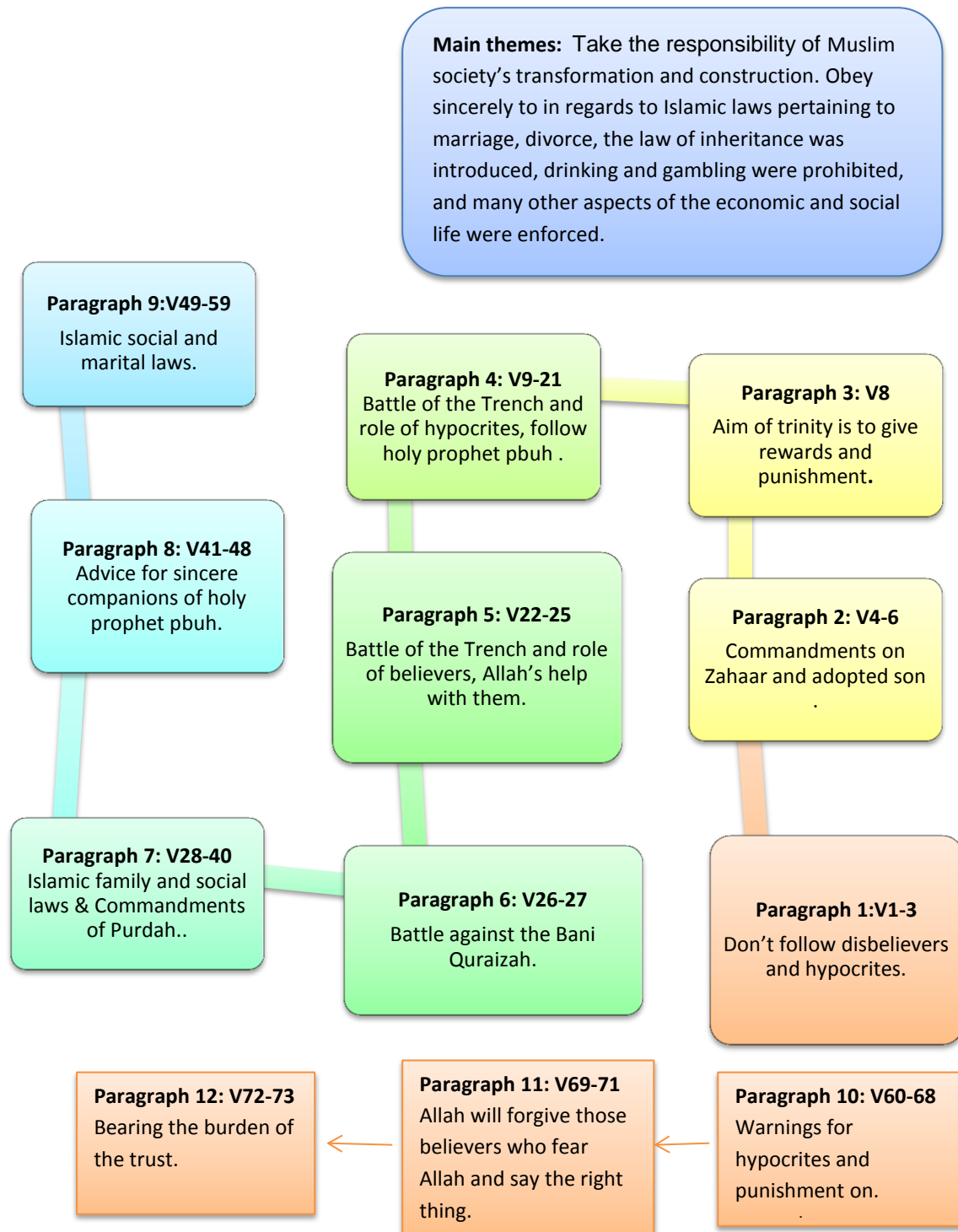


Flow Chart

Macro Structure

33. Surah Al-Ahzab (The Clans/in-groups) Verses:73; Madni; Paragraphs: 12



Period of Revelation:

The Surah discusses three important events which are: the Battle of the Trench (or *Al-Ahzab*: the Clans), which took place in Shawwal, A. H. 5; the raid on Bani Quraizah, which was made in Dhil-Qa'dah, A. H. 5; and the Holy Prophet's marriage with Hadrat Zainab, which also was contracted in Dhil-Qa'dah, A. H. 5. These historical events accurately determine the period of the revelation of this Surah.

Historical Background.

The Islamic army's setback in the Battle of Uhud (A. H. 3) that resulted from the error of the archers appointed by the Holy Prophet so boosted up the morale of the Arab pagans and the Jews and the hypocrites that they started entertaining the hope that they would soon be able to exterminate Islam and the Muslims completely. Their high state of morale can be judged from the events that occurred in the first year after Uhud. Hardly two months had passed then the tribe of Bani Asad of Najd began to make preparations for a raid on Madinah, and the Holy Prophet had to dispatch an expedition under Abu Salamah to counteract them. In Safar A. H. 4 some people of the tribes of Adal and Qarah asked the Holy Prophet to send some men to instruct them in Islam. Accordingly six of the Companions were allowed to accompany them for the purpose. But when they reached Raji (a place between Rabigh and Jeddah), they summoned Hudhail against them, who killed four of the Companions, and took the other two (Hadrat Khubaib bin Adi and Hadrat Zaid bin ad-Dathinnah) to Makkah and sold them to the enemy. Then in the same month of Safar, on the request of a chief of Bani Amir, the Holy Prophet sent another deputation of 40 (according to others, 70) preachers, consisting of the Ansar young men, to Najd. But they were also betrayed. The people of Usayyah and Ri'l and Dhakwan, tribes of Bani Sulaim, surrounded them suddenly at Bir Maunah and slew all of them. Meanwhile the Jewish tribe of Bani an-Nadir of Madinah, getting encouragement, continued to commit breaches of the treaties; so much so that in Rabi'ul Awwal, A.H. 4, they plotted against the life of the Holy Prophet himself. Then in Jamadi al-Ula, A. H. 4, Bani Thalbah and Bani Muharib, the two tribes of Bani Ghatafan, started making preparations to attack Madinah and the Holy Prophet had to go to punish them. Thus, after their setback at Uhud, the Muslims went on encountering repercussions continuously for seven to eight months.

However, it was the Holy Prophet's determination and wisdom and his great Companions' spirit of sacrifice that changed these adverse conditions completely within a short span of time. The economic boycott by the Arabs had made life hard for the people of Madinah. All the polytheistic tribes around Madinah were becoming rebellious. Inside Madinah itself the Jews and the hypocrites were beat upon mischief. But the successive steps taken by a handful of the sincere Muslims, under the leadership of the Holy Prophet, not only restored the image of strength of Islam in Arabia but also increased it manifold.