

Commentary and Tafsir from Tarawih

Introduction to Surah Al-Anfal – Concise Academic Summary

Surah Al-Anfal was named during the era of the Companions, as it opens with the mention of “al-Anfal” (spoils of war) and contains the primary rulings related to them. According to authentic reports from Ibn Abbas, Sa’id ibn Abi Waqqas, and others, the surah was revealed in connection with the events of the Battle of Badr, and for this reason it is also known as “The Surah of Badr.”

The scholars of Sirah and tafsīr agree that the surah was revealed in Ramadan of the second year after Hijrah. Its first verses came down while the Muslims were still at Badr, before the distribution of the spoils. Some verses, however, were revealed later, such as the verse: “Now Allah has lightened [the burden] for you...”, which came down long after the battle. This shows that the surah was revealed in stages according to unfolding events.

Some early scholars held that certain verses—such as “O Prophet, Allah is sufficient for you...”—were revealed during the march to Badr before the fighting began, indicating that the chronological order of revelation does not always match the order of verses in the mushaf.

Most scholars consider Al-Anfal the second Medinan surah revealed after Al-Baqarah, although the revelation of different surahs often overlapped. Reports also indicate that some verses—such as “Allah would not punish them while you are among them...”—were revealed in Makkah, while related verses were revealed later in Madinah after Badr.

The surah is listed as the 89th in order of revelation according to the narration of Jabir ibn Zayd from Ibn Abbas. Its verses number 75–77 depending on the regional method of counting.

The primary reason for its revelation was the dispute among the fighters of Badr regarding the distribution of spoils, and the Prophet ﷺ was asked to clarify the ruling.

Main Themes of the Surah

- Legal rulings on spoils of war and their rightful distribution. • Commands to fear Allah and obey His Messenger.
- The importance of unity, reconciliation, and strengthening communal bonds.
- A detailed account of the Battle of Badr, its causes, events, and divine support.
- Reminders of Allah's favours, including strengthening the believers after weakness.
- Encouragement to remain steadfast, patient, and prepared for conflict.
- Prohibition of division and dispute.
- Clarification of the true intention behind fighting: supporting the religion of Allah.
- Warnings to the hypocrites and lessons from past nations that rejected their prophets.
- Rulings on treaties with non-Muslims, when peace is appropriate, and how to deal with betrayal. • Rulings on prisoners of war.
- Guidance regarding Muslims who remained in Makkah after the Hijrah and their legal status.

This surah combines legal rulings, spiritual guidance, historical narrative, and moral instruction, forming a foundational text on warfare ethics, communal unity, and divine support.

Amar. A.S.

Imam and Khatib of MWHT