

Comprehensive Commentary on Surah 'Abasa (He Frowned) – Classical and Contemporary Perspectives

Written and collected by Zia H Shah MD -- Abstract

Surah 'Abasa (Chapter 80 of the Quran), revealed in Makkah, is a short yet profound chapter intertwining historical context with enduring spiritual lessons. This commentary provides a **verse-by-verse analysis** through multiple lenses – **historical, scientific, philosophical, and theological** – drawing on classical exegesis (with emphasis on *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*) and modern insights (including the works of **Zia H. Shah MD**). Surah 'Abasa opens with a gentle divine rebuke to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ for momentarily favoring influential listeners over a sincere but blind seeker of guidance. This incident, preserved in the Quran, exemplifies the scripture's impartial **moral teaching** and serves as internal evidence of the Quran's divine origin (for it **openly corrects** the Prophet in a matter of etiquette ¹). The Surah then elevates the discourse to universal themes: it extols the **Quran's status** as an "admonition" kept in honored, pristine records carried by noble angels, underscoring claims of the Quran's **purity and glory**. Next, through a series of vivid reflections on **creation**, it argues from **first creation to Afterlife** – reminding humans of their humble biological origin, the bounties of sustenance provided by God, and using these as rational evidence for **resurrection**. The chapter culminates in stark scenes of the **Day of Judgment**, where worldly ties are severed and people are divided by the radiance or gloom of their faces, reflective of their faith and deeds. In doing so, Surah 'Abasa emphasizes human accountability and the eventual resurrection, a theme echoed throughout the Quran.

In summary, Surah 'Abasa teaches humility, the equal worth of all seekers of truth, and the certainty of the hereafter, all while implicitly testifying to the **Glorious Quran's divine claims** – its uncompromising truthfulness, heavenly preservation, and congruence with rational reflection on the natural world. A concluding section highlights how the **argument from the first creation to the afterlife** in this Surah aligns with similar reasoning in other surahs, reinforced by both classical commentary and modern scientific-philosophical insights.

Introduction: Historical Context and Thematic Overview

Surah Name & Revelation Context: *Abasa* (عَبَسَ), meaning "He frowned," is a Makkan surah comprising 42 verses. The title comes from the opening word, referring to an incident where someone "frowned and turned away" from a blind man. According to numerous classical reports, including the account recorded by **Ibn Kathīr**, this someone was **the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself** ² ³. The Prophet was earnestly preaching Islam to several prominent Quraysh leaders (among them Utbah ibn Rabi'ah and Abu Jahl) hoping to incline their hearts to faith ⁴ ⁵. In that intense moment, a blind Muslim companion, **'Abdullāh ibn Umm Maktūm** (a sincere early convert), approached the gathering seeking to learn. Unable

to see that the Prophet was in deep discourse, Ibn Umm Maktūm interrupted repeatedly, eager for guidance 6 7 . The Prophet – who always yearned for the Quraysh nobles to embrace Islam – **frowned and turned aside** slightly from the blind man, continuing his talk with the chiefs. He perhaps thought that attending to the blind believer could be deferred to a later moment, whereas engaging the influential chiefs immediately might yield a greater good for the nascent Muslim community 8 9 . No sooner had that private moment passed than **Allah revealed Surah ‘Abasa**. The beginning sternly yet mercifully corrects the Prophet’s approach, instructing him (and all believers by extension) in the ethics of da’wah (inviting to Islam): no soul seeking truth is to be disregarded in favor of another’s status. This **historical backdrop** is crucial for understanding the first ten verses.

Structure & Themes: After the initial reprimand, the Surah transitions into broader reflections and warnings relevant to all readers. Verses 11–16 pivot to extol the **Quran itself as a noble reminder**, hinting at its celestial preservation and purity. Verses 17–32 then present a **natural theology lesson**: drawing attention to **human creation and the provision of food** as tangible signs of God’s power. By highlighting mankind’s origin from a lowly droplet and the miracle of rain reviving dead earth into lush sustenance, the Surah makes a **logical argument for the Resurrection** – a hallmark theme in the Quran: He who created life initially and brings forth life from barren earth can surely **raise the dead to life again** 10 11 . The final section (verses 33–42) delivers an evocative depiction of the **Day of Judgment**: a “Deafening Blast” that renders every human being oblivious to family ties in their own terror, and the stark contrast of **radiant vs. gloomy faces** that day (the joy of the righteous versus the despair of disbelievers) 12 13 .

Claims about the Glorious Quran: Alongside its moral and eschatological teachings, Surah ‘Abasa implicitly **validates several claims about the Quran** itself. It demonstrates the Quran’s *divine origin and honesty* – for no self-authored scripture would admonish its propagator in such a frank manner. Indeed, the presence of verses correcting Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (here and elsewhere) is “hard to imagine” if he were the author, as it runs against any motive of self-aggrandizement 1 14 . Instead, the Prophet had to **humbly recite these verses** in his lifetime, a testament that the Quran’s author is an autonomous moral authority (God). Furthermore, verses 13–16 describe the Quran as being in “*honored, exalted, purified*” pages, delivered by angelic messengers – implying the Quran is a **glorious, untainted revelation from on high** 15 16 . These self-referential claims about the Quran’s status will be noted in the commentary.

In the commentary that follows, each verse (or small group of verses) of Surah ‘Abasa is examined with insights from classical tafsīr (especially Ibn Kathīr’s explanations) and supplemented by **contemporary commentary**. Particularly, when discussing how **first creation argues for the Afterlife**, we will incorporate modern perspectives (e.g. from Zia H. Shah MD) which draw upon **cosmology, physics, and biology** to illustrate the reasonability of resurrection in light of God’s creative power.

Verse-by-Verse Commentary

Verses 1–10: The Prophet’s Moment of Mistake and Universal Message

Verses 1–2. “*He frowned and turned away, because the blind man came to him.*” These verses famously refer to the Prophet’s reaction when **Ibn Umm Maktūm**, the blind companion, interrupted his meeting. The Quran initially addresses the Prophet in the **third person** (“he frowned...”) rather than the second person (“you frowned”), a subtle shift to cushion the reproach. Exegetes note this preserves the Prophet’s honor even amid correction – as if saying “*Someone frowned*” instead of directly “you” 17 . Nonetheless, the

admonishment is clear. The Prophet's slight frown (a mild sign of discomfort that only Allah observed) and turning away became an example through which Allah taught a timeless lesson.

Verses 3–4. *"Yet for all you know, [O Prophet], he might be purifying himself; or be reminded, and the reminder benefit him."* Here God gently points out that the **blind man's soul was pure** and eager – the very interruption the Prophet found ill-timed could have been the key moment of spiritual growth for that man ³ ¹⁸. Only Allah knows who will benefit from guidance; worldly status is no metric for receptivity. In contrast, the dignitaries the Prophet was focused on had no guarantee of embracing faith. Thus, Allah asks in essence: *"Why give priority to one who might never heed, over one who wants to learn?"* This rhetorical question humbles not just the Prophet but anyone engaged in preaching: never underestimate the sincere seeker, no matter how humble, nor overestimate the elite listener.

