

A GIFT FOR YOU · FROM DEEN2U.COM

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Surah Al-Mutaffifin

The Defrauding · Makki · 36 ayat — reflections on
surah 83 of the Qur'an

QURAN

deen2u.com

One-stop center for Islamic resources · free to share

September 2026 · v1.304.1

CONTENTS

Surah Al-Mutaffifin

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------------|--|
| 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 | 5 passages, with a reflection on each |
| 4 | Reading it closely | 4 sections |
| 5 | Carrying it | 3 things to take from it |
-

المطففين — Al-Mutaffifin, “The Defrauding”. Surah 83 of 114, revealed in Makkah, 36 ayat. The full text and a recitation are on the web edition at deen2u.com/quran/83/.

ONE

The surah in brief

Opening with woe to those who cheat in weights and measures, the surah widens fraud into a warning about neglecting the reckoning, contrasting the sealed record of the wicked in Sijjin with the honoured 'Illiyyin of the righteous who will laugh at the deniers.

Al-Mutaffifin opens with a woe against those who cheat in measure, demanding full weight for themselves while shortchanging others, and asks whether such people never imagine being raised for a mighty reckoning. From this small daily dishonesty it climbs to a diagnosis of the heart: their sins have rusted over it until revelation itself looks like fables. The wicked are recorded in Sijjin and sealed from their Lord; the righteous are recorded in 'Illiyyun, seated on couches drinking a sealed pure wine mixed with tasnim. It ends by reversing the world's mockery: the disbelievers who laughed at the believers will be the ones laughed at on the couches of Paradise.

TWO

Its themes

- Honesty in dealings
- Fraud as spiritual disease
- Rust over the heart
- Sijjin and Illiyyun
- Reward of the righteous
- The mockers mocked

THREE

Key verses

Woe to those that deal in fraud,-

Qur'an 83:1

A whole surah of cosmic weight opens over a shopkeeper's short measure, teaching that a small everyday cheat is where faith is truly tested.

But when they have to give by measure or weight to men, give less than due.

Qur'an 83:3

The fraud demands full measure for himself but gives less to others; the double standard exposes a heart that does not really believe in the Reckoning.

By no means! but on their hearts is the stain of the (ill) which they do!

Qur'an 83:14

Repeated sin lays a rust over the heart until truth cannot reach it; the danger is not one lapse but the film that many lapses leave.

The seal thereof will be Musk: And for this let those aspire, who have aspirations:

Qur'an 83:26

Of the sealed pure wine of the righteous He says, for this let the competitors compete; here is a rivalry worth pouring your ambition into.

But on this Day the Believers will laugh at the Unbelievers:

Qur'an 83:34

The believers who were laughed at in the world now look on from raised couches, and the scorn of the world is answered by the vindication of the Garden.

FOUR

Reading it closely

Context & character

Al-Mutaffifin ("The Defrauders") is often placed at the boundary between the Makkan and Madinan periods — some hold it the last surah revealed in Makka, others among the first after the migration — and it uniquely opens not with the cosmic scenes of its neighbours but with a concrete social and economic sin: cheating in weights and measures. It begins with the Qur'an's characteristic cry of warning, "Woe to the defrauders" (wayl lil-mutaffifin, 83:1), and takes its name from that vice.

Its character is a movement from the marketplace to the Hereafter and back to a scene of poetic justice. It starts with everyday dishonesty, links it directly to disbelief in the Reckoning, contrasts the recorded fates of the wicked and the righteous, dwells lovingly on the bliss of the God-conscious, and ends by reversing the mockery the believers had suffered — those who were laughed at will do the laughing. It is at once a moral, a warning, and a consolation.

How the surah unfolds

The opening (83:1-6) indicts the defrauders precisely: those who, when they take a measure from people, take it in full, but when they measure or weigh out for others, give less. The surah then exposes the root of the fraud with a piercing question: "Do such people not think that they will be resurrected, for a mighty

Day — a Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds?" The petty cheat at the scales is, at bottom, someone who does not truly reckon with standing before God.

The surah then turns to the record of the wicked (83:7-17): "No! The record of the fujjar is in Sijjin" — a written register, or a place of confinement. "Woe that Day to the deniers," who deny the Day of Recompense — and none denies it but every sinful transgressor, who, when Our verses are recited to him, says, "Legends of the ancients!" The surah pierces to the cause: "No! Rather, the rust (ran) of what they used to earn has covered their hearts" (83:14) — sin layered upon sin until the heart is corroded and blind. Their punishment fits: "No! Indeed, from their Lord, that Day, they will be veiled" (83:15) — screened from the vision of God — then made to enter the Fire.

