

# THE MEANING OF THE QUR'ĀN

Vol. XVI

Surah Al-A'la—Surah An-Nās

(ARABIC TEXT WITH TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY)

*By*

S. ABUL A'LĀ MAUDŪDĪ

*English Rendering By*

'ABDUL 'AZIZ KAMĀL

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## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

This is the concluding volume of *The Meaning of the Qur'ān*, the English translation of the *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān*. The work was originally begun by the late Chaudhry Muḥammad Akbar in 1955, with the blessings and under the guidance of the author, the late Maulānā Sayyid Abul A'lā Maudūdī, himself. On the death of Chaudhry Muḥammad Akbar in January, 1972, when the work had progressed a little beyond Sūrah Al-Ḥajj (XXII), it was entrusted to me. I thank Almighty Allah humbly that He gave me the strength and ability to complete the assignment. Whatever its merit, the work now is before man and God. I request the learned reader to point out my errors and mistakes and send other suggestions, if any, for improving this work; and I implore Almighty Allah to overlook my failings and weaknesses and bless it — make it a means of people's right guidance and their maximum understanding of the Qur'ān and of the translators' forgiveness on the Day of Judgement.

My sincere thanks are due to my friend Lt. Cdr. (Retd.) Fazal Elahi for revising the translation carefully and diligently and to sister Maryam Jameelah for going through the manuscript ungrudgingly and suggesting improvements. My debt to them is indeed great. May Allah reward them richly for this labour of love both here and in the Hereafter! For such defects as remain, I alone am responsible.

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Lahore : October, 1988.

'Abdul 'Aziz Kamāl

LXXXVII

AL-A'LĀ الاعلى



## LXXXVII

AL-A'LĀ الاعلى

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Name**

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *al-A'lā* in the very first verse.

#### **Period of Revelation**

The subject-matter shows that this too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed, and the words: "We shall enable you to recite, then you shall never forget" of verse 6 also indicate that it was sent down in the period when the Holy Messenger (upon whom be Allah's peace) was not yet fully accustomed to receive Revelation and at the time Revelation came down he feared lest he should forget its words. If this verse is read along with verse 114 of Sūrah Tā Hā and verses 16-19 of Al-Qiyāmah,

and the three verses are also considered with regard to their styles and contexts, the sequence of events seems to be that first in this Sūrah the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was reassured to the effect: "Do not at all worry: We shall enable you to recite this Word, then you shall not forget it." Then after a lapse of time, on another occasion, when the Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah was being revealed, the Holy Prophet involuntarily began to rehearse the words of the Revelation. Thereupon it was said: "O Prophet, do not move your tongue to remember this Revelation hastily. It is for Us to have it remembered and read. Therefore when We are reciting it, listen to its recital carefully. Again, it is for Us to explain its meaning." Last of all, on the occasion of the revelation of Sūrah Ṭā Hā, the Holy Prophet on account of human weakness, again became afraid lest his memory should fail to preserve some portion of the 113 verses which were continuously revealed at that time, and, therefore, he began to memorise them. Thereupon, it was said: "And see that you do not hasten to recite the Qur'ān before its revelation is completed to you. After this, it never so happened that he felt any such danger, for apart from these three places, there is no other place in the Qur'ān where there might be a reference to this matter.

### **Theme and Subject-matter**

This short Sūrah contains three themes: *Tauhīd*, instructions to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and the Hereafter.

In the first verse, the doctrine of *Tauhīd* has been compressed into a single sentence, saying that Allah's name should be glorified and exalted, i.e. He should not be remembered by any name which might reflect a deficiency, fault, weakness, or an aspect of likeness,



with created beings, for the root of all false creeds in the world are wrong concepts about Allah, which assumed the form of an erroneous name for His glorious and exalted Being. Therefore, for the correction of the creed, the primary thing is that Allah Almighty should be remembered only by the beautiful names which suit and befit Him.

In the next three verses, it has been said: "Your Lord, glorification of Whose name is being enjoined, is He Who created everything in the Universe, proportioned it, set it a destiny, taught it to perform the function for which it is created, and you witness this manifestation of His power day and night that He creates vegetation on the earth as well as reduces it to mere rubbish. No other being has the power to bring about spring nor the power to prevent autumn."

