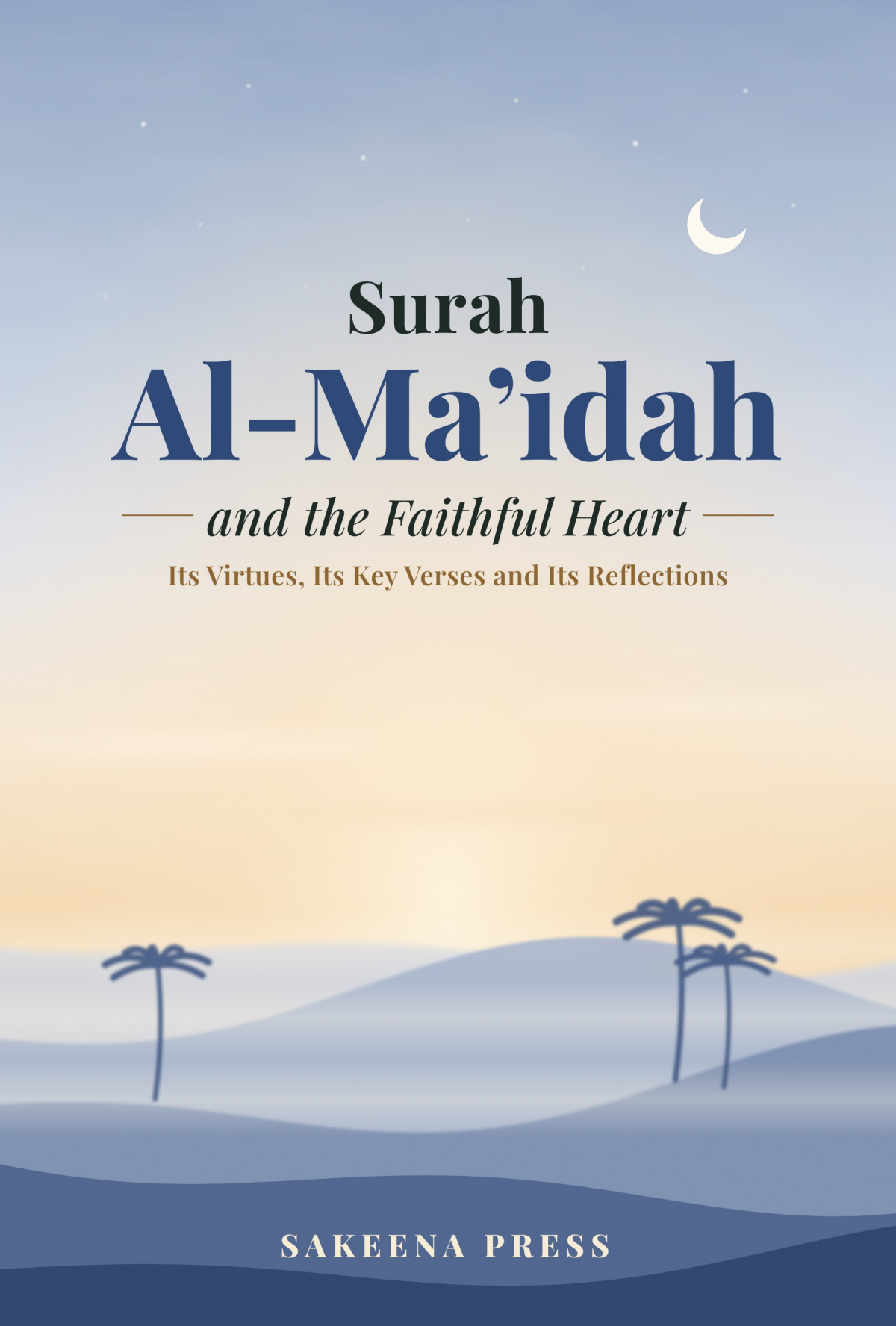
Surah Al-Ma'idah

and the Faithful Heart

Its Virtues, Its Key Verses and Its Reflections



SAKEENA PRESS

Surah Al-Ma’idah and the Faithful Heart

Its Virtues, Its Key Verses and Its Reflections

SAKEENA PRESS

Contents

A Word Before You Begin 9

PART ONE **Meeting the Surah** 11

1 The Surah of the Table 12

2 After An-Nisa 14

3 A Map of the Surah 16

PART TWO **It Begins With Promises** 19

4 Fulfil Your Contracts 20

5 We Hear and We Obey 22

6 This Day I Have Perfected Your Religion 24

PART THREE **It Teaches Justice Without Hatred** 29

7 Cooperate in Righteousness 30

8 Just Even Toward Those You Dislike 33

9 Race to What Is Good 35

PART FOUR **It Purifies and Permits** 37

10 Clean Before You Stand 38

11 The Good Things Made Lawful 42

12 The Wine Poured Out in the Streets 44

PART FIVE **It Tells the Story of Two Brothers** 47

13 The Two Sons of Adam 48

14 The Crow and the Regret 50

15 Whoever Saves One Life 52

PART SIX **It Calls the Believer Closer** 55

16 Seek the Means to Him 56

17 A People He Loves 58

18 Announce What Was Revealed 60

19 Do Not Ask About Things 62

20 Eyes Overflowing With Tears 65

PART SEVEN **It Ends at the Table and the Final Day** 67

21 The Table From the Heaven 68

22 The Verse He Repeated Until Morning 71

23 The Day Truthfulness Benefits 75

Let the Surah Teach You Faithfulness 77

Sources 79

Index of Verses and Hadith 80

Your Week with the Surah 82

PREFACE

A Word Before You Begin

This is the fourth book in a series on the surahs of the Quran. The first walked through Surah Al-Baqarah, the surah that builds. The second walked through Surah Al Imran, the surah that holds. The third walked through Surah An-Nisa, the surah that protects the ones people forget. This one walks through the surah that comes after them in the mushaf, Surah Al-Maʼidah.

Al-Maʼidah is a surah of one hundred and twenty verses, counted among the Madinan surahs, those revealed after the Hijrah. Its name means the table spread with food, and it comes from a story near its end, when the disciples of Isa, peace be upon him, asked for a table to be sent down to them from the heaven. Many readers know the surah for its rulings on food, on wudu and on the hunt in ihram, and they read it as a list of permissions and prohibitions. The rulings are there, and they matter. But the surah opens with a single command that holds all of them together: fulfil your contracts.

