will become enemies of the polytheists and will deny their worship. ﴿وَإِذَا حُشِرَ النَّاسُ كَانُوا لَهُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَكَانُوا بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ كَافِرِينَ﴾ “And when mankind shall be assembled (on the Day of Judgement), they will become enemies of those who invoked them and deny their worship altogether.”

(Verse: 6)

3- Verses: 7 to 11: In the third paragraph, the objections against Muhammad (pbuh) and the holy Quran have been recorded and their answers have been given.

One of the objections was that the holy Quran is magic (Verse: 7) The second objection was that it has been fabricated. (Verse: 8) They said that it was an old lie. (Verse: 11) They were answered: “I (Muhammad) am not a unique prophet. There were prophets before me. I am following the revelation. I do not know what is going to happen to me or to you. I am only a plain Warner. One of the Israelites has given evidence of Islam and you are showing arrogance. Allah does not guide the wrong-doers.” O prophet tell them:

﴿قُلْ مَا كُنْتُ بِدْعًا مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَمَا أَدْرِي مَا يُفْعَلُ بِي وَلَا بِكُمْ إِنِّي أَلْبِغُ إِلَّا مَا يُرْسِلُ وَمَا أَدْرِي مَا يُفْعَلُ بِي وَلَا بِكُمْ إِنِّي أَلْبِغُ إِلَّا مَا يُرْسِلُ وَمَا أَدْرِي مَا يُفْعَلُ بِي وَلَا بِكُمْ إِنِّي أَلْبِغُ إِلَّا مَا يُرْسِلُ وَمَا أَدْرِي مَا يُفْعَلُ بِي وَلَا بِكُمْ إِنِّي أَلْبِغُ إِلَّا مَا يُرْسِلُ﴾

“I am not an innovator among the messengers; nor do I know what will be done with me or with you. I follow only what is revealed to me, and I am not more than a plain Warner.” (Verse: 9)

- 4- Verses: 12 to 14:** The similarity between the holy Quran and Torah has been described in the fourth paragraph and the invitation to be steadfast on Tawheed has been given.

The Torah was a guide and mercy and this Arabic Quran also is a guide and mercy. The purpose of revelation of holy Quran is to warn the oppressive polytheist and give good tidings to the righteous people who accept Allah as their Lord and then stay firm on it. They will have no fear nor grief.

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾ “Indeed those who say: ‘Our Lord is Allah, and then remain firm, shall have nothing to fear or to grieve.’”

(Verse: 13)

They will be granted paradise because of their good deeds.

- 5- Verses: 15 to 20:** In the fifth paragraph, the rights of parents have been described and the end of arrogance has been told.

The different attitudes of the monotheist father and the polytheist son have been described and the Quraish have been invited to think about the invitation of Tawheed instead of following their forefathers. They have been warned about the end of their arrogance, transgression, immorality and haughtiness.

Allah has ordered man to treat his parents with kindness; specially the mother who bears him with difficulty, then gives birth to him and suckles him. When he becomes forty years old, he prays to Allah to guide him to be grateful. He turns to Allah and prays for the welfare of his children. He prays to be guided towards the deeds which please Allah. The reward of such people is paradise. On the contrary, the person who gives trouble to his parents, denies to believe in the life hereafter and considers the invitation of Islam to be the tales of olden times, will suffer the punishment. On the Day of Judgement they will be offered to the fire as a prey. They will be given a disgraceful punishment as a retribution for their pride, arrogance, transgression and immorality.

﴿فَالْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْسُقُونَ﴾ “Today you shall be recompensed with a punishment of humiliation because you behaved with arrogance for which you had no right (during your life) on earth because of the transgressions you committed.” (Verse: 20)

6- Verses: 21 to 26: There are historical arguments in the sixth paragraph. The Makkan pagans have been warned by the annihilation of the people of Aad.

The attitude and crimes of the Makkan pagans were similar to those of the people of Aad:

The people of Aad were brought into the field after the annihilation of the nation of prophet Nooh. They were the descendants of those who were saved in the ark. Their period is probably 3,000 B.C. They were settled in the valley of Ahqaaf in southern Arabia. Prophet Hood (pbuh) was sent to them who gave them the invitation of Tawheed. (Verse: 21)

- (a) They were a polytheist nation who told prophet Hood clearly that he had come to take them away from their gods. They insisted to follow their gods. ﴿أَجْمَعْتَنَا إِنَّا وَكُنَّا عَنِ الْهَيْبَةِ﴾ “Have you come to turn us away from our gods?” (Verse:22)
- (b) They were criminals. ﴿كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ﴾ “Thus did We reward the nation of criminals.” (Verse: 25) Prophet Hood said that they were ignorant. ﴿وَلَكِنِّي أَرَأَيْتُمْ قَوْمًا جَاهِلُونَ﴾ “However, I can see that you are ignorant people.” (Verse: 23)
- (c) They denied the revelations of Allah and made fun of them. ﴿كَانُوا يَخْتَفُونَ﴾ “They denied the revelations of Allah; and they were completely hemmed in by the same thing that they used to mock at.” (Verse: 26)
- (d) They did not use their eyes, ears, heart and mind. ﴿فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَلَا أَبْصَارُهُمْ وَلَا أَفْئِدَتُهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ﴾ “Yet their (faculties of) hearing, sight and intellect availed them nothing.” (Verse: 26) They neither thought nor used their minds. Prophet Hood presented the invitation of Tawheed to the people of Aad in the valley of Ahqaaf. They were polytheists. They asked for the punishment and were killed by a severe wind. The criminal nations are treated like this. They were given the ears, the eyes and the hearts but they did not use them. They denied the revelations of Allah and made fun of them. Consequently they were punished.