Then, in the following two verses, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been consoled, as if to say: "Do not worry as to how you will remember word for word the Qur'ān that is being revealed to you. It is for Us to preserve it in your memory, and its preservation is not in any way the result of any excellence in you but the result of Our bounty and favour, otherwise if We so will, We can cause you to forget it."

Then, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been told: "You have not been made responsible to bring everyone on to the right path; your only duty is to convey the truth, and the simplest way of conveying the truth is that admonition be given to him who is inclined to listen to the admonition and accept it, and the one who is not inclined to it, should not be pursued. The one who fears the evil consequences of deviation and falsehood, will listen to the truth and accept it, and the wretched one who avoids listening to and accepting it, will himself see his evil end."

The discourse has been summed up, saying: "Success is only for those who adopt purity of belief, morals and deed, and remember the name of their Lord and perform the Prayer. But, on the contrary, the people are wholly lost in seeking the ease, benefits and pleasures of the world, whereas they should actually endeavour for their well-being in the Hereafter, for the world is transitory and the Hereafter everlasting and the blessings of the Hereafter are far better than the blessings of the world. This truth has not been expressed only in the Qur'ân but in the books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses too, it had been brought to the notice of man.



سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى ۝ الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى ۝ وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى ۝  
 وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَى ۝ فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَى ۝ سُنُقِرُكَ ۝ فَلَا تَنسَى ۝  
 إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ۝ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى ۝ وَيُبَيِّنُ رُكُوكَ لِلْإِسْرَى ۝  
 فَذَكِّرْ ۝ إِنَّ نَفْعَتِ الذِّكْرِى ۝ سَيَذَكِّرْهُ مَن يَخْفَى ۝ وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشْقَى ۝  
 الَّذِي يَصَلَى النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى ۝ ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوءُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَى ۝ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ  
 مَن تَزَكَّى ۝ وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى ۝ بَلْ تُؤَثِّرُونَ الْحَيَوَةَ الدُّنْيَا ۝  
 وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ ۝ وَأَبْقَى ۝ إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى ۝ صُحُفِ

إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى ۝

LXXXVII

AL-A'LA الأعلی

Verses : 19

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Aliah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

(O Prophet,) glorify the name of your Lord, the Highest,<sup>1</sup> Who created and proportioned,<sup>2</sup> Who set a destiny<sup>3</sup> and showed the way,<sup>4</sup> Who caused vegetation to grow,<sup>5</sup> then reduced it to black rubbish.<sup>6</sup>

We shall enable you to recite; then you shall not forget<sup>7</sup> except what Allah wills.<sup>8</sup> He knows what is open and also what is hidden.<sup>9</sup>

And We give you the facility of the easy way; therefore, admonish them if admonition be profitable.<sup>10</sup> He who fears will accept the admonition,<sup>11</sup> and it will be shunned by the most wretched one, who shall enter the Great Fire, wherein he shall neither die nor live.<sup>12</sup>

14-19

Truly successful was he who purified himself,<sup>13</sup> and remembered the name of his Lord,<sup>14</sup> then prayed.<sup>15</sup> But you (O men,) prefer the life of this world,<sup>16</sup> although the Hereafter is better and more lasting.<sup>17</sup> The same had been said in the former Books, the Books of Abraham and Moses.<sup>18</sup>