That is why this book speaks of a faithful heart. Again and again the surah returns to promises: the covenant Allah took from the believers when they said, "We hear and we obey", the covenants taken from the nations before them and what became of them, and the testimony that Isa, peace be upon him, will give on the Last Day about how he kept what was entrusted to him. A faithful heart is one that keeps its word to Allah and to people, that stays just even toward those it dislikes, and that is truthful on the Day when only truthfulness will help.

A word on what this book is. It is not a tafsir; the books of tafsir explain the surah verse by verse with a depth no short book can match. It is a guided reflection on a selection of the surah's verses. Every verse is given in Arabic exactly as it appears in the Madinah Mushaf, followed by its full meaning in English and its reference. Every hadith is given in Arabic with a full English rendering of the same words, its source, and its grading where it is outside Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. Where this book offers a reflection of its own, it is presented as reflection, and it never claims more than the texts say.

How this book is arranged

Part One introduces the surah: its name, its place after An-Nisa, and its map.

Parts Two to Six each take one thing the surah does: it begins with promises, it teaches justice without hatred, it purifies and permits, it tells the story of two brothers, and it calls the believer closer to Allah.

Part Seven follows the surah to its end, from the table sent down from the heaven to the Day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness.

Verses are given in Arabic as they appear in the Madinah Mushaf, with the meaning in English from the Saheeh International translation as published on quran.com. Each hadith is followed by its source. At the end of most chapters there is a short reflection to carry with you.

PART ONE

Meeting the Surah

A surah named after a table, and opened with a promise.

1 The Surah of the Table

2 After An-Nisa

3 A Map of the Surah

CHAPTER ONE

The Surah of the Table 1

Most surahs take their names from a word or a story inside them, and Al-Ma'idah is no different. Near its end, the surah tells how the disciples of Isa, peace be upon him, asked whether his Lord could send down to them a table spread with food from the heaven. They wanted to eat from it, to let their hearts be reassured, and to know that he had told them the truth. Isa asked Allah for it, and Allah answered.

