

The Objectives of Guidance in Surah Al-‘Alaq

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Abstract:

This study addresses the objectives of guidance in Surah Al-Alaq, by presenting the opinions and interpretations of scholars regarding these objectives of guidance. Surah Al-Alaq discusses the perfection of humanity, among the things that complete a person are beneficial knowledge, righteous deeds, and the call to Allah. This research aims to highlight these three foundations through Surah Al-Alaq.

Keywords: Guidance; Objectives; Al-Alaq; Humanity.

INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah, who created man from a clot and shaped him in the best form. Glory be to the One who created and guided creation for their benefit; some have strayed while others have followed the truth. May Allah's peace be upon His Prophet Muhammad, to whom He revealed Surah Al-Qalam and taught him what he did not know, calling to Allah and teaching patiently despite the harm from others, until Allah completed the religion through him.

Humanity reaches its fullness by achieving the stations of knowledge, action, and calling others, thereby perfecting themselves and those who respond to them. Those who do not respond should be patiently endured. Upon fulfilling these stations, one succeeds in both this world and the Hereafter. Surah Al-Alaq indicates these levels: knowledge, action, and calling. I aim to highlight them and present what

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scholars have derived from Surah Al-Alaq in this research titled "Objectives of Guidance in Surah Al-Alaq."

Research Problem: What are the objectives of guidance in Surah Al-Alaq?

Reasons for Choosing the Topic:

1- Connecting people to the guidance of the Holy Quran and demonstrating its impact on life.

2- Highlighting the importance of knowledge, action, and calling to Allah.

3- Examining the opinions of scholars in interpreting the Surah and noting its guidance.

Research Plan:

Introduction.

Chapter One: Objectives of Guidance in the Quran.

- Section One: Definition of Quranic Objectives.
- Section Two: Definition of Guidance.

Chapter Two: Introduction to Surah Al-Alaq.

- Section One: Name of the Surah.
- Section Two: Purpose of the Surah.
- Section Three: Reason for the Revelation of the Surah.
- Section Four: Relation of the Surah to the Preceding Surah.
- Section Five: Relation of the Surah to the Following Surah.

Chapter Three: Objectives of Guidance in Surah Al-Alaq.

- Section One: The Honor of Seeking Knowledge.
- Section Two: Acting on Knowledge.
- Section Three: Calling to Allah.

Conclusion.



Chapter One: The Objectives of Guidance in the Qur'an

In this chapter, we will explore the concepts of Qur'anic objectives and guidance, examining their definitions in both linguistic and terminological contexts through the perspectives of scholars in the field.

Section One: Definition of Qur'anic Objectives

A. Linguistically: Ibn Faris states, "This word indicate three main meanings, one of which pertains to approaching something, while another signifies an essence contained within something." The primary meaning is "I intended it intentionally," and from this root, we have "I aimed my arrow at it," meaning it hit its target and did not deviate from it. Al-A'sha mentions:

"My arrow aimed at her, while before her,

I was targeting other women of the tribe. (**Al-Andalusi, 1998, p. 740**)"

From this, we also derive the meaning "I intended to kill it. (**Ibn Faris, 1982, pp. Vol. 5, p. 96**)"

Thus, the term "objectives" encompasses intention, direction, and moving toward something (**Hamid, 2007, p. 31**).

B. Terminologically: The objectives of the Qur'an refer to the aims for which it was revealed, intended to fulfill the interests of humanity. The ultimate purpose for which the Qur'an was revealed constitutes its objective, and this always includes a benefit for people, whether that benefit is general or specific.

Section two: Definition of Guidance

A. Linguistically: Ibn Faris states: "The letters 'h', 'd', and the weak letter have two roots: one indicates advancement for guidance, and the other denotes a gentle sending. (**Al-Anbari, p. 95**)"

The first root is illustrated by the phrase: "I guided him to the road (hidaya)," meaning I preceded him to guide him, and anyone who advances for this purpose is a guide. For example:

"If the guide of the young man in the land is the head of the channel, he obeys the leader. (**Ibn Quta, 2000, pp. Vol. 1, p. 593**.)"