1. Literally: "Purify the name of your Lord, the Highest." This can have several meanings and all are implied: (1) Allah should be remembered by the names which fit Him, and no such name should be used for His exalted Being which, with regard to its meaning and sense, does not fit Him, or which reflects some aspect of deficiency, lack of reverence, polytheism about Him, or which refers to some wrong belief in respect of His Being, attributes, or works. For this purpose, the safest way is that only such names be used for Allah, which He Himself has mentioned in the Qur'ān, or which are a correct translation of these names in other languages. (2) Allah should not be remembered by the names as are used generally for the created beings, or the created beings should not be called by names as are specifically meant for Allah. And if there are some attributive names which are not specifically meant for Allah, but may also be used for the created beings, such as Ra'ūf (Kind), Raḥīm (Compassionate), Karīm (Generous), Samī' (Hearing), Baṣīr (Seeing), etc. one should exercise due care not to use them for man as they are used for Allah. (3) Allah should not be mentioned in a way or in a state which reflects lack of respect for Him; for example, to mention His name when engaged in mockery or jest, or when in the lavatory, or while committing a sinful act, or before the people who might behave insolently in response or in assemblies where the people are engaged in absurd things and might laugh off His mention, or on an occasion when it is feared that the hearer will hear it disdainfully. About Imām Mālik, it is related that when a beggar begged him for something and he did not have anything to give, he would not turn away the beggar, saying that Allah would help him, as is commonly done by the people, but he would excuse himself in some other way. When asked why he did so, he replied: "When the beggar is not given anything and one makes an excuse, it inevitably displeases him. On such an occasion, I do not like to mention Allah's name, for I do not like that somebody should hear His name in a state of annoyance and displeasure."

In the *Ḥadīth*, it has been reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir Juhānī that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had enjoined recitation of *Subḥāna Rabbi-yal-A'lā* in *sajdah* on the basis of this very verse, and the recitation of *Subḥāna Rabbi-yal-'Azīm* in *rukū'* on the basis of the last verse of Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah, viz. *Fa-sabbih bi-ismi-Rabbi-kal-'Azīm.*" (Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ḥākim, Ibn al-Mundhir).

2. That is, He created everything, from the earth to the heavens, in the universe, and gave whatever He created the right proportion and balance and gave every creature the best conceivable form and shape. The same thing has been expressed in Sūrah As-Sajdah, thus: "Who gave everything He created the best form." (v. 7). Thus, the creation of everything in the world giving it due order and proportion, is an express sign of the truth that some Wise Designer is its Creator. Had the creation of the countless things in the universe been the result of a chance accident, or the work of many creators, there could be no order and balance, no beauty and inner coherence among the many things existing in the world.

3. "Set a destiny": determined beforehand what would be the function of a certain thing in the world, and for that purpose what would be its size, its form and shape, its qualities, its place of location, and what opportunities and means should be provided for its survival, existence and functioning, when it should come into being, and when and how it should cease to be after completing its part of the work. Such a scheme for a thing is its "destiny" (*taqdir*). And this destiny Allah has set for everything in the universe and for the entire universe as a whole. This means that the creation has not come about without a pre-conceived plan, haphazardly, but for it the Creator had a full plan before Him, and everything is happening according to that plan. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 13, 14 of Al-Ḥijr. E.N. 8 of Al-Furqān, E.N. 25 of Al-Qamar, E.N. 12 of 'Abasa).

4. That is, nothing was just created and left to itself, but whatever was created to perform a certain function, it was also taught the method of performing that function. In other words, He is not merely the Creator but Guide too. He has taken the responsibility to give guidance to whatever He has created in a particular capacity to fit its nature and to guide it in the way suitable for it. One kind of guidance is for the earth, the moon, the sun, and the stars and

planets, which they are following in performing their role. Another kind of guidance is for water, air, light and the solid and mineral elements, and they are performing the same services for which they have been created accordingly. Still another kind of guidance is for vegetables, according to which they take root and spread in the earth, sprout up from its layers, obtain food from wherever Allah has created it for them, produce stem, branches, leaves, blossom and fruit, and fulfil the function which has been appointed for each of them. Still another kind of guidance is for the countless species of animals of the land, and water, and for each member of the species, the wonderful manifestations of which are clearly visible in the life of the animals and in their works, so much so that even an atheist is compelled to concede that different kinds of animals possess some sort of inspirational knowledge which man cannot obtain even through his instruments, not to speak of his senses. Then, there are two different kinds of guidance for man, which correspond to his two different capacities. One kind of guidance is for his animal life, by which each child learns to suck milk spontaneously on birth, by which the eyes of man, his nose, ear, heart, brain, lungs, kidney, liver, stomach, intestines, nerves, veins and arteries, all are performing their respective functions, without man's being conscious of it, or his will's having anything to do with the functions of these organs. This is the guidance under which all physical and mental changes pertaining to childhood, maturity, youth and old age go on taking place in man, independent of his will, choice, even his consciousness. The second kind of guidance is for his intellectual and conscious life, the nature of which is absolutely different from the guidance for unconscious life, for in this sphere of life a kind of freedom has been transferred to man, for which the mode of guidance meant for voluntary life is not suitable. For turning away from this last kind of guidance, man may offer whatever arguments and excuses he may like, it is not credible that the Creator Who has arranged guidance for everything in this universe according to its capacity, might have set for man the destiny that he may appropriate numerous things in His world freely, but might not have made any arrangement to show what is the right way of using his choice and what is the wrong way. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 9, 10, 14, 56 of An-Nahl, E.N. 23 of Īa Hā, E.N.'s 2, 3 of Ar-Rahmān, E.N. 5 of Ad-Dahr)

