

THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN

From Revelation To Recitation & Beyond

MAKKI & MADANI
VERSES & SURAHS

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MAKKI AND MADANI SURAHS

A Surah is a chapter of the Qur'an Shareef. Each one of them has a name or title, which is generally taken from a word or theme in that Surah. Rasulallah ﷺ lived in Makkah Mukarramah for thirteen years after the first Wahi was revealed to him ﷺ. Then he ﷺ migrated to Madinah Munawwarah where he ﷺ lived for ten years. These two phases marked the growth and development of the Musim Ummah. The revelation of Allah Ta'ala was sent to guide the Muslims, also responded to these particular situations.

The chapters/verses revealed before Hijrah (migration) are called Makki and those revealed after migration are termed as Madani. It is not necessary that the Makki verses were revealed in the city of Makkah Mukarramah. Instead, all the verses revealed before Hijrah are called Makki even though they were revealed somewhere out of the city of Makkah Mukarramah. An example of this are the verses revealed in Mina and Arafat, or during the ascent (Mi'raj).

Similarly, all the verses revealed after Hijrah are called Madani even though some are revealed when Rasulallah ﷺ travelled outside Madinah Munawwarah. So much so, that some verses like Surah 4 V.58 and Surah 48 V.1 were revealed when he ﷺ was in Makkah Mukarramah or in its vicinity during the conquest of Makkah Mukarramah or on the expedition of Hudaibiyah; yet they are still categorised as Madani, because they were revealed after Hijrah.

The surahs of the Qur'an Shareef that mostly comprise of Makki verses are called Makki, and those comprising mostly of Madani verses are termed as Madani. Most of the Surahs are either totally Makki or totally Madani. For instance, Surah Al Muddassir is totally Makki and Surah Aal Imran is totally Madani. But there are some Makki Surahs in which some Madani verses have found place. Conversely, there are some Madani Surahs that have a few Makki verses. Every Surah termed Makki or Madani according to majority of its verses.

CONTENT OF MAKKI AND MADANI SURAHS

The subjects discussed in Makki Surahs are mostly the basic articles of faith and their proofs, the greatness of Allah Ta'ala visible throughout the Universe, refutation of idolatry, false beliefs and rituals, the objections raised by pagans against Rasulallah ﷺ and the Qur'an Shareef, narration of stories of earlier prophets ﷺ, description of the events of Qiyamah (Day of Judgement), the pleasures and bounties of Jannah (paradise) and horrors of Jahannam (hell).

In the Makkan period, Nabi ﷺ and the Muslims underwent merciless persecution at the hands of the pagans of Makkah Mukarramah. Hence, the Makki Surahs have a good number of verses that were originally meant for consoling them on such hardships. Nevertheless, these verses containing messages of universal consolation and conviction are application for all times.

Madani verses on the contrary, were revealed at a time when Nabi ﷺ had established an Islamic state in Madinah Munawwarah. The subjects discussed in these surahs are therefore mostly related to issues arising in the Madani period, like argumentation with the Jews and Christians, armed struggles against the enemies of Islam for which detailed rules of war and combat are laid down. Moreover, detailed laws of social, economic and political life are mostly found in Madani Surahs, while Makki surahs contain very few such laws. (Meanings of the Noble Qur'an – Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani)

In essence in Madinah, there were four groups of people to be met:

- The Muhajireen who migrated from Makkah to Madina
- The Ansar, who were from Madinah and helped the muhajireen.
- The munafiqun (hypocrites), who were inhabitants of Madina and pretended to support the Muslims.
- The ahl Kitab, i.e the Jews and Christians

DISTINCT FEATURES OF SURAHS

The Prophet ﷺ did not specify whether a verse was Makki or Madani. The companions and scholars of Tafsir, understood the importance of this topic and after having made a thorough investigation into the Makki and Madani Surahs, devised a set of characteristics that inform us which surahs are Makki and Madani.

1. A large number of verses of the Makkan Surahs are short and sharp, with strong expression and frequent oaths, as is seen in the 30th Juz of the Qur'an, while the Madani verses are longer.
2. The Makkan verses do not provide details about theological matters. These details are found in the Madani verses. Makkan verses deal primarily with the teachings about Tauhid (Oneness of Allah), Iman (faith), Nabi ﷺ, the angels and the last day.

3. All Surahs containing Sajdah Tilawah (Prostrations) (in the view of the Hanafi scholars) are Makkan.
4. All verses beginning with the word 'kalla' are Makkan. This word appears 33 times in 15 Surahs and all these verses occur in the second half of the Qur'an.
5. All references to the hypocrites are from the Madani period except Surah Ankaboot Verse 11, which is Makkan.
6. Most verses containing address "O you who believe" and "O people of the book" are Madani, while the address "O people" and "O mankind" are mostly Makkan.
7. Besides Surah Baqarah, every Surah in which mention is made of the incident of Adam (AS) and Iblees (Shaitan) is a Makki Surah.
8. The Makki Surahs makes extensive use of metaphors, similes and examples. On the contrary, the Madani Verses are simple in style.
9. The stories of the Prophets and previous nations are considered Makkan.
10. Those verses that include man's ingratitude for and misuse of gifts of Allah are Makkan.
11. Those verses regarding righteous conduct are Makkan.
12. All Surahs that begin with Huruf tahaji for example, Alif Laam Meem, Ha Meem are Makkan, with the exceptions of Surah Baqarah and Surah Aal Imran.

The difference in the style of Makki and Madani Surahs initially owes its origin to the conditions, circumstances and period.

AN IMPORTANT BRANCH OF KNOWLEDGE

The knowledge of Makkan and Madani revelations is one of the important branches of Ulum-ul-Qur'an (knowledge of Qur'an).

1. It is important for the understanding and interpretation of the respective verses.
2. This knowledge also helps in distinguishing the abrogated verses from the non-abrogated verses. For example, if two different verses pertaining to the same topic give two different rulings, but one is Makki and one is Madani, then the ruling is taken from the Madani verse.
3. The graduality by which different Islamic laws were implemented is appreciated when one gains an understanding of the Makki and Madani verses.
4. It lays out the procedure and methodology of calling to Islam (Dawah). The Makki and Madani verses have different methods and characteristics in calling to the religion of Allah. Different arguments are used against polytheists, Jews and Christians. The caller to Islam should use the same methodology when addressing these groups. The focus should always be on Tawheed - directing all worship, prayer and sacrifice to Allah alone.





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