This can be elaborated further: guidance is the opposite of misguidance. It is said: "I guided him rightly (hadi)," and it is said "the necks of the horses advanced (hawadi)," referring to their front, and "its guide (hadi)" is the first group of them because it is the foremost. The guiding stick (al-hadi) leads the one holding it as if to direct him. Similarly, one may say: "So-and-so looked to determine his direction," meaning to find his way, and "What a beautiful guidance I received," meaning my guidance. They also say: "So-and-so came guided (yuhada) between two (people)," when he walks between them relying on them. And when I shot an arrow, then shot another, it was for his aim (hidaya). All these concepts are related.

The other root of the term refers to a gift given out of kindness to a friend. It is said: "I gifted (ahdait), I present (ihda)." The offering is what is placed on the plate, and similarly, "the bride" is also called a gift (hadi), as it is said:

"If women are treasures, every chaste woman deserves a gift. (**Al-Jahiz, 1990, p. 70**)"

Guidance and offering refer to what is brought from the livestock to the sacred place as a means of drawing closer to God, whether called hidaya or hadi (**Ibn Faris, 1982, pp. Vol. 6, p. 43**).

It has also been said that "hadi" refers to a captive (**Al-Raghib , 2003, pp. Vol. 1, pp. 60, 62**).

Thus, guidance (hidaya) signifies leading gently towards faith for the believer or mockery for the disbeliever, which connects with the notion of a gift; what serves as a sign is described as "hadi" and what is given as "ahdi."

B. Terminologically: Al-Raghib Al-Isfahani states: "Guidance (hidaya) is the leading to goodness in words and actions. It is from God, with levels that are interconnected; the second cannot be attained without the first, nor the third without the second. The first level involves giving the servant strength to find his own interests, either through servitude or willingly, such as the five senses and intellectual faculties. Some of these are given to animals, and some are unique to humans, as indicated by the saying of Allah :“Our Lord is He who gave

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everything its existence, then guided it.” (Surah Ta-Ha) ,and His saying, the Exalted : ‘And who has determined [something’s nature] and then guided,’ (Surah Al-A’la), and this guidance is either through direction or instruction. To a similar meaning, He alluded in His saying: ‘And your Lord inspired the bee, saying, « Take for yourself among the mountains, houses, and among the trees and in what they construct, »’ (Surah An-Nahl). And His saying: ‘Because your Lord inspired it,’ (Surah Az-Zalzalah).

And in regard to man, with what He has granted him in intellect and shown him of wisdom: ‘Indeed, we guided him to the way, whether grateful or ungrateful,’ (Surah Al-Insan), and He said: ‘And We guided him to the two ways,’ (Surah Al-Balad). And regarding Thamud, He said: ‘And as for Thamud, we guided them, but they preferred blindness over guidance, so the thunderbolt of humiliating punishment seized them for what they used to earn,’ (Surah Fussilat).

The second type of guidance is through invitation and the sending of prophets, peace be upon them, as indicated by His saying: ‘And We made them leaders guiding by Our command’ (Surah Al-Anbiya), and His saying: ‘And for every people is a guide’ (Surah Ar-Ra’d). This guidance is sometimes attributed to Allah Almighty, sometimes to the Prophet, peace be upon him, and sometimes to the Holy Qur’an. Allah said: " Indeed, this Qur’an guides to that which is most suitable and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a great reward " (**Surah Al-Isra**).

The third type of guidance is the guidance given to the righteous among His servants due to their good deeds. This is the guidance mentioned in His saying: ‘Those are the ones whom Allah has guided, so from their guidance take an example. Say, « I ask of you for it no payment. It is not but a reminder for the worlds »’ (Surah Al-An’am), and His saying: ‘And those who strive for Us – We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good’ (Surah Al-Ankabut).

This guidance is also what is referred to in His saying: ‘And We certainly sent Noah and Abraham and placed among their descendants

prophethood and scripture; and among them is a rightly guided one, but many of them are defiantly disobedient’ (Surah Al-Hadid).

