

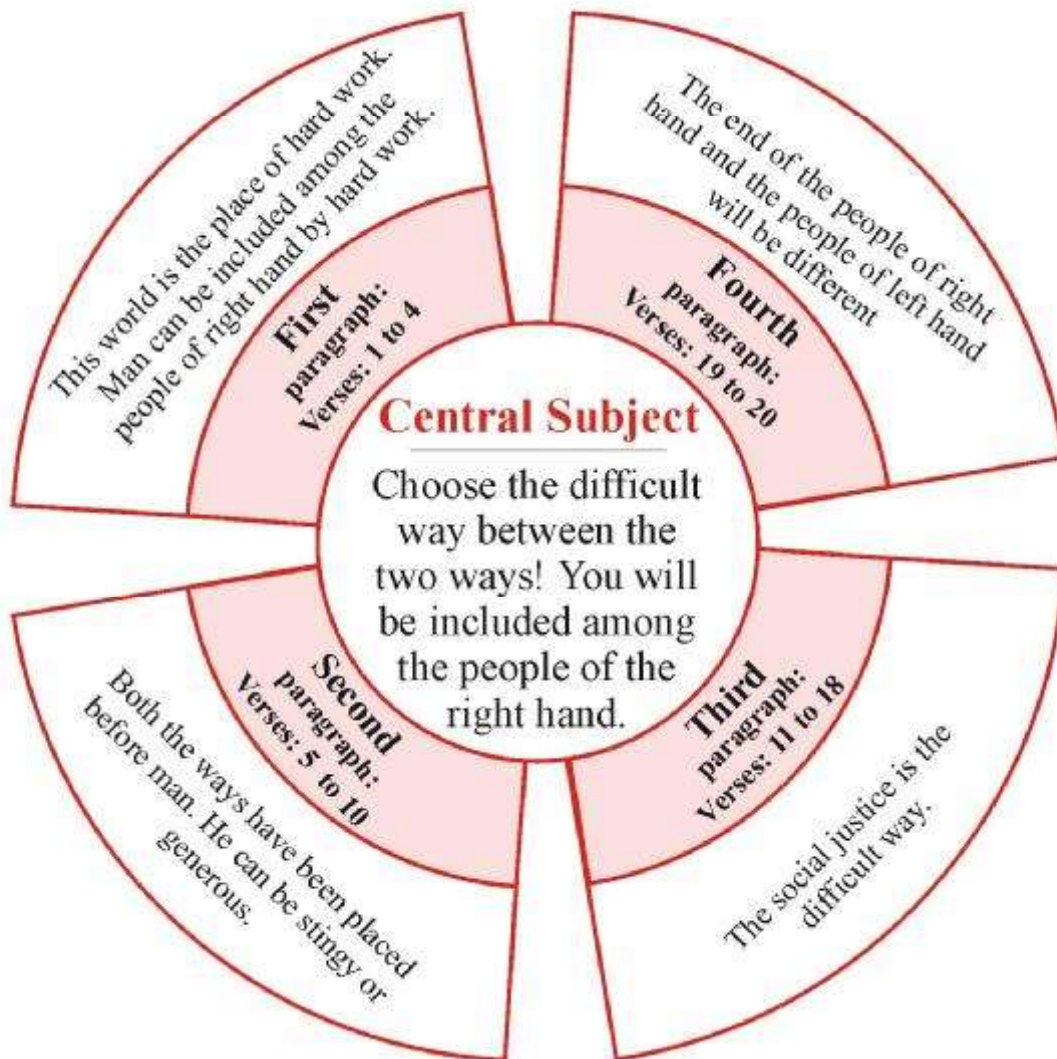
Flow Chart of Macro-Structure of Soorah Al-Balad

90 - Soorah Al-Balad

Makkan

Verses: 20

Paragraphs: 4



• Period of revelation:

Soorah Al-Balad was revealed during the third phase of prophet's stay in Makkah (6 to 10 prophet-hood) when the prophet (pbuh) was tortured and persecuted in a peaceful place like Makkah which was called ﴿البَلَدَ الْأَمِين﴾ "The city of peace". ﴿وَأَنْتَ حَلَّلَ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ﴾ "You (O Muhammad) have been made lawful in this city." (Verse: 2)

