

From of the Objectives of Surah Al-An'am

(Translated)

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Surah Al-An'am was revealed to our Prophet Muhammad (saw) all at once in Makkah. It is narrated on the authority of Abdullah ibn Abbas (ra) that he said, «نزلت سُورَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ بِمَكَّةَ لَيْلًا، حَوْلَهَا سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ يَجَارُونَ حَوْلَهَا بِالنَّسْبِ» “Surah Al-An'am was revealed in Makkah at night all at once, surrounded by seventy thousand angels glorifying Allah (swt).” (Narrated by At-Tabarani). It has been said that the reason for its revelation all at once is that it deals comprehensively with matters of fundamental principles and aqeedah, unlike Shariah rulings which require gradual revelation according to events and circumstances.

Therefore, the central focus of the Surah is aqeedah, establishing confirmations, arguments, and evidence for it and its truth, refuting the falsehoods of the polytheists, and exposing the falsity of their claims.

Therefore, we find the surah frequently addressing the faculties of the mind and thought, such as sight, hearing, and hearts. It presents a beautiful contrast between the believer who responds to the truth because his heart, sight, and hearing are sound, and the disbeliever whose heart, hearing, and sight have been struck, so he does not respond. This defect in hearing, hearts, and sight is not a corruption in their performance of their physiological function, for they are sound and can hear and see. Instead, it is a corruption in the will for truth and falsehood. They reject the truth and fight against it, and they desire falsehood and defend it despite the clarity of the truth and the evident proof of its argument. So, Allah (swt) placed coverings over their hearts, sealing them, and placed deafness over their ears, so they neither hear nor understand. Thus, they increased in their error in the darkness of disbelief and polytheism which they had chosen as their path. Then Allah (swt) increased their misguidance on this path. Allah (swt) says, «وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا صُمٌّ وَبُكْمٌ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ مَنْ يَشَأِ اللَّهُ يُضِلَّهُ» “And those who deny Our signs are deaf and dumb in darkness. Whomever Allah wills, He leaves astray; and whomever He wills, He places on a straight path.” [TMQ Surah al-Anaam 39]

This meaning is repeated in the noble Surah, and among its examples is the Saying of Allah (swt) Who said, «إِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ وَالْمَوْتَى يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ ۝٣٦» “Only those who listen will respond. As for the dead, Allah will resurrect them; then to Him they will be returned.” [TMQ Surah al-Anaam 36] In his Tafsir, Al-Qurtubi states, «إِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ» أي: سماع إصغاء وتفهم وإرادة للحق، وهم المؤمنون الذين يقبلون ما يسمعون فينتفعون ويعملون به. «والموتى يبعثهم الله ثم إليه يُرْجَعُونَ» أي: هم بمنزلة الموتى في أنهم لا يقبلون الحق ولا يُصغون إلى حجة. “Only those who listen will respond,” meaning those who listen attentively, understand, and desire the truth. These are the believers who accept what they hear, benefit from it, and act upon it. “As for the dead, Allah will resurrect them; then to Him they will be returned,” meaning they are like the dead in that they do not accept the truth nor listen to any evidential argument (hujjah).

And Allah (swt) says, «وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كَلًّا» “And among them are those who listen to you, but We have placed coverings over their hearts, preventing them from understanding it, and in their ears is deafness. And even if they see every

sign, they will not believe in it. Until when they come to you arguing with you, those who disbelieve say, ‘This is nothing but legends of the former peoples.’” [TMQ Surah al-An’am 25] In the Tafsir of Al-Qurtubi, he says, «وَجَعَلْنَا» يعني المشركين كَفَّارَ مَكَّةَ. «وَجَعَلْنَا» أي: فعلنا ذلك بهم مجازاةً على كفرهم، وليس المعنى أنهم لا يسمعون ولا يفقهون، ولكن لما كانوا لا ينتفعون بما يسمعون ولا ينقادون إلى الحق كانوا بمنزلة من لا يسمع ولا يفهم. والأكثَرُ: الأغلبية. «أن يفهموه» أي: أن يفهموه، والمعنى كراهيةً. **“And among them are those who listen to you”** refers to the polytheists, the disbelievers of Makkah. **“but We have placed coverings over their hearts”** means: We did this to them as a recompense for their disbelief. It does not mean that they do not hear or understand, but, instead, since they do not benefit from what they hear and do not submit to the truth, they are like those who neither hear nor understand. “Coverings” refers to veils. **“from understanding it”** means: so that they might comprehend it. The meaning is: We disliked that they might understand it, or so that they would not understand it. **“and in their ears is deafness”** means: a heaviness.”