Verses 5–7. *"As for him who considers himself free of need – to him you were attentive. Yet it is not your responsibility if he does not attain purity."* These verses describe the **rich pagan chief** (or chiefs) the Prophet had been addressing. They acted *self-satisfied* ("self-sufficient") in their arrogance, as if unimpressed by the reminder. The Prophet, in his zeal for their conversion, devoted his attention to them, hoping to soften their hearts. Allah's reprimand clarifies that guidance is ultimately in **God's control**, not the Prophet's. If the influential listener *chooses* not to purify himself, the Prophet is **not to blame** ⁹ ¹⁹. In other words, a missionary's duty is to convey, not to convert. There is also an implied warning: do not unduly honor the wealthy and powerful in matters of religion at the expense of the weak. **No human is "above" needing guidance**, and turning away from a willing soul is a disservice to that principle.

Verses 8–10. *"But as for him who came to you full of eagerness – and in awe [of God] – you were inattentive to him."* These lines exalt the blind man's virtues: he *hurried* to the Prophet, indicative of his thirst for knowledge, and he had **"khushū"** (reverent fear of God in his heart) ²⁰. Such a person should have been welcomed warmly. The Prophet's **"neglect"** of him in that moment, however unintended, is gently criticized. The strong wording serves to impress upon all Muslims that **sincerity and piety** – not social rank or convenience – determine who deserves priority in receiving religious attention. Classical commentators mention that after this revelation, the Prophet ﷺ **honored Ibn Umm Maktūm greatly**. It is said he would greet him with affection, spread his cloak for him, and even later assigned him as the Mu'adhdhin (caller to prayer) in Madinah when needed ²¹ ²². The lessons of verses 1–10 are both **historical** and **universal**: They correct the Prophet's *ijtihād* (personal judgment) in a specific incident ²³, but also establish that the Islamic message is **universal and egalitarian** – every seeker's soul has equal worth, and no preacher should be **"too busy"** for the poor or disabled. This ethos echoes a core Quranic theme that prophets are sent as warner and guide to *all* of humanity, making no distinction of class (cf. Quran 26:111, where Noah is taunted for welcoming lowly followers, and he responds that it's not his place to dismiss them).

From a **philosophical** angle, this passage also illustrates the Quran's commitment to **ethical objectivity**. The fact that Allah included a reprimand to Muhammad ﷺ in the Quran, which he then proclaimed publicly, demonstrates a profound principle: the truth and guidance of the Quran **transcend even the Prophet's personal inclinations**. It's a powerful internal evidence of the Quran's authenticity; as one scholar observes, *"A false prophet would have chosen self-aggrandizement, but the Messenger of God had no choice in the matter."* ¹⁴ Indeed, Muslims see in this a **divine impartiality** – the Quran does not shy away from correcting the Prophet when needed, reinforcing that it is **God's word, not Muhammad's**.

Verses 11–16: The Noble Quran – A Reminder Inscribed in Honour

Verse 11. “No indeed! Verily, it is a reminder (admonition).” After the specific rebuke, the Quran says “**Kallā**” (No indeed!), pivoting the focus. Many commentators interpret “it” (Arabic: *innahā*) as referring to the **Quranic message or the Surah itself** ¹⁵. In context, it implies that despite the Prophet’s momentary lapse, the guidance given here is a *beneficial admonition* for **everyone**. The equal-opportunity reminder – to convey God’s words to **high and low alike** – is itself “an admonition” to be heeded. Alternatively, “it” can mean the entire Quran is an admonition. Either way, the verse reasserts that the guidance being sent down holds tremendous value for *whoever wills to remember*.

Verse 12. “So whoever wills, let him pay heed to it.” This underscores human agency in benefiting from the Quran. The Prophet’s duty is to convey the reminder, but **people must choose** to take it to heart. This verse subtly absolves the Prophet from over-concern with those who turn away: whether rich or poor, **each person is responsible for their own guidance** (“whoever wills, let him remember”). It also hints that *no one should be prevented or discouraged* from accessing the reminder – since anyone who *wills* ought to be given the chance to listen and learn. Some Mufasssīrūn point out that this was a directive to spread the message without favoritism; thereafter the Prophet ﷺ **equally invited all** – noble or destitute – and left the outcome to Allah ²⁴.

Verses 13–16. “[It is] in records held in honour – exalted, purified – in the hands of ambassador-angels, noble and dutiful.” These verses describe the **lofty origin and status of the Quranic revelation**. Classical exegesis, as cited by Ibn Kathīr, explains that the Quran (or *Suhuf*, “scriptures/pages”) is **honoured (مُكَرَّمَةٌ)** and **exalted (مَرْفُوعَةٌ)**, meaning it is highly esteemed in the heavenly realm ¹⁵. It is **purified**, free from any falsehood or imperfection. The image is that of the Quran inscribed in the **Preserved Tablet** (al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz) or heavenly scrolls, and delivered by **Safarah** – a word Ibn ‘Abbās and others explained as **angelic messengers** ²⁵. These angels are *noble and obedient*, reflecting the **sanctity** of the revelation they carry.

From a theological standpoint, this passage reinforces Muslim belief that the Quran is **not a product of earthly authorship** but a divine book safeguarded by angels. The mention of “ambassadors” emphasizes that just as worldly kings have trusted couriers, the King of kings sent down the Quran through **Archangel Jibrīl (Gabriel)** and other angels, who are utterly faithful in conveying God’s word without alteration ²⁶. The Quran elsewhere (Q.85:21-22) calls itself a “Glorious Qur’an, in a Preserved Tablet.” Thus, verses 13–16 of Surah ‘Abasa echo that claim – that this *dhikr* (reminder) comes from a **glorious, protected source**.

Notably, **Ibn Kathīr** remarks here that anyone who “carries” the Quran (i.e. learns and transmits it) should emulate the purity and righteousness of these angelic **safarah**, as the Quran should only be borne by those of clean character ²⁷. This sets a high bar for the Prophet and all believers: the Quran’s carriers on earth (whether the Prophet, scribes, or memorizers) must be as sincere and upright as the angelic carriers in heaven. It also subtly indicates why the Prophet’s frown, however slight, was addressed – the Quran demands excellence in character when interacting with others, especially in contexts of learning and guidance.

