What does 2 halves, 3 thirds, and 4 fourths all share when they are added together?

That’s right! They all equal a whole.

Abu Hurairah narrated the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Gather and I will recite to you one third of the Qur’an.” He said: “So whoever was to gather did so, then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came out and recited Qul Huwa Allahu Ahad. Then he went back in. Some of them said to each other: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘I shall recite to you one third of the Qur’an I thought that this was news from the Heavens. Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) came out and said: “Indeed I said that I would recite to you one third of the Qur’an, and it is indeed equal to one third of the Qur’an.”[1]

Abu Darda’ reported Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as said:

Is any one of you incapable of reciting a third of the Qur’an in a night? They (the Companions) asked: How could one recite a third of the Qur’an (in a night)? Upon this he (the Holy Prophet) said: “‘Say: He is Allah, One’ is equivalent to a third of the Qur’an.”[2]

Narrated Abu Said Al-Khudri:
A man heard another man reciting (Surat-Al-Ikhlas) ‘Say He is Allah, (the) One.’ repeatedly. The next morning he came to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) and informed him about it as if he thought that it was not enough to recite. On that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “By Him in Whose Hand my life is, this Surah is equal to one-third of the Qur’an!”[3]

These are some of the authentic Ahadith that mention Surah Al-Ikhlas being equivalent to 1/3 of the Quran. Now the question is if a person read it 3X it would equal reading the entire Quran?

Al-Amir As-San’ani was asked about this subject and gave a detailed answer as to why held his opinion that it does.

Imam As-San’ani mentioned that Al-Hafith As-Suyuti stated people differed between the exact meanings of Surahtul Ikhlas being a 3rd of the Quran. Some scholars have said it’s considered a third of the Quran as it contains, stories, laws, and Allah’s attributes, and the 112th chapter of the Quran is entirely the attributes of Allah, so it’s a third of the Quran. [4]
Al-Ghazali said the knowledge in the Quran covers three main subjects: Tawheed, the straight path, along with details about the Hereafter, Surathul Ikhlas covers Tawheed, thus it’s a third of the book.[5]

Al-Jooni said: The Quran demands three principles to make a person’s faith correct; knowledge of Allah, the truthfulness of His Prophet and the belief in the Last Day. Anyone who acknowledges Allah is One, Muhammad is truthful and the Judgment Day is real, is a religious believer. The person who denies anything from these three principles is disbeliever. The facts about Allah are included in Suratul Ikhlas and from this viewpoint that makes it a 3rd of the Quran.[6]

We have read some reasons why scholars said Suratul Ikhlas equals 1/3 of the Quran and how their judgments were built on the fact that portion of the Quran is related to Tawheed. Following this introduction Al-Amir As-San’ani went into what does a third of the Quran represent in that hadith.

Imam As-San’ani said: It’s also believed that the meaning for a 3rd of the Quran in the hadith refers to the reward; however this opinion has been rejected by Ibn Aqeel, who said, “It’s improper to say reading Suratul Ikhlas is equals a third of the Quran in reward. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: ‘The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “[Whoever recites a letter] from Allah’s Book, then he receives the reward from it, and the reward of ten the like of it. I do not say that Alif Lam Mim is a letter, but Alif is a letter, Lam is a letter and Mim is a letter.”[7]

Stopping here at the aforementioned Hadith brings something to mind, the Quran has 114 chapters and Al-Baqarah is the longest chapter in the Quran and more words than Suratul Ikhlas, so Ibn Aqeel’s point is, if there is a reward for every letter read, then how can that chapter be considered a third in its reward?

Imam As-San’ani mentioned that Ibn Abdil Bar said: “It’s safer
and better to remain silent than to talk about this issue. Ishaq ibn Mansour asked Imam Ahmed, “What does it mean that Suratul Ikhlas equals 1/3 of the Quran? Imam Ahmed didn’t answer.

Ishaq ibn Raahoowayah said,” This means Allah made some of His words more superior to every other kind of speech and He appointed some of It to be greater in reward than others as a means to encourage people to learn. This doesn’t mean that reading Suratul Ikhlas three times earns same reward of the entire Quran. This isn’t a sound opinion, and even if a person were to read it two hundred times it wouldn’t match up to whole Quran.