5. The word *mar'a* as used in the Text means the fodder for

animals but the context shows that here it does not imply mere fodder but every kind of vegetation that grows out of the soil.

6. That is, "He does not only bring about spring but autumn as well. You witness both the manifestations of His power. On the one side, He causes lush green vegetation to grow, the freshness of which pleases the hearts and, on the other, He renders the same vegetation pale, dry and black rubbish, which is blown about by winds and swept away by floods. Therefore, no one here should be involved in the misunderstanding that he will only experience spring and will never see autumn." This same theme has been expressed at several other places in the Qur'an in other ways. For example see Yūnus : 24, Al-Kahf : 45, Al-Ḥadīd : 20.

7. Ḥākim has related from Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās and Ibn Mardūyah from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) repeated the words of the Qur'an for fear lest he should forget them. Mujāhid and Kalbī say that even before Gabriel finished recitation of the Revelation the Holy Prophet would start repeating the initial verses lest he should forget them. On this very basis Allah assured him that he should listen quietly when the Revelation was coming down, for, "We shall enable you to recite it; then you will remember it for ever. You should have no fear that you will forget any word of it." This is the third occasion where the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been taught the method of receiving the Revelation. The first two occasions have been referred to in Ṭā Hā : 114 and Al-Qiyāmah : 16-19 above. This verse proves that just as the Qur'an was sent down to the Holy Prophet as a miracle, so also its each word was preserved in his memory as a miracle and no possibility was allowed to remain that he should forget anything of it, or that he should utter another synonymous word for any word of it.

8. This sentence can have two meanings : first, "that the preservation of the entire Qur'an word for word in your memory is not a manifestation of your own power but the result of Allah Almighty's bounty and grace; otherwise if Allah so willed, He could cause it to be forgotten." This same theme has been expressed at another place in the Qur'an, thus : "O Muḥammad, We may, if We so will, take back from you all of what We have revealed to you." (Banī Isrā'il : 86). Another meaning also can be : "Your forgetting something temporarily, or your forgetting a verse or a word occasionally is an exception from this promise. What has been promised is : 'You will

not forget any word of the Qur'ān permanently.'" This meaning is confirmed by the following tradition of Bukhārī : Once while leading the Fajr Prayer the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) happened to omit a verse during the recitation. After the Prayer Ḥaḍrat Ubayy bin Ka'b asked if the verse had been abrogated. The Holy Prophet replied that he had forgotten to recite it.

9. Although the words are general, and they mean that Allah knows everything, whether it is open or hidden, yet in the context in which they occur, they seem to mean : "O Prophet, your reciting the Qur'ān along with Gabriel (peace be on him) is known to Allah and your fear for which you do so, is also in Allah's knowledge." Therefore, the Holy Prophet is being assured that he will not forget it.