And Allah (swt) says, **﴿قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ وَأَبْصَرَكُمْ وَخَتَمَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ مِّنْ إِلَهِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيَكُم بِهِ أَنْظَرُ﴾** Say, ‘Have you considered: if Allah should take away your hearing and your sight and seal your hearts, who is a creator other than Allah who could bring it back to you? Look how We diversify the signs; yet they still turn away.’” [TMQ Surah Hud 46]. And in the commentary of Al-Qurtubi, **﴿قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ وَأَبْصَرَكُمْ﴾** أي: أذهب وانتزع. و**﴿وَخَتَمَ﴾** أي: طبع. وقيل: المراد المعاني القائمة بهذه الجوارح، وقد يُذهب الله الجوارح **﴿وَخَتَمَ﴾** أي: أذهب وأنتزع. والأعراض جميعاً فلا يُبقي شيئاً. والآية احتجاج على الكفار، ومعنى **﴿أَرَأَيْتُمْ﴾** أي: علمتم. **“Say, ‘Have you considered: if Allah should take away your hearing and your sight...”** And **“He sealed”** means: He removed and took away. And **“He sealed”** means: He stamped. And it was said: What is meant is the meanings inherent in these limbs, and Allah (swt) may remove all limbs and attributes, leaving nothing. And the verse is an argument against the disbelievers, and the meaning of “Have you considered” is: Have you known?

Another tool for thinking that the noble Surah addressed was the presentation of facts and events for reflection and to draw lessons and morals from them. The Surah gave several examples of these facts, such as:

The events that took place during the time of the Prophet (saw) with the polytheists of Quraysh, who attacked Islam and confronted its aqeedah with argument, questioning, ridicule, and mockery. Many verses of this noble surah had a specific situational reason for their revelation, and these situations that occurred with our noble Prophet (saw) are a source of emulation and guidance for the believers. Therefore, it is necessary to reflect upon them, ponder their wisdom, draw lessons from them, and follow the example of our noble Prophet (saw) his approach to responding to the disbelievers and polytheists.

The mention of some stories of previous messengers and nations in this chapter serves as a consolation to our Prophet Muhammad (saw) and the believers. The disbelievers of Quraysh, who rejected the truth and mocked the Dawah to Islam, the Prophet (saw), and his Companions (ra), followed the same path as those before them who disbelieved, denied, and mocked their messengers (as). This serves as a comfort to the noble Messenger (saw) and a reminder that the fate of disbelievers, deniers, and mockers is the same in every era: destruction. Conversely, the fate of the believers who affirm the truth is nasr (victory) from Allah (swt), for He is their Protector and Guardian. Among these verses is the Saying of Allah (swt), Who said, **﴿وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ فَمَنْ ءَامَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ٤٨﴾** **“And We do not send the messengers except as bringers of good tidings and warners. So whoever believes and does righteousness - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve. (48) But**

those who deny Our verses - punishment will afflict them for what they used to do. (49)” [TMQ Surah Hud 48-49]. And Allah (swt) said, ﴿وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبْتَ رَسُولًا مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَصَبْرُوا عَلَىٰ مَا كُذِّبُوا وَأَوْدُوا ۚ﴾ “And indeed, messengers before you were denied, but they patiently endured what they were told.” They were denied and harmed until Our help came to them. And there is no changing the words of Allah. And there has certainly come to you some of the news of the messengers.” [TMQ Surah Hud 34]

Among the examples of realities mentioned in this noble Surah are the cosmic signs, such as the creation and death of humankind, the night and day, the stars, and so on. These verses speak at length about the evidence of the Creator's greatness in the vast universe and point to His Almighty power.

How can anyone who contemplates these magnificent cosmic signs and reflects upon them not believe in their Creator? This also serves as a lesson: that Allah (swt), the One capable of creation and innovation, the One capable of governing the universe with a magnificent and precise system, is certainly capable of destroying the disbelievers, who turned away from Iman in their Creator and were blind to His worship and submission.

Allah (swt) says, ﴿وَمَا مِن دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَيْرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَمٌ أَمْثَلُكُمْ مَا فَرَقْنَاهُ فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ ۝٣٨﴾ “And there is no creature on earth nor bird that flies with its wings except that they are communities like yourselves. We have not neglected anything in the Book. Then to their Lord they will be gathered.” [TMQ Surah Hud 38]