From a modern perspective, verses 13–16 can be seen as alluding to the Quran’s **preservation and authenticity**. Muslims often cite that despite being transmitted over 1400 years, the Quran remains textually unaltered and revered, which they attribute to divine protection as hinted here. The phrase “exalted, purified” in a spiritual-philosophical sense means the Quran’s teachings are **loftier than any human agenda** and unsullied by the biases that typically creep into human-authored texts. Indeed, as

contemporary scholars highlight, the Quran's content frequently runs **against the grain of the Prophet's personal convenience or ego** (for instance, reproaching him as in verse 1, or revealing verses that caused him personal hardship). This objectivity and willingness to reveal even the Prophet's private matters (e.g. Quran 66:1) indicate an origin beyond the Prophet – supporting the claim that it is **truly God's word** ¹ ¹⁴ . Surah 'Abasa's inclusion of this backstory and its description of the Quran's exalted source reinforce those claims about the **Glorious Quran**.

Verses 17–23: Man's Origin, Ingratitude, and God's Power to Resurrect

Verse 17. *“Condemned is man; how ungrateful is he! (Qutila'l-insān, mā akfarah)”* Here the tone shifts from addressing the Prophet to addressing **all humanity, especially deniers of God's favors**. *“Qutila”* (lit. “killed”) is an Arabic expression of censure, interpreted as *“May man be cursed/slain”* – not a literal command, but a way to say *woe to man* for his **ingratitude** ²⁸ . In classical tafsīr, Ibn 'Abbās explained it as *“May man be cursed for his disbelief”* ²⁸ . This verse sets the stage: despite all the evidence of God's blessings, man's attitude (particularly the stubborn disbeliever's) is often one of blatant ingratitude. It is a moral indictment meant to jolt the listener: after reflecting on the Prophet's error, we are now invited to reflect on **our own failings** – chiefly, the failure to acknowledge the Creator.

Verses 18–19. *“From what thing did He create him? From a drop of fluid (nutfa), He created him and proportioned him.”* In answering the question *“From what was man created?”*, the Quran reminds us of our **biological origin** – a humble sperm-drop mingled with an egg (nutfa). God then *“fa-qaddarahu”* – set him in due **proportion**, shaping the embryo stage by stage. Classical commentators, including Ibn Kathīr, note that *qaddara* implies God decreed everything about the developing person: their form and features, their lifespan and sustenance, even aspects of their destiny ²⁹ ³⁰ . The emphasis is twofold: **ontological humility** (we begin as a microscopic cell, something that would elicit no pride), and **Divine design** (the perfectly measured development from that drop into a complex human being).

Modern science beautifully underscores this ayah. Today we know that within that drop of fluid is the DNA blueprint that will govern the person's growth and traits – a remarkable “proportioning” indeed. As Zia Shah MD observes, **embryology** has confirmed that every human starts as a nutfah, a fact unknowable in 7th-century Arabia except through divine insight ³¹ . The Quran's description of embryonic stages (detailed in other verses as well) aligns with scientific knowledge, which many see as a **sign of the Quran's truth**. But beyond science, the **philosophical** message is clear: How **dare** man be arrogant or deny God's power, when his origin is so base? Imam *Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* mused that it is astonishing for a being fashioned from such a lowly drop to grow into a boastful skeptic who argues against his very Maker ³² . Thus, verses 17–19 call man out on his **forgetfulness** of his own creation.

Verse 20. *“Then He made the path easy for him.”* After birth, God “eases the way” for the human being. This has been interpreted in **two main ways**: (1) **Physiologically**, as Ibn 'Abbās and others say, it refers to God facilitating the baby's passage through the birth canal at delivery ³⁰ . The intricate process of childbirth, with bones and muscles flexing to allow the infant out, is indeed divinely orchestrated. (2) **Guidance-wise**, as Mujāhid and some commentators see it, it can allude to God then guiding the person through life – showing the paths of right and wrong (paralleling Quran 76:3: *“We guided him to the path...”*) ³³ ³⁴ . Both meanings carry truth and are complementary: Allah facilitates our **entry into the world**, and provides guidance (through intellect, revelation, messengers) to **navigate life's journey**. The phrase thus encapsulates God's nurturing care from womb to tomb – He not only creates man but also charts a way for man's spiritual and worldly progress.

Verses 21–22. “Then He causes him to die and [has him] buried. Then, when He wills, He will resurrect him [again].” These verses cover the latter stages of human existence. Death is appointed by God, and the **grave** (or resting place) becomes every human’s temporary abode. Notably, burial (*aqbara-hu*) is mentioned – a dignified end where humans place their dead in earth, which itself is a blessing distinguishing us from animals. After that, **resurrection** is promised at the time **Allah wills**. The phrasing is emphatic: resurrection isn’t a matter of *if* but *when* – entirely within God’s power and decree.

For the Quran’s audience, this is a direct argument: *The One who brought you out of nothing will bring you back again*. Ibn Kathīr comments that Allah mentions **creating man from a despised fluid** as proof that He is **able to bring him back to life** just as easily ¹⁰ ¹¹. He even cites a hadith: the Prophet ﷺ said **all of a person’s body decays after death except one tiny bone – the tailbone (coccyx)**, from which Allah will recreate the whole body on Resurrection Day ³⁵. This interesting narration resonates with a modern analogy: **DNA or a single cell** could theoretically regenerate the organism (a concept seen in cloning). The tailbone in Islamic tradition is like the seed of a plant that remains to sprout again. Whether literal or metaphorical, it powerfully conveys that human re-creation is trivially easy for God – He **keeps an “original seed”** of us as it were.

From a **scientific perspective**, one may add that nothing of our physical being truly disappears; matter and energy are conserved. As some modern thinkers note, *every atom of our bodies remains under God’s dominion, even after we turn to dust*. Gathering those atoms is a simple matter for the One who made the atom itself. **Physics** thus poses no obstacle to resurrection: if the universe had a beginning (Big Bang) from nothing, a second creation from existing matter is surely plausible. The Quran elsewhere explicitly makes this logical case: “Does man not remember that We created him before, when he was nothing?” (19:67) and “As We originated the first creation, We shall repeat it” (21:104). Surah ‘Abasa’s concise contribution to this argument is to remind us of **life’s full cycle under God’s power** – *creation, guidance, death, and resurrection*.

Verse 23. “No! But man has not accomplished what He (Allah) commanded him.” This verse has two complementary interpretations in tafsīr. One view (adopted by at-Tabarī and others) is that it returns to chastising the disbelieving **ingrate**: the **ungrateful man has not fulfilled God’s commands**; he has fallen short in worship and obedience ³⁶. In other words, after all the favors of creation and life’s facilitation just mentioned, man still doesn’t do as he is obligated – hence he is “liable to be cursed” as in verse 17. Another interpretation, favored by Ibn Kathīr in context, is that this verse actually ties to *the act of resurrection* mentioned in verse 22 ³⁶. It would mean: *No, not yet – Allah hasn’t carried out that final command (of resurrection) just yet*. On this reading, the phrase “he (Allah) commanded him” is about Allah’s decree of resurrection – it will indeed happen, but at its appointed time. Until then, man shouldn’t be complacent; the delay is part of God’s plan, not a cancellation of it ³⁶. Both nuances are meaningful: **(a)** Most people have indeed **not obeyed God as they ought**, and **(b)** The promised Resurrection **has not yet occurred**, but will certainly occur once the decreed term of the world is complete.