10. Generally, the commentators take these as two separate sentences. They interpret the first sentence to mean : "We are giving you a simple code of law, which is easy to practise and act upon", and the second sentence to mean : "Admonish the people if admonishing be useful." But in our opinion, the word "*fa-dhakkir*" connects the two sentences in meaning, and the theme of the second sentence bears upon the theme of the first sentence. Therefore, we interpret these sentences to mean : "O Prophet, We do not want to put you to any hardship concerning the preaching of Islam by demanding that you should make the deaf to hear and the blind to see the way, but We have appointed an easy way for you, which is this : Give admonition when you feel that the people are inclined to benefit by it. As to who is inclined to benefit by the admonition and who is not, this you can only know through general preaching. Therefore, you should continue your general preaching, but your object should be to search out those from among the people who will benefit by it and adopt the right way. Such people alone are worthy of your attention and you should pay full attention only to their instruction and training. You need not abandon them and pursue those about whom you find by experience that they are not inclined to accept any admonition." Almost this very theme has been expressed in Sūrah 'Abasa in another way, thus : "As for him who is indifferent, to him you attend, though you would not be responsible if he does not reform. And the one who comes to you running, of his own will, and fears, from him you turn away. By no means ! This is but an Admonition. Let him who wills, accept it." (vv. 5-12).

11. That is, only the one who has fear of God and of evil consequences, will consider whether or not he is following a wrong way,



and he only will heed the admonition of the Servant of Allah, who is distinguishing guidance from mis-guidance for him and guiding him to true success and piety.

12. That is, "He will neither die so as to escape the punishment, nor live as one truly lives so as to enjoy the pleasures of life." This punishment is for those who do not at all accept the admonition of Allah and His Messenger and persist in disbelief, polytheism and atheism till death. As for those who believe in their hearts but are cast into Hell because of their evil deeds, it has been said in the *Hadith* that when they will have undergone their punishment, Allah will give them death; then intercession on their behalf will be accepted, and their scorched bodies will be brought to the canals of Paradise, and the dwellers of Paradise will be asked to sprinkle water on them; then by that water they will come to life even as vegetation grows up when water is sprinkled on the earth. This theme has been reported from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in Muslim on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī and in Bazzār on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah.

13. "Who purified himself" : who affirmed the faith giving up disbelief and polytheism, adopted good morals giving up evil morals, and performed good deeds giving up evil deeds. Success does not imply worldly prosperity, but true and real success whether worldly prosperity accompanies it or not. (For explanation, see E.N. 23 of Yūnus, E.N.'s 1, 11, 50 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 4 of Luqmān).

14. To remember Allah signifies His remembrance in the heart as well as with the tongue.

15. That is, he did not remain content only with remembering Allah but proved by performing the Prayer that he is practically also prepared to obey God in Whom he has affirmed the faith, and will remember His name as long as he lives. In this verse mention has been made of two things respectively : first, to remember Allah, then to perform the Prayer. Accordingly, the method enjoined is that the Prayer be begun with *Allahu Akbar*. This is an evidence to prove that all the elements of the procedure that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has taught of performing the Prayer, are based on the allusions in the Qur'ān. But, no one else, apart from the Messenger of Allah, could by combining these injunctions and allusions give the Prayer the form that it has.

16. That is, "O man, all your thoughts and endeavours are only for the world. its ease and comforts, its benefits and enjoyments.

You regard whatever you gain here as the real gain and whatever you lose here as your real loss."

17. That is, the Hereafter is preferable to the world for two reasons : first, that its comforts and pleasures are far superior to all the blessings of the world; second, that the world is transitory and the Hereafter everlasting.

18. This is the second place in the Qur'ān where reference has been made to the teachings of the Books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses. The first reference was made in section 3 of Sūrah An-Najm above.

LXXXVIII

A-GHĀSHIYAH الغاشية



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## LXXXVIII

### A-GHĀSHIYAH الغاشية

#### INTRODUCTION

##### **Name**

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *al-ghāshiyah* in the first verse.

##### **Period of Revelation**

The whole subject-matter of the Sūrah indicates that this too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed; but this was the period when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had started preaching his message publicly, and the people of Makkah were hearing it and ignoring it carelessly and thoughtlessly.

##### **Theme and Subject-Matter**

To understand the subject-matter well one should keep in view the fact that in the initial stage the preach-

ing of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) mostly centred around two points which he wanted to instil in the people's minds: *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter; and the people of Makkah were repudiating both. Let us now consider the subject-matter and the style of this Sūrah.