It is correct to attribute this guidance to Allah Almighty, saying that He preferred them with it, as He is the cause of their reaching it. It is also correct to say that they attained it through their own efforts, as they pursued it with diligence. For instance, if someone seeks help from a ruler and the ruler grants it, it can be said that the ruler granted it, or it can be said that the person earned it through his effort. Because it encompasses both aspects, Allah says: ‘Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds – their Lord will guide them by their faith. Beneath them rivers will flow in the Gardens of Pleasure’ (Surah Yunus).

He pointed out that this is due to their efforts and favor altogether, and that this guidance can be said to be accessible to all rational beings. It can also be said that it is forbidden except to His close allies, since all rational beings have the potential to strive for it. It should be noted that it is not easy to attain before the human being has formed in a particular way through the performance of worship. Some scholars have said: ‘Guidance from Allah is abundant, yet only the insightful can see it, and only the few act upon it.’ Do you not see how many stars there are in the sky, yet only the blind fail to be guided by them? Some of the saints have said: ‘The guidance of Allah to people is like a river passing over valleys and hills, and each valley receives according to its capacity.’ Others have likened it to rain that falls upon two lands, each benefiting from it according to its ability to absorb and utilize it. The fourth level of guidance is the ability to be in the proximity of Allah in the eternal abode, and this is what Allah refers to in his saying: ‘And We will have removed whatever is within their breasts of resentment, [while] flowing beneath them are rivers. And they will say, « Praise to Allāh, who has guided us to this; and we would never have been guided if Allāh had not guided us.’

If this is established, then among the types of guidance, there are some that no one is excluded from, and others that are denied to some and granted to others.

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From this, it is understood that the types of guidance mentioned in the Qur'an can be divided into four categories:

General Guidance: This is the guidance by which Allah has directed all of creation to what benefits them and sustains their lives and livelihoods.

Guidance of Instruction and Direction: This is the guidance of delivering the message and clarifying the truth to creation. It is specifically for the Prophets and those who follow their path, such as scholars and callers to Allah.

Guidance of Success: This is the opening of the heart to the truth and its acceptance. It is exclusive to Allah alone, with no partner.

Guidance to Heaven or Hell: This guidance will occur on the Day of Judgment. The believers will be guided to Paradise, while the sinners will be directed to Hell.

Chapter Two: Introduction to Surah Al-Alaq

In this chapter, we will discuss the name of the Surah, the reason for its revelation, its purpose, and its connection to the Surahs before and after it.

Section One: The Name of the Surah

This Surah has several names. It is called "Iqra' bismi rabbik" (Read in the name of your Lord), "Al-Alaq" (The Clot), "Iqra' bismi rabbik allathee khalaq" (Read in the name of your Lord who created), "Iqra'" (Read), "Iqra' wa al-Alaq" (Read and the Clot), and "Al-Qalam" (The Pen), a name used for Surah "Nun wa al-Qalam."

Ibn Ashour said: "This Surah was commonly known in the time of the Companions and the Followers as 'Surah Iqra' bismi rabbik.' It is named 'Al-Alaq' in the Mushafs and most interpretations because the word 'Alaq' appears at the beginning of the Surah. It is also called this in some Tafsirs. Al-Bukhari titled it 'Surah Iqra' bismi rabbik allathee khalaq.' It is also called 'Surah Iqra,' and al-Kawashi referred to it in 'al-Takhlees' as 'Surah Iqra' wa al-Alaq.' Ibn Atiyyah and Abu Bakr al-Arabi titled it 'Surah al-Qalam. (Muhammad Al-Tahir, 1984, pp. Vol. 30, p. 433)'"

Section Two: The Purpose of the Surah

The purpose of this Surah is to command the worship of Allah alone, without any partners, for He alone is worthy of worship, as He is the One who commands and creates. This is indicated by the opening command of "Iqra" (Read), which refers to His command, and by "Allathee khalaq" (Who created), which refers to His act of creation.

Al-Buqai said: "Its purpose is to command the worship of the One who has the power over creation and command, in gratitude for His kindness, to avoid ingratitude, in hope of His paradise, and in fear of His hellfire, as it is established that He will judge His servants on the Day of Resurrection. (Al-Baqa'i, 1987, pp. Vol. 3, p. 213)"

Section Three: The Reason for Its Revelation

The first Surah revealed to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was Surah Al-Alaq, in the Cave of Hira, and with its revelation, he became a Prophet.

