

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Surah At-Talaq

The Divorce · Madani · 12 ayat — reflections on surah
65 of the Qur'an

QURAN

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Surah At-Talaq

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الطلاق — At-Talaq, “The Divorce”. Surah 65 of 114, revealed in Madinah, 12 ayat. The full text and a recitation are on the web edition at deen2u.com/quran/65/.

ONE

The surah in brief

Detailing the just rulings of divorce—the waiting period, honorable treatment, maintenance, and nursing—the surah shows that God's limits protect both spouses, and promises that whoever fears Him will be given a way out and provision from where he never expected.

At-Talaq is a legal and spiritual guide to divorce, opening with the command to divorce women at the onset of their prescribed period and to count that waiting term (iddah) carefully as a boundary set by Allah. It details the iddah of different women, the right of the divorced woman to dignified housing and maintenance, and the handling of pregnancy and nursing, insisting throughout on kindness rather than harm. Woven through these rulings is a striking spiritual promise: whoever is mindful of Allah, He makes for him a way out of difficulty and provides from where he never expected. The surah warns, through the fate of past towns that defied Allah's command, that His limits are not to be trifled with.

TWO

Its themes

- Rules of divorce and iddah
- Taqwa opens a way out
- Provision from the unseen
- Dignity and maintenance for women
- Reliance upon Allah (tawakkul)

THREE

Key verses

Thus when they fulfil their term appointed, either take them back on equitable terms or part with them on equitable terms; and take for witness two persons from among you, endued with justice, and establish the evidence (as) before Allah. Such is the admonition given to him who believes in Allah and the Last Day. And for those who fear Allah, He (ever) prepares a way out,

Qur'an 65:2

Whoever is mindful of Allah, He makes for him a way out. Ibn Kathir reports this came amid divorce law to show that fearing Allah in hardship, including a broken marriage, opens relief.

And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine. And if any one puts his trust in Allah, sufficient is (Allah) for him. For Allah will surely accomplish his purpose: verily, for all things has Allah appointed a due proportion.

Qur'an 65:3

And He provides for him from where he does not expect; whoever relies on Allah, He is sufficient for him. Al-Sa'di reads taqwa and tawakkul here as the twin keys that unlock unforeseen provision.

Such of your women as have passed the age of monthly courses, for them the prescribed period, if ye have any doubts, is three months, and for those who have no courses (it is the same): for those who carry (life within their wombs), their period is until they deliver their burdens: and for those who fear Allah, He will make their path easy.

Qur'an 65:4

The iddah of the pregnant is until she delivers, and Allah eases the affairs of the God-conscious. The rulings are wrapped in the reminder that taqwa lightens every difficulty.

Let the women live (in 'iddat) in the same style as ye live, according to your means: Annoy them not, so as to restrict them. And if they carry (life in their wombs), then spend (your substance) on them until they deliver their burden: and if they suckle your (offspring), give them their recompense: and take mutual counsel together, according to what is just and reasonable. And if ye find yourselves in difficulties, let another woman suckle (the child) on the (father's) behalf.

Qur'an 65:6

House them as you dwell, do not harm them to constrain them, and pay them if they nurse your child. Al-Qurtubi stresses the repeated ban on causing harm even at the end of a marriage.

Let the man of means spend according to his means: and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. After a difficulty, Allah will soon grant relief.

Qur'an 65:7

Let the wealthy spend according to his means; Allah does not burden a soul beyond what He has given it, and He will bring ease after hardship. A promise of proportion and of relief to come.

FOUR

Reading it closely

Context & character

At-Talaq (Divorce) is a Madinan surah that sets out the detailed law of divorce — its timing, the waiting period ('idda), the manner of witnessing, and the maintenance and housing of the divorced woman. So closely does it complement the divorce rulings of Surat al-Nisa that some early scholars called it 'Surat al-Nisa al-Sughra,' the lesser chapter of Women.

Its character interweaves precise legislation with a striking spiritual thread: the promise that God-consciousness (taqwa) opens exits from hardship and brings provision from unexpected places. Around the dry mechanics of divorce, the surah wraps repeated assurances that whoever fears God will find his affair eased, punctuated by warnings drawn from the ruined towns of old and by a closing glimpse of the seven heavens.

The tone is protective and reassuring. Even in the pain of separation, the surah insists on kindness, on the woman's dignity, and on trust that God provides for those who keep His limits.