At the outset, in order to arouse the people from their heedlessness, they have been plainly asked: "Do you have any knowledge of the time when an overwhelming calamity will descend?" Immediately after this details of the impending calamity are given as to how the people will be divided into two separate groups and will meet separate ends. One group of the people will go to Hell and they will suffer punishments; the second group will go to the sublime Paradise and will be provided with blessings.

After thus arousing the people the theme suddenly changes and the question is asked: Do not these people, who frown and scorn the teaching of *Tauhīd* and the news of the Hereafter being given by the Qur'ān, observe the common things which they experience daily in their lives? Do they never consider how the camels, on whom their whole life activity in the Arabian desert depends, came into being, endowed precisely with the same characteristics as were required for the beast needed in their desert life? When they go on their journeys, they see the sky, the mountains, or the earth. Let them ponder over these three phenomena and consider as to how the sky was stretched above them, how the mountains were erected and how the earth was spread beneath them? Has all this come about without the skill and craftsmanship of an All-Powerful, All-Wise Designer? If they acknowledge that a Creator has created all this with great wisdom and power and that no one else is an associate with Him in their creation, why then do they refuse to accept Him alone as their

Lord and Sustainer? And if they acknowledge that that God had the power to create all this, then on what rational ground do they hesitate to acknowledge that that God also has the power to bring about Resurrection, to recreate man, and to make Hell and Heaven?

After making the truth plain by this concise and rational argument, the address turns from the disbelievers to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and he is told: "If these people do not acknowledge the truth, they may not; you have not been empowered to act with authority over them, so that you should coerce them into believing: your only task is to exhort, so exhort them. Ultimately they have to return to Us; then We shall call them to full account and shall inflict a heavy punishment on those who do not believe"



هَلْ أَتَكَ حَدِيثُ الْغَاشِيَةِ ۝ وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ ۝ عَامِلَةٌ  
 تَأْصِبَةٌ ۝ تَصَلَّى نَارًا حَامِيَةً ۝ تُسْفَى مِنْ عَيْنِ أُنْيَةٍ ۝ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ  
 طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيْعٍ ۝ لَا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنْ جُوعٍ ۝ وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ  
 تَارِعَةٌ ۝ لَسَعِيهَا رَاضِيَةٌ ۝ فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ۝ لَا تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا لِغِيَّةٌ ۝  
 فِيهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ ۝ فِيهَا سُرُرٌ مَرْفُوعَةٌ ۝ وَآكُوبٌ مَوْضُوعَةٌ ۝ وَتَمَارِقُ  
 مَصْفُوفَةٌ ۝ وَزَرَافِيُّ مَبْثُوثَةٌ ۝ أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ ۝  
 وَإِلَى السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ ۝ وَإِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ ۝ وَإِلَى الْأَرْضِ  
 كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ ۝ فَذَكِّرْ ۝ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ ۝ لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ ۝  
 إِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلَّى وَكَفَرَ ۝ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ اللَّهُ الْعَذَابَ الْأَكْبَرَ ۝ إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا  
 إِيَابَهُمْ ۝ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ ۝



# LXXXVIII

## AL-GHĀSHIYAH الغَاشِيَة

Verses : 26

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

Has the news of the over-shadowing calamity (of Resurrection) reached you? Some faces<sup>1</sup> on that Day shall be downcast, labouring hard, feeling weary, scorching in the blazing fire. They will be given to drink from a boiling fountain, and their only food will be thorny, dry grass,<sup>2</sup> which will neither fatten nor satisfy hunger. Some faces on that Day shall be joyful, well-pleased with their endeavours,<sup>3</sup> in a lofty Garden; there they shall hear no idle talk.<sup>4</sup> In it there will be running springs; in it there will be raised couches; goblets set forth;<sup>5</sup> cushions ranged in rows and fine carpets spread out. 1-16

(They do not believe:) but, do they not look at the camels, how they were created? And at the heaven, how it was raised high? And at the mountains, how they were firmly set? And at the earth, how it was spread out?<sup>7</sup> 17-20

Well, (O Prophet,) go on admonishing them, for you are only an admonisher: you are not there to coerce them.<sup>8</sup> But on him who turns away and disbelieves, Allah will inflict a heavy punishment. To Us they have to return; then it is for Us to call them to account. 21-26

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1. "The over-shadowing calamity": the Resurrection which will over-shadow the whole world. One should know that here the Hereafter as a whole is being depicted, which comprehends all the stages from the upsetting of the present system to the resurrection of all human beings and the dispensation of rewards and punishments from the Divine Court.