Against this, the record of the righteous (83:18-28): "No! Indeed, the record of the abrar is in 'Illiyyun" — the lofty heights — a written register witnessed by those brought near to God. The righteous are in bliss, upon adorned couches, gazing; you will recognise in their faces the radiance of delight; they are given to drink of a sealed, pure wine (rahiq makhtum) whose seal is musk — "and for this let the competitors compete" (83:26) — and its mixture is from Tasnim, a spring from which those nearest to God drink directly.

The surah then closes with the great reversal (83:29-36). In the world, the criminals used to laugh at those who believed; they would wink at one another as they passed them, return to their families amused and gloating, and, when they saw the believers, say, "These are surely astray" — though they had never been

sent to guard over them. "So today" — on the Day of Recompense — "it is the believers who laugh at the disbelievers," seated upon couches, gazing. And the final, quietly triumphant question: "Have the disbelievers not been repaid for what they used to do?" — the mockery returned in full, by God's perfect justice.

The major themes, in depth

The first theme is that everyday honesty is a matter of faith, not merely commerce. By opening with the defrauders — people who demand full measure but give short — the surah locates disbelief in the Reckoning in the ordinary transactions of the market. The bridge is verse 4: "Do they not think that they will be resurrected?" The one who shaves a little off the scale reveals, in that small theft, that he does not truly expect to stand before "the Lord of the worlds" (83:6). The surah thus refuses any divorce between creed and conduct: how a person weighs out grain is a window onto whether they believe in the Day. Islahi and others note the deliberate placement — the sins of the Hereafter-deniers show up first in the tangible injustices they inflict on others.

A second theme is the corrosion of the heart through persistent sin — the doctrine of *ran*. When the deniers dismiss revelation as "legends of the ancients," the surah diagnoses why they cannot hear it: "the rust of what they earned has covered their hearts" (83:14). The Prophet ﷺ explained this rust as a black speck that grows with each sin until, unrepented, it envelops the heart. Sin, in this understanding, is not merely a discrete act punished later but a substance that dulls

perception now, dimming the heart's capacity to recognise truth. And the punishment answers the crime with terrible symmetry: hearts that let sin veil them from truth in this world will themselves be "veiled from their Lord" (83:15) in the next — deprived of the vision of God that is, by contrast, the very summit of the righteous' reward.

A third theme is God's perfect justice as the reversal of worldly mockery. Much of the surah is consolation for the believers, who in Makka endured the sneering, winking contempt of the powerful (83:29–33). The Hereafter overturns the scene exactly: "So today the believers laugh at the disbelievers" (83:34), reclining in honour and gazing upon the humiliation of those who once derided them. The two records — the fujjar's in the confinement of Sijjin, the abrar's in the heights of 'Illyyun — and the two drinks — the deniers' scalding punishment against the sealed, musk-scented wine of Paradise — express the same principle: God's justice is exact, and the final laugh belongs to the faithful. "For this," the surah says of the reward, "let the competitors compete" (83:26).

Points of reflection

Al-Mutaffifin turns a searchlight onto the small, deniable dishonesties of daily life — the shaved measure, the unfair advantage taken when no one is watching — and reveals them as symptoms of a deeper disease: not truly believing one will stand before God. Its first call is to integrity in the ordinary, to give full measure precisely because we do expect the Reckoning. A faith that does not reach the scales, the surah suggests, has not reached the heart.

Its warning about the heart's rust is a call to guard the heart's clarity through repentance, before layer upon layer of unrepented sin blinds us to truth itself. And to the believer wearied by the world's contempt, the surah offers a durable consolation: the mockery is temporary and the justice is certain. What God invites us to compete for is not the fleeting standing of the scoffers but the sealed wine of 'Illyyun and the faces bright with delight — "and for this, let the competitors compete."

FIVE

Carrying it

1. Test your faith at the point of small honesty, in measures, prices, and promises, not only in grand acts of worship.
2. Fear the slow rust of repeated sin more than a single fall; guard the heart's polish through repentance.
3. Let the world's ridicule not move you; the final laughter belongs to the faithful, so compete for that.

Where this reading draws from. Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, al-Sa'di, Taysir al-Karim al-Rahman, al-Tabari, Jami' al-Bayan. 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/.