Al-Bukhari narrated in his Sahih from Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her): "The first revelation that came to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was the true vision in sleep. He would not see a dream except that it came like the break of dawn. Then the love of solitude was made dear to him, and he used to seclude himself in the Cave of Hira, where he worshiped for many nights before returning to his family. He would take provisions with him for this purpose, and then return to Khadijah to take more provisions for the same purpose, until the truth came to him while he was in the Cave of Hira. The Angel came to him and said: 'Read.' He replied: 'I am not a reader.' The Angel took him and embraced him tightly until he was overwhelmed, then released him and said: 'Read.' He replied: 'I am not a reader.' The Angel took him again and embraced him tightly until he was overwhelmed, then released him and said: 'Read.' He replied: 'I am not a reader.' The Angel took him a third time, embraced him tightly, and released him, then said: {Read in the name of your Lord who created * Created man from a clot * Read and your Lord is the Most Generous. (Al-Bukhari, 1994, p. No. (3).)}"



Section Four: The Connection to the Surah Before It

The connection between Surah Al-Alaq and Surah At-Tin lies in the fact that in the last part of Surah At-Tin, Allah rebukes those who reject the religion after the clear signs and evidence of truth have been shown to them. In Surah Al-Alaq, a proof is provided of Allah's power over resurrection, which is the creation of man from a clot and his transformation into a fully-formed human being. Al-Qasimi mentioned in his Tafsir: "The creation of man from a drop of fluid and his development into a complete human being, his transformation from one state to another, in growth and decline, is one of the clearest signs of Allah's power over resurrection and recompense. So what could possibly lead you to reject it? (al-Qasimi, pp. Vol. 9, p. 505.)"

Section Five: The Connection to the Surah After It

The connection between Surah Al-Alaq and Surah Al-Qadr is one of cause and effect. The cause of the honor of the Night of Decree (Laylat al-Qadr) is that the Qur'an was revealed on that night, and the Qur'an is mentioned in Surah Al-Alaq with the command "Read." Al-Buqai mentioned this connection, saying: "Its purpose is to elevate the matter, which is one of the components of what the command of 'Read' encompasses. This is also indicated by its name, because Laylat al-Qadr is honored by the revelation of the Qur'an. Thus, it is the cause being described by its effect (Al-Baqai, 1987, pp. Vol. 3, p. 217)."

Chapter three: The Objectives of Guidance in Surah Al-Alaq

In this section, we will explore the objectives of guidance in Surah Al-Alaq by highlighting the honor of seeking knowledge, acting upon that knowledge, calling to Allah, the challenges faced by a caller to Allah, the things that help one endure harm, that the army of Allah is victorious, and that the enemies of Allah are the ultimate losers.

Section One: The Honor of Seeking Knowledge

Surah Al-Alaq demonstrates the honor and virtue of seeking knowledge through its opening word, "Iqra'" (Read), which emphasizes the importance of knowledge. It is the first surah revealed to the Prophet (PBUH), commanding him to read, symbolizing the high status of knowledge. The surah acknowledges Allah's favor upon the Prophet (PBUH) by teaching him what he did not know. Al-Qassimi states: "There is no more eloquent statement or clearer evidence of the superiority of reading writing, and all kinds of knowledge than the opening of Allah's Book and the beginning of the revelation with these brilliant verses. If Muslims do not heed this guidance, and if they do not awaken to its message to brea the veils of ignorance that have covered their eyes, and shatter the doors that their leaders have locked them behind in the darkness of ignorance, and if they do not seek guidance from the opening of this clear book and light their way with this radiant illumination, then may Allah never guide them. (al-Qasimi, pp. Vol. 9, p. 510.)"