How the surah unfolds

It addresses the Prophet ﷺ and, through him, the believers: when you divorce women, divorce them at their prescribed period, count the 'idda accurately, and fear God (65:1). Do not expel them from their homes, nor let them leave, unless they

commit a clear indecency; these are the limits of God, and 'you never know — perhaps God will bring about, after that, a new situation' (65:1) — leaving the door of reconciliation ajar. When they reach the end of their term, either retain them honorably or part with them honorably, and call two just witnesses, establishing the testimony for God (65:2).

Here the surah's spiritual key turns: 'And whoever fears God, He will make for him a way out (makhraj), and will provide for him from where he does not expect; and whoever relies upon God — He is sufficient for him' (65:2–3). God accomplishes His purpose; He has set for everything a measure (qadr).

It then details the waiting periods: for women past menstruation or who never menstruated, three months; for the pregnant, until they deliver — 'and whoever fears God, He will make his affair easy for him' (65:4). This is God's command sent down; whoever fears Him has his sins remitted and his reward magnified (65:5). House the divorced women according to your means, do not harm them so as to make things hard for them, and if they are pregnant, spend on them until they deliver; if they nurse for you, give them their due, and consult one another kindly (65:6). 'Let the man of means spend from his means, and whoever is straitened, let him spend from what God has given him — God burdens no soul beyond what He has given it; God will bring ease after hardship' (65:7).

The surah then sounds a warning from history: how many a town rebelled against its Lord's command, so We called it to a severe reckoning and punished it terribly, and it tasted the evil result of its affair (65:8–9). God has prepared severe

punishment — so fear Him, O people of understanding who believe (65:10); He has sent down to you a Reminder, a Messenger reciting God's clear verses to bring the believers from darkness into light (65:11). And it closes on cosmic majesty: 'God is He who created seven heavens, and of the earth their like; the command descends among them, that you may know that God has power over all things, and that God encompasses all things in knowledge' (65:12).

The major themes, in depth

The first theme is divorce governed by law and mercy together. The surah surrounds a painful act with protections: divorce at the right time, an accurate 'idda that guards lineage and allows reconciliation, honorable retention or release, just witnessing, and — insistently — that the woman not be expelled from her home nor harmed, and that she be housed and maintained according to the husband's means. Even the pregnant and nursing are provided for by name. The law aims not to wound but to part, if part they must, with dignity intact.

The second theme, and the surah's spiritual heart, is that taqwa opens exits and unseen provision. Three times the surah promises relief to the God-fearing: 'He will make for him a way out,' 'He will provide for him from where he does not expect,' 'He will make his affair easy for him' (65:2–4). Placed within the tense context of divorce — where a person may feel cornered, anxious about maintenance and the future — these verses declare that no one who fears God is ever truly trapped: God's makhraj and rizq reach him from directions he cannot foresee.

The third theme is reliance and decree. 'Whoever relies upon God — He is sufficient for him' (65:3), and 'God has set for everything a measure.' The surah teaches the believer, amid upheaval, to lean on God as enough, trusting that every matter, including the size of one's provision and the length of one's hardship, is measured by Him — and that 'God will bring ease after hardship' (65:7).

The fourth theme is the cosmic framing of intimate law. By ending with the seven heavens and earths and God's all-encompassing power and knowledge, the surah grounds the smallest household ruling — a nursing mother's wage, a divorced woman's lodging — in the majesty of the Lawgiver who orders the whole cosmos. The God who governs the heavens is the same God who cares how a divorced wife is treated.

Points of reflection

The surah teaches that even in the bitterness of separation, one is to act with taqwa and kindness — not expelling, not harming, not shortchanging — for how a person conducts himself in conflict is itself a test of his God-consciousness.

Its central consolation reaches far beyond divorce: whoever fears God will find a way out and provision from the unseen. For anyone who feels cornered — by hardship, poverty, or fear of the future — the surah's promise is that taqwa and reliance open doors that calculation cannot see.

And it dignifies the ordinary by the eternal. The same passage that regulates a nursing mother's due ends by naming the seven heavens, reminding the believer that the Lord of all

creation attends to the fairness of his most private dealings — so let them be conducted as before Him.

FIVE

Carrying it

1. Handle even endings with fairness and without inflicting harm.
2. Fear Allah in your hardest moments and expect a way out.
3. Trust Allah for provision from directions you cannot foresee.
4. Know that after every hardship Allah brings ease.

Where this reading draws from. Ibn Kathir, 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/.