The flow from verses 17–23 paints a comprehensive picture: Human beings owe everything – their very existence and sustenance – to Allah, yet many respond with denial or negligence. They forget their lowly start and final end. Surah ‘Abasa is refuting such irrational ingratitude and particularly aiming at those who **doubt the Afterlife**. By logically interlinking **creation→death→resurrection**, the Quran appeals to reason: *Is it harder to create from scratch, or to recreate from remnants?* Obviously the latter is easier. **Zia Shah MD** notes that this line of reasoning is a recurring Quranic theme (appearing in *at least a dozen places* in the Quran) because belief in afterlife is so central ³⁷. He cites Surah Qāf (50:15) where Allah pointedly asks: “Were We incapable of the first creation? No indeed! Yet they doubt a second creation.” ³⁸. The consistency of

this argument across the Quran underscores that **resurrection is rational** once one acknowledges God's creative power. Denying it, the Quran suggests, stems not from reason but from obstinate ignorance or arrogance – truly “how ungrateful” man is! ³⁹

Verses 24–32: Nature's Testimony – Rain, Food, and Resurrection

Verse 24. “Then let man look at his food.” After reflecting on human creation, the Quran directs our attention to a daily miracle we often take for granted: the **food on our plates**. The command “*falyanzur*” (let him look/consider) is an invitation to **reflect deeply** on where our sustenance comes from ⁴⁰. This simple ayah bridges from human biology to the broader **ecology** that supports human life. It implies: if the origin of *your life* didn't convince you of God's power, then consider the origin of *your food*. Both are signs of a deliberate Creator. The classical scholar Fakhr al-Rāzī notes how elegantly the Quran moves from the creation of man to the nurturing of man – providing another proof of resurrection by analogy ⁴¹ ⁴². We're asked to ponder the entire chain of provision as a **Divine sign**.

Verses 25–27. “We pour forth water in abundance, then We split the earth in clefts, and cause grain to grow therein.” These verses describe the **water cycle and plant growth** in succinct, powerful imagery. Allah sends **rainfall** in abundance, soaking the earth. Then He **splits the soil** – a reference to how sprouting seeds break apart the ground, or how rain cracks open the dry earth so that shoots can emerge ⁴³ ⁴⁴. The result is the growth of **ḥabb** (grain/cereals) – the staple food grains like wheat, barley, etc., which form the basis of human diet. Each term here is rich in meaning: the **rain “pouring”** evokes mercy cascading from the sky, the **earth's splitting** evokes the effort of life pushing forth, and the **grain** symbolizes sustenance. Classical tafsīr details that *al-ḥabb* means all kinds of grain seeds and crops ⁴⁵. This whole process, the Quran implies, is something **man cannot truly engineer** on his own; it depends on a fine-tuned balance set by the Creator (right amounts of rain, fertile soil, the biology of seeds).

From a scientific point of view, these lines align with what we know: Water is the catalyst for life in soil. Modern time-lapse photography of plant germination indeed shows the ground bulging and cracking as a seedling emerges – precisely matching the Quran's wording ⁴⁶ ⁴⁷. Zia Shah MD writes that the Quran's vivid depiction of the earth **quivering and swelling** with new life (as also described in 41:39 and 22:5) finds affirmation in scientific observation, and serves as a **visual analogy** for how the dead will rise ⁴⁸ ⁴⁹. The rain that revives a barren land is a mini-resurrection on earth, **observable to our eyes**. As the Quran says in another verse, “And of His signs is that you see the earth dry; then when We send down water, it stirs and swells... Indeed, He who gave it life is surely able to give life to the dead.” ⁵⁰.

Verses 28–31. “And vines and herbs; and olives and date-palms; and dense gardens; and fruits and fodder – as provision for you and your cattle.” These verses continue the list of produced vegetation, painting a lush tableau of various foods and foliage that result from that rain. Grapevines (*a'nāb*), edible herbs or vegetables (*qaḍb* refers to green fodder or produce eaten fresh) ⁴⁵, the hardy olive (a staple fat and food in Arabia and the Levant), and the iconic date palm groves are mentioned. “*Ḥadā'iq ghulb*” is translated as **luxuriant or dense gardens** – groves with thick foliage ⁵¹ ⁵². *Fākihah* means fruits in general, and *abb* refers to pasture or herbage for animals (grasses, etc.) ⁵¹ ⁵³. The Quranic style here is almost poetic, conjuring images of an entire **ecosystem of sustenance**. It covers everything from human delicacies (fruits, olives) to animal feed, implying a comprehensive provision for all living beings.

Ibn Kathīr notes that second Caliph ‘Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb, upon reciting “and fruit and *abb* (herbage)”, wondered what exactly *abb* was, then immediately rebuked himself saying “This inquiry is not burdensome –

it simply means some kind of plant that grows from earth.” ⁵⁴ ⁵⁵ . The takeaway is that the specific identities of each plant are less important than the overall recognition that **God’s mercy sends forth a diversity of sustenance** without which we and our livestock could not survive. Ancient and modern readers alike can grasp this simple abundance enumerated – from vineyards to date orchards.

Finally, **verse 32** clinches the section: *“A provision and benefit for you and your cattle.”* All the aforementioned marvels of agriculture are explicitly labeled as **provision from God**. It reminds us that human and animal life are interdependent and both are cared for by Allah’s planning. The pairing of humans and cattle also subtly recalls that humans are **stewards** of animals – our cattle eat of what the earth grows just as we do.

Theologically and **morally**, verses 24–32 teach gratitude. They imply: *Consider where your dinner comes from – the rain-laden clouds, the rich earth, the biology of plants – none of which you created. Should you not be thankful to the One who nourishes you?* The mention of cattle also recalls that many disbelievers in Prophet Muhammad’s time raised livestock; they should consider Who keeps those animals fed and breeding.

Most pertinently, these verses serve as an **analogy for resurrection**, complementing the earlier verses on human creation. Just as **rain revives dead land**, bringing forth a resurrection of landscape, so will God’s command revive dead humans from the earth ⁴⁰ ⁵⁶ . The Quran makes this parallel explicit in many places (e.g. *“Allah gives life to the earth after its death – similarly, you will be brought forth (alive).”* ⁵⁷). In fact, **classical scholars** like Ibn Kathīr often concluded from such verses: *“Just as We bring life to dead land, We shall raise up the dead on the Day of Resurrection.”* [26†L169-177] ⁵⁸ . There is even a hadith or report that in the end times Allah will send a special rain that causes human bodies to **sprout from the ground like plants**, reinforcing the parable. Whether taken literally or metaphorically, it drives home the point – **nature’s cycles are a signpost to the Hereafter**. Every seed that sprouts is like a preview of how the Creator can call forth life anew.



