87 | Surah al-A‘la

سورة الأعلى

19 Ayat

Parent’s tafsir: adapted from Ibn Kathir
Tafsir al-Qur’an al-‘Azim · 87:1–19

Background and Meaning

Al-A‘la begins by glorifying the Most High, then speaks of His creation, guidance and care for revelation. It contrasts those who benefit from the reminder with those who turn away, and ends by affirming the greater worth and permanence of the Hereafter. Ibn Kathir records the Prophet’s ﷺ recitation of this surah, together with al-Ghashiyah, in Friday and Eid prayers. The parent should follow its connected movement from knowing the Lord to receiving His reminder and choosing what will endure.

Tafsir of the Surah

Ayat 1–5: Glorifying the Creator. Ibn Kathir explains that Allah created and formed each creature suitably, determined its course and guided it. His commentary includes the guidance of human beings and the directing of animals to their pasture. The green growth that later becomes dark, dry vegetation illustrates Allah’s power over both growth and change. The opening invites recognition of the Lord’s perfection through His ordering of creation.

Ayat 6–8: Revelation and divine care. Ibn Kathir explains the promise that the Prophet ﷺ will be made to recite and will not forget, except what Allah wills. The assurance is addressed to the Messenger concerning revelation. Allah knows what is spoken openly and what is hidden. The following promise concerns facilitating good words and deeds and a straight, merciful law. Revelation and the ability to act upon it remain gifts from Allah.

Ayat 9–13: Receiving or avoiding the reminder. Ibn Kathir explains the command to remind where the reminder brings benefit, and draws from it care in the way knowledge is shared. The person who fears Allah and knows he will meet Him takes heed. The opposing person avoids the reminder and faces the great Fire, where neither death brings relief nor life brings benefit. The contrast concerns the response of the heart as well as outward hearing.

Ayat 14–15: Purification, remembrance and prayer. Ibn Kathir explains success through cleansing oneself of corrupt character and following the revelation given to the Messenger ﷺ. Remembrance of the Lord is joined to establishing prayer in obedience and seeking His pleasure. His commentary also records explanations connected with charity and purification of wealth. The ayat present an active response to guidance, joining the inward state with worship and righteous conduct.

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Tafsir of the Surah · Continued

Ayat 16–19: What lasts. Ibn Kathir explains the preference people give to the present life, despite the Hereafter being better and more lasting. The warning challenges attachment to what will soon pass away. He favours understanding the reference to the earlier scriptures as including the preceding message about purification, prayer and the enduring Hereafter. The scriptures of Ibrahim and Musa therefore affirm the continuity of this call to give lasting reality its proper place.

87 | Surah al-A'la

سورة الأعلى

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

١ سَبِّحِ ٱسْمَ رَبِّكَ ٱلْأَعْلَى

Memorised

Praise the name of your Lord, the Most High.

٢ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ

Memorised

He who creates and regulates.

٣ وَٱلَّذِى قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ

Memorised

He who measures and guides.

٤ وَٱلَّذِىٓ أَخْرَجَ ٱلْمَرْعَىٰ

Memorised

He who produces the pasture.

٥ فَجَعَلَهُۥ غُثَآءً أَحْوَىٰ

Memorised

And then turns it into light debris.

٦ سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلَا تَنسَىٰٓ

Memorised

We will make you read, so do not forget.

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سورة الأعلى

Memorisation · Continued

٧ إِلَّا مَا شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ يَعْلَمُ ٱلْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَىٰ

Except what Allah wills. He knows what is declared, and what is hidden.

٨ وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ

We will ease you into the Easy Way.

٩ فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ ٱلذِّكْرَىٰ

So remind, if reminding helps.

١٠ سَيَذَّكَّرُ مَن يَخْشَىٰ

The reverent will remember.

١١ وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا ٱلْأَشْقَى

But the wretched will avoid it.

١٢ ٱلَّذِى يَصْلَى ٱلنَّارَ ٱلْكُبْرَىٰ

He who will enter the Gigantic Fire.

87 | Surah al-A'la

سورة الأعلى

Memorisation · Continued

١٣ ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ

Memorised

Where he will neither die, nor live.

١٤ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن تَزَكَّىٰ

Memorised

Successful is he who purifies himself.

١٥ وَذَكَرَ ٱسْمَ رَبِّهِۦ فَصَلَّىٰ

Memorised

And mentions the name of his Lord, and prays.

١٦ بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا

Memorised

But you prefer the present life.

١٧ وَٱلْـَٔاخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰٓ

Memorised

Though the Hereafter is better, and more lasting.

١٨ إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَفِى ٱلصُّحُفِ ٱلْأُولَىٰ

Memorised

This is in the former scriptures.

87 | Surah al-A‘la

سورة الأعلى

Memorisation · Continued

صُحُفِ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ ١٩ Memorised

The scriptures of Abraham and Moses.

Parent tafsir: adapted from Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur’an al-‘Azim, 87:1–19.
Arabic commentary: quran.ksu.edu.sa/tafseer/katheer/sura87-aya1.html
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