Imam As-San’ani said:” It’s obvious from the apparent meaning of the hadith, “Whoever reads Qul Huwa Allahu Ahad, and then it’s as if he read a third of the Quran.”[8]

Is there anything that prevents us from taking the meaning of the Hadith literally or explaining it based on what is clearly stated?

We read that Ishaq didn’t accept the reading of Suratul Ikhlas 3x times to be comparable to whole Quran in reward, but Imam As-San’ani responded by asking what prevents us from taking that interpretation from the clear wording of the Hadith?

Ibn Aqeel believed the same as Ibn Raahowayah, but mentioned his reason was such a belief outwardly contradicted the hadith.” “[Whoever recites a letter] from Allah’s Book, then he receives the reward from it, and the reward of ten the like of it. I do not say that Alif Lam Mim is a letter, but Alif is a letter, Lam is a letter and Mim is a letter.”[9]

Imam As-San’ani answered this interpretation by saying, “This hadith is general and applies to everyone who recites the Quran. Allah specified the recital of 112th chapter from the Quran to be the same as reading a 3rd of His book. There’s
nothing preventing that from being absolutely possible and specific for that chapter.

So if a person says, “Reading a 3rd of the Quran can be achieved by reciting Suratul Ikhlas?”

The answer is yes. These are the words of Tawheed and best words to remember Allah, and are the easiest to say. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The best remembrance of Allah is la ilaha illallah.” [10]

I don’t believe there’s a text that prevents the hadith from be understood by its apparent meaning. Suratul Ikhlas is equal to 1/3 of the entire Quran in reward. Allah can bestow special honors to whatever He wills and how He wills. We must believe in this and submit to it and avoid interpreting texts from their obvious meaning.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “There are two statements that are light for the tongue to remember, heavy in the Scales and are dear to the Merciful: ‘Subhan-Allahi wa bihamdihi, Subhan-Allahil-Azim [Glory be to Allah and His is the praise, (and) Allah, the Greatest is free from imperfection]’.” [11]

This hadith proves the best deeds superior in reward aren’t connected to a difficulty. Certain deeds were made superior to others by Allah’s will. This is similar to the way He has made some of His servants loftier than others. He said: “Those Messengers! We preferred some to others.” [12] Allah mentioned that He gives His bounty to whoever He wills. “That is the Grace of Allah which He bestows on whom He pleases.” [13]

Al-Amir As-San’ani’s supporting evidence for this topic is strong and unambiguous. After an analysis why some scholars said reading Suratul Ikhlas three times couldn’t possibly be similar to reading to the entire Quran, we saw that they didn’t interpreted the Hadith from its apparent meaning. Ibn Aqeel rejected the idea through calculation of the number of
verses in the Quran compared to amount of the ayah in that chapter.

In reflecting over As-San’ani’s argument we can further support it with other acts of worship done at certain times which are superior in reward.

- The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Umrah during Ramadan is equivalent to Hajj." [14]

All the rites of Hajj aren’t done in Umrah, yet performing Umrah in Ramadan is similar to Hajj.

- The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whoever prays Fajr in congregation, after that sits and remembers Allah until the sunrises, following this he prays two rakah earns the reward of a Hajj and an Umrah.” [15]

Remembering Allah after Fajr until sunrise is equal to the reward of Hajj and an Umrah. And this is action which doesn’t have any rites of Hajj or Umrah. And Allah the Most High knows Best

Presented by your brother in need of Allah’s Mercy,

Abu Aaliyah Abdullah ibn Dwight Battle

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1437H
Muslim(812) and At-Tirmithi (2900)

Muslim(811)

Al-Bukhari(5013)

At-Tirmithi 2910

Ahmed (6/442,447)

At-Tirmithi 2910

At-Tirmithi (3383)

Al-Bukhari(7563) Muslim(2694)

Al-Baqarah (253)

Al-Hadeed (21)

Ibn Majah (2994)

Collected by At-Tirmithi (579) Imam At-Tirmithi and Al-Albani (May Allah mercy on them both) graded this hadeeth as Hasan.