2. "Some faces" : some persons, so said for the face is the most conspicuous part of the human body by which man's personality is judged and which reflects the good or bad states through which man passes.

3. At some places in the Qur'an it has been stated that the dwellers of Hell will be given *zaqqūm* to eat; at another place it has been said that they will have no other food but *ghislīn* (washing from wounds), and here that "their only food will be thorny, dry grass." There is, in fact, no contradiction between these statements. This may as well mean that Hell will have many different compartments in which different categories of the criminals will be lodged according to their crimes, and subjected to different punishments. This may also mean that if they try to avoid *zaqqūm*, they will be given *ghislīn*, and if they try to avoid even that, they will only get thorny grass. In short, they would get nothing to suit their taste.

4. That is, they will be overjoyed to see the best results in the Hereafter of their endeavours and deeds in the world; they will be satisfied to see that they had, in fact, made a profitable bargain in that they had adopted a life of faith, virtue and piety, by sacrificing the desires of the flesh, undergone hardships in carrying out their obligations, endured afflictions in obeying the Divine Commands, incurred losses and suffered deprivation of benefits and pleasures while trying to avoid sins and acts of disobedience.

5. This thing has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'an as a major blessing of Paradise. (For explanation, see E.N. 38 of Maryam, E.N. 18 of At-Ṭūr, E.N. 13 of Al-Wāqī'ah, E.N. 21 of An-Nabā).

6. That is, filled goblets already supplied so that they do not have to ask for them.

7. That is, "If they deny the possibility of the Hereafter, have they never looked around themselves and considered how the camels were created, how the heaven was raised high, how the mountains were firmly set and how the earth was spread out? When all these things could be created, and exist before them in their finished form, why can the Resurrection not take place? Why cannot a new world come about, and why cannot Hell and Heaven be possible? Only a foolish and thoughtless person would think that the coming into existence of only those things which he has found existing on opening his eyes in the world, is possible, because they already exist. As for

the things, which he has not yet observed and experienced, he should thoughtlessly pass the judgement that their coming into being is impossible. If he has any common sense, he should think as to how the things which already exist, came into being. How did the camel possessing precisely the same characteristics as needed for the beast required by the desert-dwellers of Arabia come into being? How did the sky whose atmosphere is filled with air to breathe in, whose clouds bring rain, whose sun provides light and warmth in the day, whose moon and stars shine at night, come into being? How did the earth spread out on which man lives and passes his life, whose products fulfil all his needs and requirements, on whose springs and wells his life depends? How did the mountains rise up from the surface of the earth, which stand fixed with earth and stones of different colours and a variety of minerals in them? Has all this happened without the artistic skill of an All-Powerful, All-Wise Designer? No thinking and intelligent mind can answer this question in the negative. Unless it is stubborn and obstinate, it will have to acknowledge that each one of these things was impossible, had an Omnipotent, Wise Being not made it possible. And when an All-Pbwerful, Wise Being created these things, there is no reason why the Hereafter should be regarded as remote from reason and impossible.

8. That is, "If a person does not listen to reason, he may not. You have not been appointed to force the will of the deniers: your only task is to distinguish the right from the wrong for the people and warn them of the consequences of following the wrong way; so this is the task you should continue to perform."



**LXXXIX**

**AL-FAJR** الفجر



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## LXXXIX

AL-FAJR الفجر

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Name**

The Sūrah is so designated after the word *wal-fajr* with which it opens.

#### **Period of Revelation**

Its contents show that it was revealed at the stage when persecution of the new converts to Islam had begun in Makkah. On that very basis the people of Makkah have been warned of the evil end of the tribes of 'Ād and Thamūd and of Pharaoh.

#### **Theme and Subject-Matter**

Its theme is to affirm the meting out of rewards and punishments in the Hereafter, which the people of Makkah were not prepared to acknowledge. Let us

consider the reasoning in the order in which it has been presented.