Section two: Acting upon Knowledge

Whoever is honored by Allah with knowledge must adorn it with action, because knowledge without action is like a tree without fruit. Knowledge becomes a proof against its owner, increasing Allah's evidence against him, and it becomes a burden on him. In contrast, the one who follows knowledge with action finds it to be a proof and an adornment for him. He increases in knowledge and is granted by Allah knowledge of what he did not know. Knowledge calls out to action: if it is answered, it stays; if not, it leaves. This saves one from resembling the Jews, who possess knowledge but do not act upon it. This point is emphasized in several parts of Surah Al-Alaq, including the verse, "Have you seen if he is upon guidance?" The one who is truly on guidance must have both knowledge and action. As Al-Saadi explained: "{ON GUIDANCE}" means knowledge of the truth and acting upon it. (Ibn Nasser Al-Saadi, 2007, p. p. 930.)" The Surah also commands striving in action and drawing nearer to Allah: "No! Do not obey him. Prostrate and draw nearer."



Section Three: Calling to Allah

When a servant realizes the virtue and honor of knowledge, and eagerly seeks it, dedicating his life to it, traveling across lands, sacrificing wealth, and working tirelessly, he must, once he has acquired knowledge, convey it to the servants of Allah. Calling to Allah is the duty of the messengers, and it is an honor of the highest degree. Surah Al-Alaq highlights this in part through the verse, "Or enjoined piety," illustrating that the Prophet (PBUH) was commanded to call to piety, which is a reminder of the importance of calling to Allah.

The Surah also outlines some qualities that a caller to Allah should possess. First, the caller should act according to the knowledge they have before calling others to Allah. This makes their message more likely to be accepted by others, as indicated by the verse: "He who is on guidance or enjoins piety." Before calling to piety, one must be on guidance.

It also emphasizes that the caller to Allah should be patient in the face of opposition and harm from those who reject the message, ignoring threats or hostility, and continuing steadfastly in their mission to call others to Allah and act upon what they preach. Allah says: "No! Do not obey him. Prostrate and draw near." As Al-Saadi explained: "As for the one being prohibited, Allah commands that he should not listen to the one who forbids him, nor obey him, for his command only leads to the loss of both worlds. 'Prostrate to your Lord and draw nearer' through prostration and other acts of worship, as they all bring one closer to Allah and His pleasure. (**Ibn Nasser Al-Saadi, 2007, p. 930**)"

Thus, this Surah highlights the value of knowledge, encourages seeking it, and stresses that after acquiring knowledge, one must act upon it. Moreover, the call to Allah must follow, along with an emphasis on the proper qualities of the one who calls others to Allah.

Conclusion

Praise be to Allah, by whose grace good deeds are completed, and blessings and peace be upon Muhammad as long as the earth and heavens endure, and upon his family, companions, and those who follow his guidance until the Day of Judgment.

Indeed, Allah sent our Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, to lead people out of darkness into light. He conveyed the message, fulfilled the trust, and left us upon a clear path, as bright as day, from which none deviate but those doomed to destruction. Allah's law is supreme, containing guidance suitable for the diverse conditions of people across all lands and eras. It alone is fit for every time and place, as beautifully embodied in Surah Al-‘Alaq. Through the interpretation and analysis of this Surah, we arrive at certain findings and recommendations.

First : Findings

1. The guiding objectives of Surah Al-‘Alaq are numerous and varied, despite its brevity, and most of these were highlighted in this study.
2. Surah Al-‘Alaq has a profound connection to the Surah preceding it (Al-Tin) and the one following it (Al-Qadr), as they are inseparable in sequence—a subtle miracle of the Quran.
3. The Surah reveals the secret of the honor and empowerment of Muslims, which lies in knowledge and acting upon it.
4. In this Surah, Allah commanded His Prophet, peace be upon him, to prostrate and draw near to Him, a means of dignity and empowerment for those who call to Allah.

Second : Recommendations

1. Muslims today must expose the schemes of those who seek to disparage Islam, its message, and the character of the Prophet, peace be upon him. This should be done by, first, presenting Islam in its true light, and second, calling for adherence to Allah's law and the rejection of anything contrary to it.
2. Islamic law contains solutions to the challenges of all ages, and the Quran is suitable for every time and place.

3. Teaching, memorizing, and interpreting Surah Al-‘Alaq is essential to draw guidance from its teachings.

Finally, this represents what Allah has enabled us to interpret, analyze, and organize regarding the objectives of Surah Al-‘Alaq. All praise is to Allah, Lord of all worlds, and may blessings and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon all his family and companions.

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