

A GIFT FOR YOU · FROM DEEN2U.COM

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Surah Ar-Rahman

The Beneficent · Madani · 78 ayat — reflections on
surah 55 of the Qur'an

QURAN

deen2u.com

One-stop center for Islamic resources · free to share

September 2026 · v1.304.1

CONTENTS

Surah Ar-Rahman

1	The surah in brief	What it is, when it came, what it sets out to do
2	Its themes	6 threads running through the surah
3	Key verses	4 passages, with a reflection on each
4	Reading it closely	4 sections
5	Carrying it	4 things to take from it

الرحمن — Ar-Rahman, “The Beneficent”. Surah 55 of 114, revealed in Madinah, 78 ayat. The full text and a recitation are on the web edition at deen2u.com/quran/55/.

ONE

The surah in brief

A hymn to the Most Merciful, cataloguing His countless favors to humankind and jinn upon the earth, in the two seas, and in the Gardens. Its refrain, 'So which of the favors of your Lord will you deny?' summons gratitude and awe of the Lord of majesty and honor.

Ar-Rahman, called the beauty of the Qur'an, opens by naming the Most Merciful as the One who taught the Qur'an, created humanity, and taught it clear speech (55:1-4). It then displays gift after gift — sun and moon by reckoning, the balance to be kept with justice, two seas yielding pearl and coral — punctuating each with its refrain to jinn and humanity alike: 'So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?' (55:13), asked thirty-one times. It teaches that all upon the earth will perish and only the Face of your Lord remains (55:26-27), then unfolds two gardens for the God-fearing, and two more beyond them.

TWO

Its themes

- The mercy behind creation
- Innumerable divine favors
- The balance and justice
- The permanence of Allah alone
- The two realms of jinn and men
- The gardens of reward

THREE

Key verses

Then which of the favours of your Lord will ye deny?

Qur'an 55:13

'So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?' returns thirty-one times, addressed to jinn and humankind; al-Qurtubi records that when the Prophet recited it to the jinn, they answered, 'We deny none of Your favors, our Lord.'

All that is on earth will perish:

Qur'an 55:26

'Everyone upon it will perish, and there remains the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor' — al-Sa'di reads this as the anchor against attachment to a passing world; only the Everlasting endures.

So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance.

Qur'an 55:9

'Establish weight in justice and do not fall short in the balance' places honest measure among the cosmic order of sun, moon, and sky; Ibn Kathir links human fairness to the very equilibrium of creation.

Is there any Reward for Good – other than Good?

Qur'an 55:60

'Is the reward for good anything but good?' distills divine generosity into a single line; al-Tabari reads it broadly — Allah answers ihsan with ihsan, in this life and the next.

FOUR

Reading it closely

Context & character

Ar-Rahman (The Most Merciful) is a hymn unlike any other in the Qur'an. The scholars differed over where it was revealed: many, following reports from Ibn 'Abbas, held it Makkan, while others counted it among the Madinan surahs; its cosmic sweep and its refrain suit the early proclamation, though its concern with the Balance and justice has a Madinan flavor. It is the only surah that opens with a divine name standing alone: 'Ar-Rahman' (55:1).

It is famously called 'the bride of the Qur'an' ('arus al-Qur'an) in a well-known if weakly-chained report, on account of its beauty and its adornment with a single recurring line: 'So which of the favors of your Lord will you deny?' (fa-bi-ayyi ala'i rabbikuma tukadhdhiban), repeated thirty-one times. The dual address — 'you two' — speaks to the two classes of responsible creation, mankind and jinn (the thaqalan), calling both to acknowledge the gifts laid before them.

Its character is that of a great litany of mercy: God unrolls His blessings across the cosmos, in creation, in provision, in the world to come, and after each cluster pauses to ask which of these gifts could possibly be denied. The mood is majestic, generous, and, beneath the beauty, insistent.

How the surah unfolds

The prologue announces the theme in four strokes: the Most Merciful taught the Qur'an, created man, and taught him eloquence (al-bayan) (55:1–4). Mercy, revelation, creation, and the gift of speech are placed at the head as the greatest of favors — that God should teach His word before even mentioning the making of man is itself the surah's argument in miniature.