After rainfall, even a barren desert blooms with life – a vivid metaphor the Quran uses to illustrate Allah’s power to resurrect the dead. Just as rain transforms arid land into lush greenery, the Quran invites us to witness in nature a proof of revival after death. ⁵⁶ ⁴⁸

(Image: Thar desert in Sindh turning green after rain – a real-world “ayat” (sign) of life from dead earth.)

In summary, verses 24–32 complement the **human creation argument** with a **cosmic agriculture argument**. Together they form a one-two punch against disbelief in the Resurrection: First, *remember your own genesis from nothing (so don't deem resurrection impossible)*, and second, *observe how annually God revives the earth (so don't deem resurrection unlikely)*. The Quran's **integrated approach** – blending spiritual reminders with tangible phenomena – demonstrates what one author calls “arguing from the seen to the unseen” ⁵⁹ ⁶⁰. It's an encouragement to use our intellect (‘aql) and senses as tools to strengthen faith, seeing **unity in God's work**: the Lord who feeds you each day will not fail to raise you one day for judgment.

Verses 33–42: The Day of Judgment – Human Ties Severed, Faces Transformed

Verses 33–36. “Then, when the Deafening Blast (*as-Sakhkhah*) comes – the Day when one will flee from his brother, and from his mother and father, and from his wife and children.” The Surah now shifts our gaze from the present world to the cataclysmic **Hereafter**, beginning with the arrival of *as-Sakhkhah*, literally “the Deafening Sound/Blast.” This is one of the dramatic names for the **Day of Judgment**. Ibn ‘Abbās said *as-Sakhkhah* refers to the Day of Rising itself, emphasizing its enormity ⁶¹. Others, like Imam Ṭabarī, interpret it as the second **trumpet blast** that will deafen ears – essentially the moment of resurrection when graves burst open at the angel Isrāfīl's horn ⁶¹ ⁶². Either way, it is a scene of unparalleled terror.

On that Day, even the closest earthly bonds dissolve under the weight of personal accountability. The verses enumerate our **nearest relations** – siblings, parents, spouses, and children – from whom a person will **flee** in fear. It is striking that the Quran, which elsewhere upholds kinship ties and kindness to parents, here shows that on Judgment Day the **instinct for self-preservation** trumps all social attachments. Each soul is overwhelmed with concern for its own fate ¹² ⁶³. The Prophet ﷺ, in an authentic narration, described that even the greatest prophets will be saying “*Myself, myself!*” on that Day, not interceding until Allah grants permission ⁶⁴. Jesus, for instance, will not even speak on behalf of his own mother Mary at first, illustrating how **individualized the dread** will be ⁶⁴.

It's worth noting the sequence of relations mentioned: one's **brother** (often a peer), then **parents** (revered figures whom one is duty-bound to care for), then one's **spouse and children** (whom one naturally protects and loves deeply). In this world, these are exactly the people for whom we'd sacrifice everything; yet on the Day of Judgment, the Quran says, *the terror will be such that every person is ready to abandon even these beloved ones*. Qatādah commented that a man will flee from “the person most beloved to him then the next dearest” because of the **horror of that Day** ⁶⁵. It is a profound psychological depiction: all relationships and dependencies melt away; each human stands alone before God.

Verse 37. “Each one of them, that Day, will have enough concern of his own to make him oblivious (to others).” This verse explains *why* people will flee from loved ones: every individual will be utterly preoccupied with **their own reckoning** ⁶⁶. The Arabic “*sha'nun yughnihi*” implies an affair that fully absorbs and spares no thought for anything else. The Prophet ﷺ was asked in a hadith, “*Will we really be so distracted that we won't even notice others naked (after resurrection)?*” – he replied by quoting this verse: “*Each will be too worried to notice others.*” ⁶⁷ ⁶⁸. In other words, the anxiety and shame of one's own sins and outcome will be so intense that even the sight of one's closest family – even people being naked in the crowd – will not register. This is a **psychological truth** the Quran wants us to internalize now: do not bank on familial intercession or

collective escape; **salvation is an individual burden**. No father can ransom his son, nor a mother her daughter on that Day (cf. Quran 31:33, 31:33). Everyone's "**plate is full**" with their own deeds.

Classical scholars also derived a moral: since each person will face God alone, we should prioritize preparing for that meeting over pleasing family or society in disobedience to God. The verse dispels the illusion some had that lineage or clan ties could **shield** them from divine justice. Even the Prophet's own lineage (his uncles, etc.) could not save themselves if they didn't believe. The Quran in 80:33-37 thus drives home the **absolute seriousness** of the Day of Resurrection.

Verses 38–40. "*Some faces on that Day will be bright – laughing, rejoicing at good news. And other faces that Day will be dust-stained – covered with gloom.*" After the terrifying initial imagery, these verses separate humanity into two camps by the **expressions on their faces**. The first group are those whose faces shine (*musfirah* – lit. "brightly radiant") ⁶⁹. They will be *laughing* out of joy and *rejoicing at tidings* – meaning they are receiving the news of Allah's pleasure, reward, perhaps entry into Paradise. Their prior fear and worry (which everyone had) has turned into relief and happiness. It's a beautiful turn of tone: from fleeing and dread to *laughing in delight*. This captures the **moment after judgment** for the righteous, when they realize they are saved. The phrase "*bi-basharah*" (at good news) indicates they are hearing the announcement of their success – e.g. angels congratulating them or seeing their record in the right hand. The **psychological contrast** with the prior verses is stark and intentional: those who **prepared** for this Day will find unimaginable joy replacing their anxieties.

The second group, alas, are those with faces **darkened** by misery. The imagery of *dust and gloom covering faces* signifies humiliation, sorrow and despair ⁶⁹. It is as if their faces are clouded in smoke or pitch (the word *qatarah* implies a blackness of soot or dust) ⁷⁰. This could be both figurative – showing their shame and terror – and perhaps literal, as some narrations say the disbelievers will literally be given **blackened faces** as a mark (contrast this with believers whose faces will glow). In Quranic language, *a shining face* is a sign of **felicity**, while *a downcast face* is a sign of **wretchedness** (see also 3:106-107). Ibn 'Abbās commented that the darkness covering the faces means "*they will be overwhelmed by gloom*" ⁷⁰. One can imagine their faces fallen, eyes downcast, covered in metaphorical dust – the opposite of pride. All their arrogance in life has literally **fallen to dust** on their faces.