And Allah (swt) says, ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَالِقُ الْخَبِّ وَالنَّوَىٰ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَمُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتِ مِنَ الْحَيِّ ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّىٰ تُؤْفَكُونَ ۝٩٥ فَالِقُ الْإِصْبَاحِ وَجَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ سَكَنًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ حُسْبَانًا ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ۝٩٦ وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُومَ لِتَهْتَدُوا بِهَا فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ۝٩٧ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ فَمُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمُسْتَوْدَعٌ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ۝٩٨﴾ “Indeed, Allah is the cleaver of the grain and the date stone. He brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the dead from the living. That is Allah; so how are you deluded? (95) He is the cleaver of the daybreak and has made the night for rest and the sun and moon for reckoning. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the All-Knowing (96) And it is He who has placed for you the stars so that you may be guided by them through the darkness of the land and sea. We have detailed the signs for a people who know. (97) And it is He who created you from a single soul, and gave you a place of settlement and a place of repose. We have detailed the signs for a people who understand.(98)” The surah clarified that these verses and realities were given to provide a lesson, confirmation, and evidence, but only for the believers who understand and know.

The surah, in its verses, points to the method of arguing with polytheists and disbelievers, through reason and intellectual discourse, and by placing truth in opposition to falsehood. It gives a great example of this from the life of our master Abraham, peace be upon him, in his argument with his father Azar. Allah (swt) says, ﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ عَازَرَ اتَّخِذْ ۖ﴾ “And when Abraham said to his father Azar, “Do you take idols as gods? Indeed, I see you and your people in manifest error.”” [TMQ Surah Hud 74] Likewise, in his argument with his people, he proved that what they invoke and worship besides Allah (swt), such as celestial bodies and planets, is manifest error, and that the One worthy of worship is the Creator of all things. Glory be to Him, the Most High says, ﴿وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ أَتُحِبُّونِي فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَبْنَا ۚ وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ ۚ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْءٌ وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۚ﴾ “And his people argued with him. He said, ‘Do you argue with me

concerning Allah (swt) while He has guided me? And I do not fear what you associate with Him unless my Lord should will something. My Lord encompasses all things in knowledge; so will you not remember?" [TMQ Surah Hud 80]

The surah began by praising Allah (swt) and paired His praise with verses, indicating His creation and organization, to affirm that Allah (swt) Alone is worthy of praise and worship. However, the disbelievers, despite this, equate other gods with Allah (swt) and turn away from His signs whenever they are presented to them, instead of obeying Him, worshipping Him, and praising Him.

Allah (swt) says, ﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ ۝۱ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ قَضَىٰ أَجَلًا وَأَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى عِنْدَهُ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ تَمْتَرُونَ ۝۲﴾ **"All praise is due to Allah (swt), Who created the heavens and the earth and made darkness and light. Yet those who disbelieve ascribe equals to their Lord. (1) He is the One Who created you from clay and then decreed a term—a term specified with Him. Yet you doubt. (2)"** [TMQ Surah Al An'am 1-2]

The surah concludes by mentioning the Lordship of Allah (swt), after great verses that spoke about His power, greatness, mercy, and planning, and the fate of the believers and the fate of the disbelieving deniers. Allah (swt) is the Lord of all things and the Creator of all things. Allah (swt) created man in this world to test him, and so that his life, duas, and worship in it would be for Allah (swt), and his return from this world would be to Allah (swt) to inform him about his deeds and his destiny. Allah (swt) is the One Who made man a successor on earth and prepared things for him so that his succession in it would be upright. Allah (swt) created for him the mind and the ability to think, and sent Messengers (as) to him calling him to Iman, and presenting him with the confirmation that guides him to the straight path. All of this is so that his succession in the earth would be upright and stable, and so that he would perform his function in life, worshipping his Lord (swt) and not associating anything with Him (swt).

Allah (swt) says, ﴿قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَانِي رَبِّي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيمًا مِّلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ۝۱۶۱ قُلْ أَغْنَىٰ اللَّهُ عَنِّي رِبَا وَصَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝۱۶۲ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ۚ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ۝۱۶۳ قُلْ أَغْنَىٰ اللَّهُ عَنِّي رِبَا وَهُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ۚ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُم مَّرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ۝۱۶۴ وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ۝۱۶۵﴾ **"Say, 'Indeed, my Lord has guided me to a straight path - a correct Deen - the way of Ibrahim, inclining toward truth. And he was not of those who associate others with Allah. (161) Say, 'Indeed, my Salah, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah (swt), Lord of the worlds. (162) No partner has He (swt). And this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.' (163) Say, 'Is it other than that which I have been commanded to do?'" I seek Allah (swt) as my Lord, and He is the Lord of all things. And no soul earns anything except against itself, and no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord is your return, and He will inform you concerning that over which you used to differ. (164) And it is He who has made you successors on the earth and raised some of you above others in degrees. That He may test you in what He has given you. Indeed, your Lord is swift in punishment, and indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful. (165)"** [TMQ Surah Al An'am 161-165]. Indeed Allah (swt) has spoken the truth.