7- Verses: 27 to 28: In the seventh paragraph, the helplessness of the so called gods at the annihilation of nations is mentioned.

In these two verses the picture of weakness and helplessness of the self-made

intermediary gods of the polytheist nations at the time of their annihilation has been drawn and it has been established that Allah has the complete authority and control.

Allah has ruined many towns and showed His signs in different ways with the expectation that they will turn to their Lord but they did not repent. So they were ruined. Their gods to whom they prayed and thought that they would bring them closer to Allah could not help them when they were annihilated. They all disappeared when they needed their help which proves that their beliefs were wrong and self-made.

﴿فَلَوْلَا نَصْرُهُمُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَبُّكَ الْإِلَهَ ۗ دَبَلْ ضَلُّوا عَنْهُمْ ۗ وَذَلِكَ إِفْكُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ﴾

“Then why did not those whom they had taken for gods besides Allah, as a means of access to Him, help them? But those deities utterly forsook them, because those were nothing but their lies and their false inventions.” (Verse: 28)

8- Verses: 29 to 32: In the eighth paragraph, acceptance of Islam by the Jinns and their missionary services are mentioned.

The envy of Quraish has been incited that they did not pay due regard to the holy Quran, but the Jinns did pay due regard to it. They listened to it and many of them became the preachers and propagators of Tawheed.

- (a) Some of the Jinns became preachers and Warners and they started inviting their nation towards Tawheed. (Verse: 29)
- (b) The believing Jinns considered the holy Quran to be the guidance towards the right way after the Torah. (Verse: 30)
- (c) The believing Jinns invited their nation to accept the invitation of the messenger (pbuh) of Allah and advised them to believe.

﴿يَقَوْمَنَا أَجِيبُوا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ وَآمِنُوا بِهِ يَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُجِرْكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ﴾ “O our people, answer the one who is calling you towards Allah and believe in him! Allah will forgive your sins and save you from a painful punishment.” (Verse: 31)
- (d) The Jinns who believed and followed the Tawheed, considered the Shirk in guardianship as plain misguidance. They believed that there is none besides Allah who can put right their affairs, be their guardian and help them.

﴿وَلَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ مُبِينٌ﴾ “He shall have no protector besides Allah. Surely, such people are in manifest error.” (Verse: 32)

9- Verses: 33 to 34: In the ninth paragraph, the arguments of possibility of life hereafter have been provided from the Tawheed of Creation.

Like the first paragraph, there are arguments of Allah's creation in the ninth paragraph and the evasion of polytheists is mentioned. They are asked that the One Who has not been fatigued by the creation of heavens and earth, is He not able to bring the dead to life again?

﴿أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَلَمْ يَعْـُٔ بِخَلْقِهِنَّ بِغْيٰرٍ عَلٰٓى اَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتٰى بَلٰٓ اِنَّهٗ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْـٍِٔ قَدِيْرٌ﴾

“Do they not see that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth and was not wearied by their creation, has the power to raise the dead to life? Yes! Surely, He has the power over everything.” (Verse: 33)

10- Verse: 35: In the last paragraph, the messenger (pbuh) of Allah has been advised to be patient and steadfast and the transgressors have been threatened with annihilation.

The messenger (pbuh) of Allah has been advised to continue his invitation and preaching of Islam with steadfastness like the great prophets, in that atmosphere of derision, evasion, abstinence and escape. The sinful people among the Makkan pagans have been threatened with annihilation.

﴿فَاَصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ اُولُو الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ ؕ كَانَتْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ مَا يُوعَدُوْنَ ؕ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوْا اِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّنْ نَّهَارٍ ؕ

بَلٰٓغٌ ؕ فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُكَ اِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ﴾ (آيت: 35)

“Therefore, bear with them with patience, as did the messengers endowed with firmness of purpose before you, and do not be in haste about them. On the Day when they shall see that which they are being threatened with, their life (on earth) will seem to them as if they had lived no more than an hour of a day. The message (of forewarning) has been conveyed. Shall any be destroyed except the transgressors?” (Verse: 35)

The great prophets are five: Nooh, Ibraaheem, Moosaa, Eesaa and Muhammad. (Peace and blessings of Allah be on all of them).

Central Subject

Believe in the holy Quran revealed by Allah, the Almighty, the Wise! Learn a lesson from the end of polytheist people of Aad! Be the preachers and propagators of holy Quran like the Jinns who followed the Tawheed! Otherwise, your end will not be different from that of the people of Aad.