Verse 42. "*Those – they are the disbelievers, the wicked sinners (al-kafarah al-fajarah).*" The Surah ends by identifying who the gloomy-faced ones are: they are those who **denied the truth and dove into sinfulness**. Notably, the Quran uses intensive plurals here – *kafarah* (intense unbelievers, vehement rejecters) and *fajarah* (flagrantly immoral folk). This phrasing indicates that these people **earned** their fate by persistent disbelief and evil deeds. It ties back to the earlier theme: ingratitude and denial of resurrection (as hinted in verse 17's "*how ungrateful is man*") lead to a terrible end. By contrast, though not explicitly stated here, other surahs clarify that the bright-faced ones are those who believed, were devout (5:119, 10:64). Surah 'Abasa implies it by antonym: if the cursed are disbelievers and sinners, the blessed must be **faithful and righteous**.

Ibn Kathīr highlights that the disbelievers are "*wicked in their deeds*" as well ⁷¹ – showing that Islam links belief and action. It is not mere theological label that dooms them, but also the "*fujūr*" (immorality) that went with their disbelief. Interestingly, an earlier Makkan passage (Quran 77:41-45) uses a similar rhyme and contrast of faces, ending with "*Woe that Day to the deniers!*" Here, Surah 'Abasa concludes more succinctly by naming them. The use of rhyming words *kafarah/fajarah* wraps up the Surah with a memorable **phonetic punch**, characteristic of the Qur'an's eloquence.

From a **theological** perspective, these final verses reinforce belief in **Al-Akhirah (the Hereafter)** with palpable imagery. Fear can be a powerful motivator; by depicting the utter collapse of worldly relationships and the visceral signs of doom or bliss on faces, the Quran appeals to both fear and hope. It tells us: *There is a Day when all accounts are settled*. The previous verses gave rational reasons to accept resurrection; these verses give a dramatic **foretaste of its outcomes**. Together, they strengthen the surah's overarching message: *do not be arrogant or heedless (like the chiefs who were being catered to at the expense of the blind man), for everyone will face God individually – either radiant with joy or blackened by regret*.

On a final reflective note, Surah 'Abasa began with a scenario about how we treat people **in this world**, and ends with how we ourselves will be treated in the **Next World**. There is a moral symmetry: show care to *the seemingly least of people now*, and perhaps you will be among *the radiant faces later*. But scorn guidance and remain thankless, and one risks being among *the faces of gloom*. The Prophet ﷺ, who initially frowned at the blind man, undoubtedly took this lesson to heart – and we see throughout his life thereafter an exemplary kindness to all seekers. In a way, Surah 'Abasa's first and last verses are connected by the theme of **not letting superficial judgments deceive us**: The Prophet momentarily thought a wealthy audience was "more important" than a blind beggar – Allah corrected that. Likewise, many humans think worldly ties or status will save them – the Quran corrects that by depicting everyone fleeing those ties on Judgment Day. Thus, the Surah consistently steers us toward **what truly matters: faith, gratitude, and accountability to Allah**.

Creation and Resurrection: A Quranic Theme Across Other Surahs

The argument presented in Surah 'Abasa – that **God's ability to create in the first place is proof of His ability to resurrect us after death** – is a recurring **Quranic theme** found throughout many chapters. This rational and analogy-based approach is so prominent that scholars like Zia Shah note it appears "in at least a dozen other places" in the Quran ³⁷. Below, we highlight a few examples from other surahs, both classical and contemporary perspectives, to show the **unity of this theme**:

- **Surah Yā Sīn (36:77–79,81)**: *"Does not man see that We created him from a mere sperm-drop? Yet lo, he stands as an open adversary. And he makes arguments against Us, forgetting his own creation, saying 'Who will revive these bones when they have rotted away?' Say: He who produced them the first time will revive them – for He is All-Knowing of every creation."* ⁷² ⁷³ Here, the Quran explicitly urges the skeptic to remember his **humble origin**. Classical tafsīr relates this to an incident where a disbeliever crumbled a bone to dust in front of the Prophet, scoffing at resurrection ⁷⁴. The Quran's reply is direct logic: **the one who creates from nothing can recreate from something**. Zia Shah's commentary on these verses adds a modern touch: he notes how the skeptic's fallacy is projecting human limits onto God, and that even scientifically, all the atoms of those "rotted bones" remain in the universe under God's control ⁷⁵. Surah Yā Sīn further strengthens the argument in **36:81**: *"Is not He who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them [again]?"* ⁷⁶. This **cosmological perspective** invites us to think: if God could create the vast cosmos (trillions of stars and galaxies) ⁴², then surely resurrecting human beings is easy in comparison – *"a fortiori"* proof from greater to lesser ⁷⁷ ⁴¹. Modern astronomy has only magnified the force of this verse by revealing the unimaginable scale of the universe ⁴², making the skeptic's doubt look even more absurd, as Zia Shah eloquently points out: doubting God's power to raise a few humans after witnessing His cosmic creation is like doubting a palace-builder can reconstruct a cottage ⁷⁸.

- **Surah Qāf (50:6-11,15):** This chapter uses the **signs in nature** similarly to Surah 'Abasa. It asks, *"Have they not looked at the sky above – how We built and adorned it... and the earth – how We spread it out and brought forth from it every beautiful kind of plant... and We sent down blessed rain, bringing forth gardens and grain and date-palms..."* and concludes, *"Thus will the dead be brought forth (from their graves)." 79* . Then in verse 15 comes the punch-line: *"Were We then incapable of the first creation? No indeed! Yet they doubt a second creation."* 38 . This is almost a direct parallel to the message in 'Abasa: disbelief in resurrection is irrational given the evidence of **first creation** in both the heavens and earth. **Ibn Kathīr** and others note how this surah and others like it were revealed to **console the Prophet** and challenge the deniers by reminding them of past destroyed nations (50:12-14) and present signs. Zia Shah's commentary on Surah Qāf emphasizes how it "highlights the creativity of God Almighty as a proof for the Afterlife," tying the flourishing earth after rain to the scene of emergence from graves 80 81 . Indeed, Surah Qāf 50:15 (quoted above) neatly encapsulates the Quran's reasoning, and Zia Shah notes this line of reasoning is "fundamental for believers to see the universe as a beautiful creation of God, rather than an accident" – linking acceptance of resurrection with recognizing purpose in creation 37 .
- **Surah al-Rūm (30:20, 30:50):** In verses 20 and 27 of Surah al-Rūm, it mentions creation of humans from dust and says *"the same One who started creation will repeat it"*. But **30:50** is very explicit: *"So observe the effects of Allah's mercy: how He gives life to the earth after its death – indeed the same [God] will give life to the dead, for He is over all things capable."* 82 56 . This verse even uses the word *"likewise"* (kadhalika) to directly make the analogy – seeing the **dead land revived** should make you certain that **dead people will be revived**. Classical mufasssīrūn like *Ibn Kathīr* point out that the Qur'an repeats this similitude in multiple contexts to drive the point home 83 58 . Contemporary reflections add that today we witness through science the exact mechanisms of earth's revival (from seed germination to ecosystems blooming after rain), which should only strengthen our conviction in the One behind these laws of nature 47 84 .
- **Surah al-Hajj (22:5-7, 22:63):** Hajj 22:5 challenges doubters of resurrection to consider their own embryonic development (from dust to clot to lump to baby) and also that *"you see the earth barren, then when We send down water it stirs and swells and produces every delightful kind of growth"*, immediately followed by *"That is because Allah is the Truth... and He gives life to the dead and has power over all things."* Likewise 22:63 says *"Allah sends down rain and the earth becomes green – indeed, Allah is Subtle, All-Aware."* Both verses tie the **observable reality** of life's origins and plant revival to the **promise of resurrection**. In fact, verse 7 of that surah emphatically states "the Hour is coming, no doubt in it, and Allah will resurrect those in the graves." So, Surah Hajj combines both **biological and botanical arguments** with an explicit conclusion.
- **Surah al-Tāriq (86:5-8):** A short but powerful example: *"So let man observe from what he was created. He was created from an ejected fluid... Indeed, [Allah] is Able to bring him back [to life]!"* This echoes Surah 'Abasa's reminder of the **nutfa**. It's essentially a one-two argument: *"Look at your origin (a humble fluid) – surely God can bring you back."* The phrasing "inna-Hu 'alā raj'ihī la-qādir" is very direct: **God is truly capable of returning him** (to life) 85 77 . Zia Shah in a commentary on this surah notes how the discovery of the details of human conception adds awe to these verses, and philosophically, it reinforces the point that **no stage of our existence is outside God's knowledge and power**, be it initial creation, death, or rebirth.

