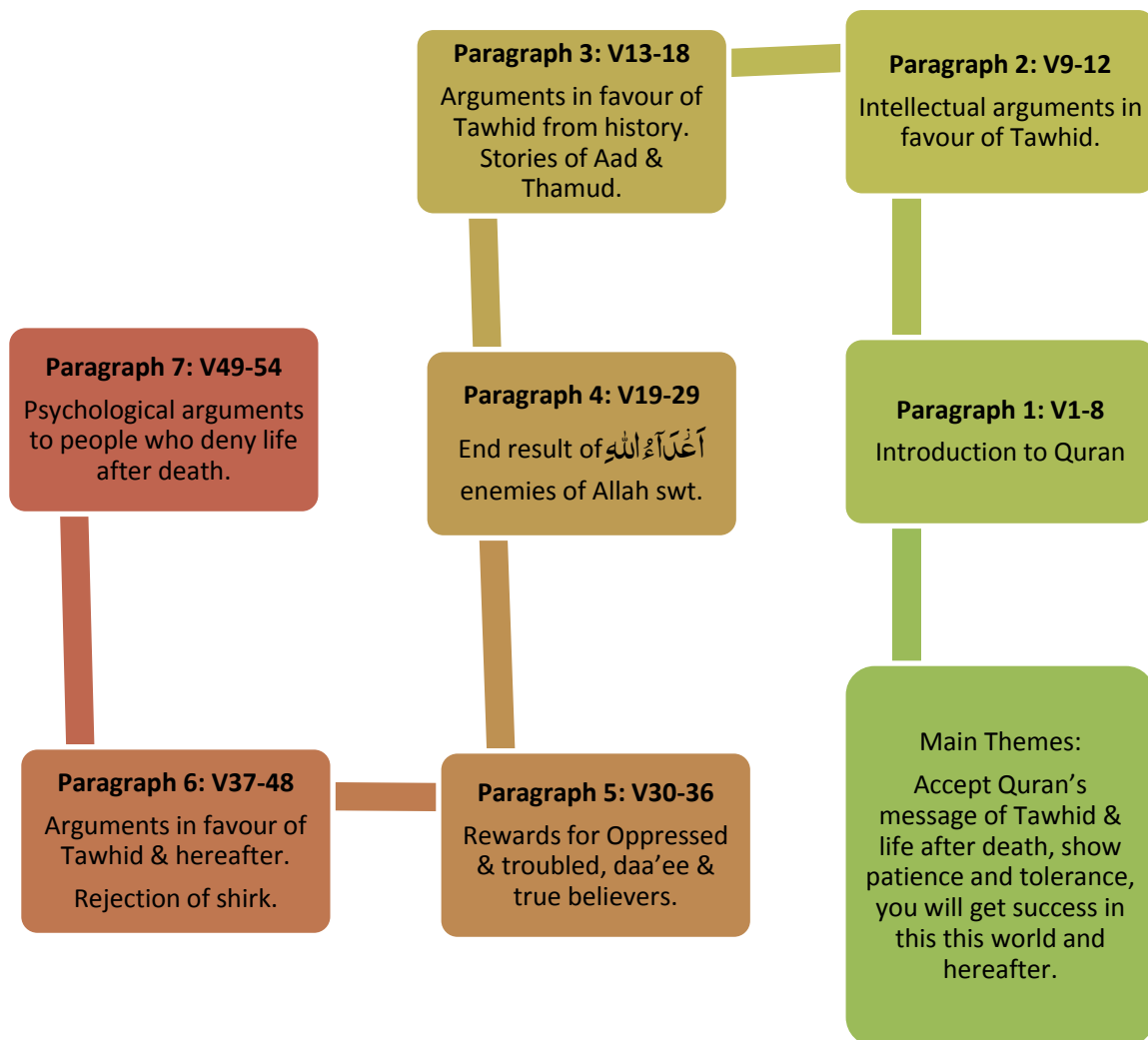


Flow Chart

Macro Structure

41. Surah Ha Mim As –Sajdah, also known as Surah Fussilat (Explained in Detail) Verses: 54; Makki; Paragraphs: 7



Period of Revelation. According to authentic Traditions, it was sent down after the affirmation of the Faith by Hadrat Hamzah and before the affirmation of the Faith by Hadrat Umar. Muhammad bin Ishaq, the earliest biographer of the Holy Prophet, has related on the authority of Muhammad bin Ka'b al-Qurzi, the famous follower of the Companions, that one day some of the Quraish chiefs were sitting in their assembly in the Masjid al-Haram,