It then opens the book of the cosmos: the sun and moon run by exact calculation; the star and the tree prostrate; He raised the heaven and set the Balance (al-mizan), commanding, 'do not transgress within the balance; establish weight in justice and do not shortchange it' (55:7–9). He laid the earth for all creatures, with its fruits, palms, husked grain, and fragrant plants (55:10–12). Here the refrain first sounds, and thereafter it punctuates the whole recital.

The surah moves to the origins of the two addressed species — man from clay like earthenware, jinn from a smokeless flame (55:14–15) — and to God as 'Lord of the two easts and the two wests' (55:17). It describes the two seas that meet yet do not overrun their barrier, from which pearl and coral emerge (55:19–22), and the ships that ride the sea like mountains. Then comes the great turn: 'Everyone upon it will perish, and there remains the Face of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor' (55:26–27). All in the heavens and earth beg of Him; every day He is engaged in some affair (55:29).

From majesty it moves to reckoning. God will attend to the two burdened species; and if jinn and men could pass beyond the zones of the heavens and earth, let them — but they cannot, except by an authority they do not possess (55:33). The heaven will split and turn rose-red like oil-dregs; on that Day no human or jinn will be asked about his sin, for the criminals will be known by their marks and seized by their forelocks and feet (55:37–41). Then two great tableaux of reward unfold: for whoever fears the standing before his Lord, two gardens with branches and springs and every fruit in pairs, couches lined with brocade and chaste companions like rubies and coral (55:46–61); and besides them two further gardens, dark green, with gushing springs, fruits, dates and pomegranates, and beautiful companions in pavilions (55:62–76). The surah then breaks its pattern to close not with the challenge but with praise: ‘Blessed is the name of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor’ (55:78).

The major themes, in depth

The governing theme is mercy read as gift. The surah is a systematic inventory of ala' — the favors, graces, and bounties of God — running from the teaching of the Qur'an, through sun and moon and grain and sea, to the gardens of the Hereafter. The refrain forces the listener, again and again, to answer for these gifts: which of them will you deny? It makes ingratitude impossible to hide, because each blessing is named and set before the eyes.

A second theme is the Balance (al-mizan). God raised the heaven and set the balance, and immediately commanded justice in weighing (55:7–9). Many commentators read this as

both cosmic and moral: the same order that keeps sun and moon on their reckoning underlies the demand that human beings deal justly and not cheat. To live rightly is to keep, in one's dealings, the same equilibrium God wove into the heavens.

A third theme is annihilation and permanence: 'Everyone upon it will perish, and there remains the Face of your Lord' (55:26–27). Placed at the center of a surah overflowing with created gifts, this verse is the surah's spiritual axis. Every favor named is transient; only the Bestower endures. The right response to a world of perishing gifts is to attach the heart to the One who does not perish.

A fourth theme is the graded reward of the Hereafter — two gardens, then two more. The commentators generally understood the first, higher pair as the abode of the foremost and near ones, and the second as that of the people of the right hand, echoing the taxonomy of Surat al-Waqi'a. Even in bliss there are ranks, matched to the sincerity of one's fear and striving here.

Points of reflection

Ar-Rahman trains the heart in gratitude. Its method is not abstract; it names blessing after blessing until denial becomes absurd. To recite it attentively is to be walked through the world and asked, at every station, to admit the goodness of the Giver — an antidote to the forgetfulness that treats God's gifts as accidents or entitlements.

It also honors the human being uniquely: of all creatures, we were taught al-bayan, clear speech, the faculty that lets us receive the Qur'an and respond. That gift carries responsibility — the tongue that can deny favors is the same tongue meant to give thanks and glorify.

Most searchingly, the surah ties the gardens to a single inner quality: 'for whoever fears the standing before his Lord' (55:46). The one who lives now in awareness that he will one day stand before God is the one led into those gardens. And its final word teaches the destination of all this contemplation — not merely to enumerate gifts but to bless the Name of the Giver, 'Owner of Majesty and Honor.'

FIVE

Carrying it

1. Count Allah's favors deliberately; ingratitude is the sin the surah keeps naming.
2. Hold to justice in your dealings as part of the balance Allah set in the world.
3. Loosen your grip on a world that perishes; only Allah's Face remains.
4. Answer good with good, trusting that Allah rewards excellence with excellence.

Where this reading draws from. Ibn Kathir, al-Tabari, al-Sa'di, al-Qurtubi. A summary is not a tafsir: for the verse-by-verse treatment go to the works themselves, or to the close studies at deen2u.com/tadabbur/.