The relationship of soorah Al-Balad with the Book

- 1- In the previous soorah (Al-Fajr), the characteristics of the dissatisfied souls were described that they do not establish the social justice because they do not believe in the life Hereafter. They love the wealth, therefore, they do not care for the rights of the orphans and the poor and they usurp the inheritance. Here, in soorah Al-Balad, the social justice has been called a difficult way. Only the fortunate people of the right hand who believe firmly in the Hereafter can traverse this difficult way.
- 2- Both in this soorah (Al-Balad) and in the next soorah (Ash-Shams) man's freedom of choice has been mentioned. Here, it is described in the following words: ﴿وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ﴾ “Then shown him the two High Ways.” (Verse: 10) There, in soorah Ash-Shams, in these words: ﴿فَاللَّهُمَّ بُرْهَانَ وَتَقْوَاهَا﴾ “And inspired it with knowledge of what is wrong for it and what is right for it.” (91:8) It indicates the reality that man has been given both kinds of abilities. He can deserve the Paradise by making the right use of his freedom and can deserve the Hell by making the wrong use of his freedom.

Important Key words and Subjects

- 1- **There is comparison between the people of the right hand and the people of the left hand in this soorah.**
 - (a) Socio-economic justice has been called a difficult way. The fortunate people of the right hand can cross this difficult pass. They promote the culture of enjoining fortitude and encouraging kindness and compassion.
 - (b) The unfortunate and damned people of the left hand cannot follow this way of sacrifice. They do not think that Allah is watching them and He can punish them.

The Macro-structure of soorah Al-Balad

Soorah Al-Balad consists of four paragraphs.

- 1- **Verses: 1 to 4: It has been told in the first paragraph that this world is the place of hard work.** ﴿لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ﴾ “Certainly We have created man to be in stress.” (Verse: 4)

Man can be included among the fortunate people of right hand only by being steadfast in Tawheed and working hard for good deeds. Those who believe

in the Messenger (pbuh) of Allah are being persecuted in the peaceful city of Makkah. However, they will succeed in the end.

﴿لَا أَقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ﴾ “I swear by this city of Makkah (where to harm anyone is prohibited).” (Verse: 1)

﴿وَأَنْتَ حَلَّالٌ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ﴾ “And you (O Muhammad) have been made lawful in this city.” (Verse: 2)

﴿وَوَالِدٍ وَمَا وَلَدٍ﴾ “And I swear by your father (Adam) and the children he begot (mankind)” (Verse: 3)

﴿لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ﴾ “Certainly, We have created man to be in stress.” (Verse:4)

2- Verses: 5 to 10: In the second paragraph, it has been told that man has been shown both the ways.

He can be stingy or generous. Man has been given the eyes, the tongue and the lips and the freedom of choice between good and bad.

﴿أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَنْ يُقَدِرَ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ﴾ “Does he think that none has power over him?” (Verse: 5)

﴿يَقُولُ أَهْلَكْتُ مَالًا لُبَدًا﴾ “He may boast: 'I have squandered wealth in abundance!'” (Verse: 6)

﴿أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ﴾ “Does he think that no one observes him?” (Verse: 7)

﴿أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ﴾ “Have We not given him two eyes (to observe)” (Verse: 8)

﴿وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ﴾ “One tongue and two lips (to control it).” (Verse: 9)

﴿وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ﴾ “Then shown him the two High Ways (good, leading towards Paradise and evil, leading towards Hell).” (Verse: 10)

This paragraph begins with a question. The mentality of the person who does not believe in Allah and the Hereafter has been shown here. He thinks that no one will check him on his financial behaviour.

﴿أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَنْ يُقَدِرَ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ﴾ “Does he think that none has power over him?” (Verse: 5)

No one will question him for his stinginess? No power will ask him to account for his extravagance and voluptuousness? Rather, he does not consider Allah to be watchful. ﴿أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ﴾ “Does he think that no one observes him?” (Verse: 7)

On the contrary, a believer earns lawful livelihood with piety and spends it moderately with piety; while the unbeliever earns it by unlawful means and spends it extravagantly on useless things. ﴿يَقُولُ أَهْلَكْتُ مَالًا لُبَدًا﴾ “He may boast: 'I have squandered wealth in abundance!'” (Verse: 6)

3- Verses: 11 to 18: It has been explained in the third paragraph that social justice is a difficult pass.