while in another corner of the Mosque there was the Holy Prophet sitting by himself. This was the time when Hadrat Hamzah had already embraced Islam and the people of the Quraish were feeling upset at the growing numbers of the Muslims. On this occasion, Utbah bin Rabi'ah (the father-in-law of Abu Sufyan) said to the Quraish chiefs: "Gentlemen, if you like I would go and speak to Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and put before him some proposals; maybe that he accepts one of them, to which we may also agree, and so he stops opposing us." They all agreed to this, and Utbah went and sat by the Holy Prophet. When the Holy Prophet turned to him, he said: "Nephew, you know the high status that you enjoy in the community by virtue of your ancestry and family relations, but you have put your people to great trouble: you have created divisions among them and you consider them to be fools: you talk ill of their religion and gods, and say things as though all our forefathers were pagans. Now listen to me and I shall make some suggestions. Consider them well: maybe that you accept one of them." The Holy Prophet said: "Abul Walid, say what you want to say and I shall listen to you." He said, "Nephew, if by what you are doing, you want wealth, we will give you enough of it so that you will be the richest man among us; if you want to become an important man, we will make you our chief and will never decide a matter without you; if you want to be a king, we will accept you as our king; and if you are visited by a jinn, whom you cannot get rid of by your own power, we will arrange the best physicians and have you treated at our own expense." Utbah went on speaking in this strain and the Holy Prophet went on listening to him quietly. Then he said, "Have you said, O Abul Walid, what you had to say?" He replied that he had. The Holy Prophet said: "Well, now listen to me." Then pronouncing *Bismillah ir Rehman-ir-Raihm* he began to recite this very Surah, and Utbah kept on listening to it, putting his hands behind his back and leaning on them as he listened. Coming to the verse of prostration (v. 38) the Holy Prophet prostrated himself; then raising his head, said, "This was my reply, O Abul Walid, now you may act as you please." then Utbah arose and walked back towards the chiefs, the people saw him from afar, and said: "By God! Utbah's face is changed. He does not look the same man that he was when he went from here." Then, when he came back and sat down, the people asked, "What have you heard?" He replied, "By God! I have heard something the like of which I had never heard before. By God, it's neither poetry, nor sorcery, nor magic. O chiefs of the Quraish, listen to what I say and leave this man to himself. I think what he recites is going to have its effect. If the other Arabs overcome him, you will be saved from raising your band against your brother, and the others will deal with him. But if he overcame Arabia, his sovereignty would be your sovereignty and his honor your honor." Hearing this the chiefs spoke out: "You too, O father of Walid, have been bewitched by his tongue." Utbah replied, "I have given you my opinion; now you may act as you please." (Ibn Hisham, vol. I, pp. 313-314).

This story has been narrated by several other traditionists also on the authority of Hadrat Jabir bin Abdullah in different ways, with a little variation in wording. In some traditions it has also been related that when during the recitation the Holy Prophet had come to verse 13, viz. "If they turn away, say to them: I warn you of a thunderbolt the like of which had visited the Ad and the Thamud," Utbah had spontaneously placed his hand on the Holy Prophet's mouth, and said: "For God's sake, have mercy on your people." Afterwards he justified his action before the Quraish chiefs, saying: "You know that whatever Muhammad says is always fulfilled; therefore, I feared lest a torment should descend on us." (For details, see *Tafsir* Ibn Kathir, vol. IV, pp. 90- 91; *Al Bidayah wan-Nihayah*, vol. III, p. 62).