In all these examples – and many more like Surah Ya-Sin 36:77-83, Surah Ghāfir 40:11, Surah al-Isrā’ 17:51, Surah al-Nazī’āt 79:27-33, etc. – the Quran weaves **scientific reality, logical reasoning, and spiritual message** together. Classical scholars like **Imam al-Ghazālī** and **Fakhr al-Rāzī** loved to delve into these verses to argue against both atheists and philosophers who doubted resurrection ⁸⁶ ⁷⁸ . They highlighted that **the same divine knowledge and power** that formed the world can reform it. Modern commentators like Zia Shah echo these arguments, often pointing out how **modern science** (cosmology’s Big Bang, biology’s origin of life from water, physics’ conservation laws) intriguingly align with Quranic hints, further underlining that belief in resurrection is not a blind leap but anchored in recognising the Creator’s patterns in the universe ⁸⁷ ⁸⁸ .

Ultimately, the Quran presents the **Afterlife not as a fanciful idea, but as a rational necessity** if one believes in an omnipotent, purposeful Creator. Surah ‘Abasa is one cog in that larger Quranic tapestry – focusing on the personal creation and daily sustenance angle – and when viewed alongside other surahs, we appreciate a consistent, multi-faceted argument. As Surah Qaf 50:15 (cited above) implies: how could one believe God created everything in the first place and yet think a “second creation” is beyond Him? The *uniform answer* of the Quran across all these passages is: **It is not beyond Him – in fact, it is easy for Him** ⁸⁹ ⁹⁰ . The only thing “difficult” it seems is getting man to use his reason and be grateful! Hence the Quran reminds, cajoles, and even challenges humanity through these repeated themes.

By presenting this theme across diverse contexts – human reproduction, plant life cycles, cosmic creation – the Quran appeals to all manner of thinking people. Whether one is moved by **the marvel of the heavens** or **the miracle in a seed**, the conclusion is the same: “كَذَٰلِكَ يُنْشِئُ اللَّهُ الْقَوْتَىٰ” – “*So observe [these signs]... thus will Allah resurrect the dead*”. The consistency of this message in classical exegesis and its resonance with contemporary knowledge strengthen a Muslim’s conviction that the Quran is indeed “**Al-Haqq**” (the Truth) from the Lord of the worlds.

Conclusion: Key Lessons and Thematic Summary

Surah ‘Abasa, though brief, encapsulates **profound lessons that span from prophetic etiquette to eschatological realities**. This concluding summary revisits its core teachings and connects them to the overarching message of the Quran:

- **Humility, Sincerity, and Inclusivity in Guidance:** The Surah’s opening incident delivers a timeless moral: in the sight of Allah, the **sincere seeker of truth** is invaluable, no matter how humble their social standing. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ – the best of creation – was gently corrected by Allah for favoring a potential elite convert over a blind believer. This underscores Islam’s foundational principle of **egalitarianism**: guidance and respect are not the exclusive due of the rich or powerful; rather, “*the most honored in God’s eyes is the most righteous*” (49:13). For us today, it’s a reminder to root out any prejudice or elitism in our religious outreach or community engagement. The one who might seem “insignificant” to us could be far more beloved to God. The Surah thus teaches **empathy and attentiveness** to everyone – a reflection of the Prophet’s own later practice, as he would ask, “*Have you rebuked me concerning this person?*” whenever he saw Ibn Umm Maktūm, then honored him ²¹ . In a broader sense, Surah ‘Abasa exemplifies the Quran’s commitment to **justice and humility** – values that must guide Muslims in da’wah and daily life.