﴿فَلَا أَفْتَحُمُ الْعَقَبَةَ﴾ “Yet, he does not attempt to tackle the “Aqabah” (steep path).”
(Verse: 11)

﴿وَمَا أَذْرَكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةَ﴾ “And what will explain to you what the steep path is?”
(Verse: 12)

﴿فَكَرَبَّةٍ﴾ “It is the freeing of a neck (slave) from bondage.” (Verse: 13)

﴿أَوْ أَطْعَمُ فِي يَوْمٍ مَسْعَبَةٍ﴾ “Or the giving of food in day of famine.” (Verse: 14)

﴿يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ﴾ “To an orphan relative.” (Verse: 15)

﴿أَوْ مَسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ﴾ “Or to a needy in distress.” (Verse: 16)

﴿ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالضَّرِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ﴾ “Besides this, he should be of those who believe, enjoin fortitude, encourage kindness and compassion.” (Verse: 17)

﴿أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ﴾ “Such are the people of the right hand (going towards Paradise).” (Verse: 18)

The Characteristics of the fortunate people of the right hand have been described here. The steep path is a difficult path. The extravagant people cannot cross this pass; but the people of the right hand can cross this pass.

- (1) The people of the right hand free the slaves. ﴿فَكَرَبَّةٍ﴾ “It is the freeing of a neck (slave) from bondage.” (Verse: 13)
- (2) They take care of the needs of orphans among the relatives.
﴿أَوْ أَطْعَمُ فِي يَوْمٍ مَسْعَبَةٍ﴾ “Or the giving of food in day of famine.” (Verse: 14)
﴿يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ﴾ “To an orphan relative.” (Verse: 15)
- (3) They fulfil the rights of the needy. ﴿مَسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ﴾ “Or to a needy in distress.” (Verse: 16)
- (4) They are believers. ﴿ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا﴾ “Besides this, he should be of those who believe.” (Verse: 17)
- (5) They advise mutual patience to each other in affliction.
﴿وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالضَّرِّ﴾ “They enjoin fortitude.” (Verse: 17)
- (6) They advise for mutual kindness and compassion. ﴿وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ﴾ “They encourage kindness and compassion.” (Verse: 17)

4- Verses: 19 to 20: In the fourth and last paragraph, the end of the people of the left hand has been described.

In the last paragraph, the attitude of the people of right hand was mentioned; here, in this paragraph, the people of left hand are mentioned.

﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا هُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ﴾ “But those who disbelieve Our revelations, they are the people of the left hand (going towards Hell).” (Verse: 19)

﴿عَلَيْهِمْ نَارٌ مُّؤَصَّدَةٌ﴾ “Having fire all around them.” (Verse: 20)

Here, in these two verses, the crime and the punishment of the people of left hand have been described briefly that they denied the Divine revelations and they will go to Hell.

Characteristics of the people of left hand:

The following characteristics of the people of left hand are found when all the verses of this soorah from the beginning to the end are considered.

- (1) They make the wrong use of freedom of choice. They are ungrateful to the blessings of their Lord.
- (2) They choose the wrong one between the two ways.
- (3) They have a wrong notion about Allah that He will not seize them.
﴿أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَنْ يَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ﴾ “Does he think that none has power over him?” (Verse: 5)
- (4) They spend extravagantly on their luxuries. ﴿يَقُولُ أَهْلَكْتُ مَالًا لُبَدًا﴾ “He may boast: 'I have squandered wealth in abundance!'” (Verse: 6)
- (5) They have a wrong notion about Allah that He is not watching them.
﴿أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ؟﴾ “Does he think that no one observes him?” (Verse: 7)
- (6) They do not have the courage to cross the difficult pass of socio-economic justice. ﴿فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ﴾ “Yet, he does not attempt to tackle the “Aqabah” (steep path).” (Verse: 11)
- (7) They are senseless and indifferent about the oppressed class of the society.

Central Subject

Man should choose the difficult way between the two ways. In other words, he should choose the way of the social justice. He can be included in the people of the right hand.