إِذْ قَالَ ٱلْحَوَارِيُّونَ يَٰعِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ هَلْ يَسْتَطِيعُ رَبُّكَ أَن يُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا
مَآئِدَةً مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ ۖ قَالَ ٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٢﴾

"[And remember] when the disciples said, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, can your Lord send down to us a table [spread with food] from the heaven? [Jesus] said, "Fear Allah, if you should be believers (112)"

SURAH AL-MA'IDAH 5:112

The request is a human one. The disciples were believers, and still they wanted something they could see and touch. Isa's first answer to them is to fear Allah, if they are truly believers. Only after they explain what is in their hearts does he raise the request to his Lord. We will return to this story in Part Seven, because it carries a lesson

about what we ask for and what we owe once our request is answered.

The surah has one hundred and twenty verses and belongs to the Madinan period. It is the fifth surah of the mushaf, coming after An-Nisa and before Al-An'am. Its subjects range widely: contracts and covenants, lawful and unlawful food, wudu and tayammum, justice in testimony, the first killing on earth, the prohibition of wine, the duty to convey the message, and the testimony of Isa, peace be upon him, on the Last Day.

What joins these subjects is the idea of a bond. Something has been given, and something is owed in return. Food is given, so gratitude and obedience are owed. A covenant is taken, so it must be kept. Testimony is given, so it must be just. The surah asks, in many different settings, one question: will you be faithful to what you have accepted?

REFLECT

Think of one promise you made to Allah in a hard moment, perhaps a du'a with a vow attached to it. Have you kept it? What would keeping it look like this week?

CHAPTER TWO

After An-Nisa

2

In the order of the mushaf, Al-Ma′idah follows An-Nisa, and the move between them is worth noticing. An-Nisa is a surah of rights: the rights of orphans, of wives, of relatives, of neighbours and of the weak. It closes with a ruling on inheritance. Al-Ma′idah opens with a call to the believers to fulfil their contracts, and then sets out what is lawful and unlawful for them to eat.

Read together, the two surahs describe a whole life. An-Nisa protects people inside the home and the community. Al-Ma′idah binds the believer to his word and to his Lord′s limits in everything he takes in: what he eats, what he drinks, what he promises and what he testifies to. The just heart of An-Nisa becomes the faithful heart of Al-Ma′idah.

Both surahs also speak to the People of the Book. Al-Ma′idah addresses them directly and tells them what has come to them.

يَٰٓأَهۡلَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ قَدۡ جَآءَكُمۡ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمۡ كَثِيرٗا مِّمَّا كُنتُمۡ تُخۡفُونَ مِنَ
ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ وَيَعۡفُواْ عَن كَثِيرٖۚ قَدۡ جَآءَكُم مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ نُورٞ وَكِتَٰبٞ مُّبِينٞ ١٥
يَهۡدِي بِهِ ٱللَّهُ مَنِ ٱتَّبَعَ رِضۡوَٰنَهُۥ سُبُلَ ٱلسَّلَٰمِ وَيُخۡرِجُهُم مِّنَ ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ
إِلَى ٱلنُّورِ بِإِذۡنِهِۦ وَيَهۡدِيهِمۡ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٖ مُّسۡتَقِيمٖ ١٦

"O People of the Scripture, there has come to you Our Messenger making clear to you much of what you used to conceal of the Scripture and overlooking much. There has come to you from Allah a light and a clear Book (15) By which Allah guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from darknesses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path (16)"

SURAH AL-MA'IDAH 5:15–16

A light and a clear Book. The surah describes the Quran as the means by which Allah guides those who seek His pleasure to the ways of peace, and brings them out of many darknesses into one light. Notice that darkness is plural and light is singular. There are many ways to be lost and one way to be guided.

REFLECT

Verse 16 says Allah guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace. Where in your life do you most need peace right now? Ask Allah for it in those words tonight.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Verse He Repeated Until Morning

22

In the last passage of the surah, Allah tells of a conversation that will take place on the Last Day. Allah will ask Isa, son of Maryam, whether he told people to take him and his mother as gods besides Allah. Isa will answer with complete humility.

مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَآ أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِۦٓ أَنِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ ۚ وَكُنتُ عَلَيْهِمْ
شَهِيدًا مَّا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنتَ أَنتَ ٱلرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ وَأَنتَ عَلَىٰ
كُلِّ شَىْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿١١٧﴾ إِن تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ ۖ وَإِن تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنتَ
ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ ﴿١١٨﴾

“I said not to them except what You commanded me - to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them as long as I was among them; but when You took me up, You were the Observer over them, and You are, over all things, Witness (117) If You should punish them - indeed they are Your servants; but if You forgive them - indeed it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise (118)”

SURAH AL-MA'IDAH 5:117–118

I said to them only what You commanded me: worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. I was a witness over them while I was among them, and when You took me up, You were the Observer over them. Then the words that end his testimony: if You punish them, they are Your servants; and if You forgive them, You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

Notice what Isa does not say. He does not ask for punishment for those who went astray, and he does not claim the right to forgive them. He places them in the hands of their Lord, reminding Him that they are His servants, and he ends with two of His names: the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

These two verses moved the Prophet ﷺ deeply. He recited them together with the words of Ibrahim, peace be upon him, from Surah Ibrahim, where Ibrahim says of the idols that they led many people astray, and that whoever follows him is of him.

HADITH

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم تَلاَ قَوْلَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ {رَبِّ إِنَّهُنَّ أَضْلَلْنَ كَثِيرًا مِنَ النَّاسِ فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي} الآيَةَ. وَقَالَ عِيسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ {إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَإِنْ تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ} فَرَفَعَ يَدَيْهِ وَقَالَ اللَّهُمَّ أُمَّتِي أُمَّتِي. وَبَكَى، فَقَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَا جِبْرِيلُ اذْهَبْ إِلَى مُحَمَّدٍ، وَرَبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ، فَسَلْهُ مَا يُبْكِيكَ. فَأَتَاهُ جِبْرِيلُ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلاَةُ وَالسَّلاَمُ فَسَأَلَهُ، فَأَخْبَرَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم بِمَا قَالَ، وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ. فَقَالَ اللَّهُ يَا جِبْرِيلُ اذْهَبْ إِلَى مُحَمَّدٍ فَقُلْ إِنَّا سَنُرْضِيكَ فِي أُمَّتِكَ وَلاَ نَسُوءُكَ

The Prophet ﷺ recited the words of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, about Ibrahim: "My Lord, indeed they have led astray many among the people. So whoever follows me, then he is of me," to the end of the verse, and what Isa, peace be upon him, said: "If You should punish them, indeed they are Your servants; but if You forgive them, indeed it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise." Then he raised his hands and said, "O Allah, my ummah, my ummah," and he wept. Allah, Mighty and Majestic, said, "O Jibril, go to Muhammad, and your Lord knows best, and ask him what makes him weep." So Jibril, peace be upon him, came to him and asked him, and Allah's Messenger ﷺ told him what he had said, and He knows best. Then Allah said, "O Jibril, go to Muhammad and say: We will please you concerning your ummah, and We will not grieve you."

Sahih Muslim 202.

The Prophet ﷺ wept for his ummah, and Allah sent Jibril to tell him that He would please him concerning them. Every believer who reads this hadith is among those he wept for.

Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet ﷺ once spent a whole night with verse 118 alone.

HADITH

قَامَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم حَتَّى أَصْبَحَ بِآيَةٍ، وَالآيَةُ {إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَإِنْ تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ}

"The Prophet ﷺ stood [in prayer] until morning with one verse, and the verse was: 'If You should punish them, indeed they are Your servants; but if You forgive them, indeed it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.'"

Sunan an-Nasa'i 1010. *Graded hasan (Darussalam).*

One verse, a whole night. The Prophet ﷺ showed that the Quran is not only to be finished. It is also to be lived with. A single verse, repeated with presence, can fill a night of prayer.

REFLECT

Choose one verse from this surah. In your next night prayer, even if it is only two rak'ahs, recite it again and again with its meaning, and let it be the whole of your prayer.

END OF THE FREE SAMPLE

The surah has only begun to open

You have read the opening of this book and the chapter on the verse the Prophet ﷺ repeated in prayer until morning. The full edition walks through Surah Al-Ma'idah in twenty-three short chapters.

It covers the command to fulfil your contracts, the day the religion was perfected, justice toward those you dislike, wudu and the good things made lawful, the wine poured out in the streets of Madinah, the two sons of Adam, a people Allah loves, and the table sent down from the heaven.

Continue reading

The complete digital and print editions of *Surah Al-Ma'idah and the Faithful Heart* are available from the Sakeena Institute website, together with the earlier books in the series: *The Power of Surah Al-Baqarah*, *Surah Al Imran and the Firm Heart* and *Surah An-Nisa and the Just Heart*.

www.sakeenainstitute.com

SAKEENA PRESS