- **The Quran's Integrity and Exalted Status:** Through its self-referential verses (11–16), Surah 'Abasa illuminates several **claims about the Glorious Quran**. First, its very inclusion of the Prophet's admonishment is an internal proof of the Quran's authenticity and the Prophet's truthfulness ¹ ¹⁴. No fabricator of scripture would chastise himself and risk authority; only a genuine Prophet conveying God's words would unhesitatingly relay even those verses that reprimand him. This enhances our appreciation for the Quran as **transparent truth** – “revealed by One who knows all secrets” (25:6). Second, the description of the Quran as “*held in honor, exalted, pure, in the hands of noble angels*” ¹⁵ bolsters the doctrine that the Quran is **divinely preserved and uncorrupted**. It isn't a product of human culture or authorship; it's a **heavenly message** entrusted to trustworthy messengers (the angels and then the Prophet). This affirms for believers that the Quran they recite is the very word of God, majestically safeguarded. And third, by calling the Quran an “admonition” accessible to **whoever wills to remember** (v.12), it highlights the Quran's universal intent. It positions the Quran as the **ultimate reminder and guide** for all humanity – a book that speaks to the learned and unlettered, the leader and the outcast alike. In sum, Surah 'Abasa quietly but powerfully **elucidates the Quran's qualities**: its divine origin, its purity, its unflinching honesty, and its role as a merciful reminder to the worlds.
- **Gratitude versus Ingratitude:** The middle section of the Surah (v.17 onwards) pivots to a stark contrast between human **ingratitude** and God's continuous generosity. “*How ungrateful is man!*” encapsulates a recurring Quranic critique of those who enjoy life's blessings yet deny the Benefactor ²⁸. Surah 'Abasa's catalogue of God's favors – from creating a human from a drop, to easing his birth, guiding him, providing foods of many varieties – paints a comprehensive picture of **divine grace** in our lives. The logical (and ethical) demand is that we respond with **shukr** (gratitude) and **īmān** (faith). Gratitude in Islam is shown by recognizing Allah's hand in all we have, obeying His commands, and using His gifts responsibly. Ingratitude (kufr) is shown by the deniers who live heedlessly, perhaps even arrogantly, as if self-made. By listing basic blessings like food and rain, the Surah brings even a modern reader to reflect: *Did I really earn the air I breathe, the water I drink, the sun that ripens my food?* None of these fundamentals can be purchased or invented by us – they are pure gifts. Thus 'Abasa humbles us and implicitly calls us to **thankfulness** and worship of the One who nurtures us every moment.
- **The First Creation as Evidence for Resurrection (Imān bi'l-Ākhirah):** A dominant theme in Surah 'Abasa is affirming the **Afterlife (Hereafter)** by appealing to **reason and observation**. The Surah effectively says: *Look at yourself, look at the earth – these hold the clues that resurrection is not only possible but expected*. By paralleling human creation from a droplet with human re-creation from dust, and the sprouting of seeds with the raising of dead, the Quran provides a **rational antidote** to the skepticism of its era (and ours). This surah's argument is part of a larger Quranic strategy (as discussed in the previous section) to ground belief in the Hereafter in the **observable signs** of God's power. It moves the concept of resurrection from abstract theology to tangible analogy. Thematically, this strengthens two pillars of Islamic faith simultaneously: **Tawhīd** (recognizing the one Creator's power in all things) and **Ākhirah** (believing in the final return to that Creator). In fact, belief in the Afterlife is what truly gives moral urgency to everything – including the initial story of the Prophet's frown. Why should one care about correcting that small mistake? Because ultimately there is a Day where even a Prophet is accountable to God's standard of conduct. Thus, the Surah ties our behavior (ethics) to eschatology: the knowledge of a coming Judgment should refine our conduct **here and now** – from how we treat a blind man to how we spend our life in gratitude or in heedlessness.

- **The Day of Judgment and Personal Accountability:** Surah 'Abasa concludes by imprinting on our minds the **personal nature of salvation**. It dismantles any false securities one might cling to – wealth, family, social standing – by vividly portraying that none of these will avail on the Day of Resurrection. Each soul will stand alone, recognized only by its faith and deeds, which will be visibly reflected on faces lit with **joy** or darkened by **despair** ⁶⁹ ⁷⁰ . This imagery serves as both a **warning and a hope**. It's a warning that one cannot ride into Paradise on someone else's coattails or avoid hell by clinging to worldly relations. It's also a hope, in that those who perhaps were downtrodden or unknown in this life but kept their faith pure will shine on that Day, while the haughty who thought they were above divine law will be debased. The scales of justice will be balanced. For believers, these verses are meant to engender a kind of **positive fear** (khawf) that motivates action, and an eager **hope** (rajā') for Allah's reward that encourages patience and righteousness.

In the grand scope of the Quran, Surah 'Abasa resonates with the principle that this life is a **test** (67:2) and a temporary field of action, while the next life is the place of **harvest and recompense**. It calls us to focus on what truly matters: not chasing status or turning religion into a prestige project (as the Prophet was momentarily inclined, thinking of winning a leader), but striving for integrity, serving those who seek truth, and preparing for the inevitable meeting with our Lord.

In closing, Surah 'Abasa is a microcosm of Quranic wisdom. Its verses start from a very intimate, specific event – almost a *private prophetic lesson* – yet by the end, they encompass universal truths of human existence. This juxtaposition itself is a subtle sign of the Quran's divine origin: seamlessly moving from the particular to the universal, from a single frown in Makkah to the fate of **all faces** on Judgment Day. The chapter invites us to admire the Quran's **literary miracle** and **moral depth**. As Goethe famously said of the Quran, *"It soon attracts, astounds, and in the end forces admiration"* ⁹¹ . Surah 'Abasa surely evokes that sense of astonishment and reflection.

May we heed its admonition – to never belittle the humble, to remember our dependence on God's favors, and to ready ourselves for the Day when nothing will matter except the light of **faith and good deeds** we bring before our Creator.

All praise and thanks are for Allah, who sent down this illuminating guidance.

Sources: Classical commentary references are primarily drawn from *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* ⁹² ³ ⁹³ ¹⁰ ⁶¹ , with supporting insights from *Ma'āriful Qur'ān* ⁶ ²³ and other traditional exegeses. Contemporary analysis is informed by the works of **Zia H. Shah MD** and others, linking Quranic themes with modern scientific understanding ⁴¹ ⁴⁸ . These sources collectively testify to the rich, multi-layered guidance contained in Surah 'Abasa – guidance that remains ever relevant, speaking to both the heart and the intellect across ages. ¹ ⁸⁹

¹ ¹⁴ The Glorious Quran and Science: Scientific and Philosophical Commentary on the Verses 25:4-6 – The Glorious Quran and Science

<https://thequran.love/2025/04/16/scientific-and-philosophical-commentary-on-quran-254-6/>

2 3 9 10 11 12 13 15 16 18 19 20 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 33 34 35 36 39 40 43 44 45 51 52
53 54 55 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 92 93 Tafsir of Surah Abasa Ayat 1-42 (end) | honey for
the heart

<https://honeyfortheheart.wordpress.com/tafsir-ibn-kathir/tafsir-of-surah-abasa-ayat-1-42-end/>

4 5 6 7 8 17 21 22 23 Tafsir Surah 'Abasa - 1 - Quran.com

<https://quran.com/en/80:1/tafsirs/en-tafsir-maarif-ul-quran>

31 32 41 42 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 85 86 87 90 The Glorious Surah Yā Sīn: Arguing from the First
Creation to Afterlife – The Glorious Quran and Science

<https://thequran.love/2025/04/24/surah-ya-sin-arguing-from-the-first-creation-to-afterlife/>

37 38 79 80 81 89 Surah Qaf: Allah's First Creation Proves the Second Creation or Afterlife – The Glorious
Quran and Science

<https://thequran.love/2024/05/15/surah-qaf-allahs-first-creation-proves-the-second-creation-or-afterlife/>

46 47 48 49 50 56 57 58 59 60 82 83 84 88 91 Greenery After Rain: Quranic Signs of Divine Power
and Wisdom – The Glorious Quran and Science

<https://thequran.love/2025/03/10/greenery-after-rain-quranic-signs-of-divine-power-and-wisdom/>