First of all, swearing oaths by the dawn, the ten nights, the even and the odd, and the departing night, the listeners have been asked: "Are these things not enough to testify to the truth of that which you are refusing to acknowledge?" From the explanation that we have given of these four things in the corresponding notes, it will become clear that these things are a symbol of the regularity that exists in the night and day, and swearing oaths by these the question has been asked in the sense: Even after witnessing this wise system established by God, do you still need any other evidence to show that it is not beyond the power of that God Who has brought about this system to establish the Hereafter, and that it is the very requirement of His wisdom that He should call man to account for his deeds?

Then, reasoning from man's own history, the evil end of the 'Ad and the Thamūd and Pharaoh has been cited as an example to show that when they transgressed all limits and multiplied corruption in the earth, Allah laid upon them the scourge of His chastisement. This is a proof of the fact that the system of the universe is not being run by deaf and blind forces, nor is the world a lawless kingdom of a corrupt ruler, but a Wise Ruler is ruling over it, the demand of Whose wisdom and justice is continuously visible in the world itself in man's own history that He should call to account, and reward and punish accordingly, the being whom He has blessed with reason and moral sense and given the right of appropriation in the world.

After this, an appraisal has been made of the general moral state of human society of which Arab paganism was a conspicuous example; two aspects of it in particular, have been criticised: first the materialistic attitude of the people on account of which overlooking



the moral good and evil, they regarded only the achievement of worldly wealth, rank and position, or the absence of it, as the criterion of honour or disgrace, and had forgotten that neither riches was a reward nor poverty a punishment, but that Allah is trying man in both conditions to see what attitude he adopts when blessed with wealth and how he behaves when afflicted by poverty. Second, the people's attitude under which the orphan child in their society was left destitute on the death of the father. Nobody asked after the poor; whoever could, usurped the whole heritage left by the deceased parent, and drove away the weak heirs fraudulently. The people were so afflicted with an insatiable greed for wealth that they were never satisfied however much they might hoard and amass. This criticism is meant to make them realize as to why the people with such an attitude and conduct in the life of the world should not be called to account for their mis-deeds.

The discourse has been concluded with the assertion that accountability shall certainly be held and it will be held on the Day when the Divine Court will be established. At that time the deniers of the judgement will understand that which they are not understanding now in spite of instruction and admonition, but understanding then will be of no avail. The denier will regret and say: 'Would that I had provided for this Day beforehand while I lived in the world.' But his regrets will not save him from Allah's punishment. However, as for the people who would have accepted the Truth, which the heavenly Books and the Prophets of God were presenting, with full satisfaction of the heart in the world, Allah will be pleased with them and they will be well pleased with the rewards bestowed by Allah. They will be called upon to join the righteous and enter Paradise.



وَالْفَجْرِ ۝ وَ لَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ ۝ وَ الشَّفْعِ ۝ وَ الْوَتْرِ ۝ وَ الْبَيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ ۝ هَلْ  
 فِي ذَلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِّذِي حِجْرِ ۝ أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ ۝ إِرْمَ  
 ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ ۝ الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ ۝ وَ شَمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا  
 الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ ۝ وَ فِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ ۝ الَّذِينَ طَعَنُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ ۝  
 فَكَثُرُوا فِيهَا الْفَسَادَ ۝ فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ ۝ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ  
 لِبِالْبُرْصَادِ ۝ فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَ نَعَّمَهُ ۝ فَيَقُولُ  
 رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ ۝ وَ أَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ ۝ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي  
 أَهَانَنِ ۝ كَلَّا بَلْ رَأَىٰ مَكْرُمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ ۝ وَ لَا تَحْضُونَ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ  
 الْيَسِيرِينَ ۝ وَ تَأْكُلُونَ الثَّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَّمًّا ۝ وَ تُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا ۝  
 كَلَّا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا ۝ وَ جَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَ الْمَلَكُ صَفًّا ۝ وَ  
 جَاءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ ۝ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَ أَىٰ لَهُ الذِّكْرَىٰ ۝  
 يَقُولُ يَلَيَنَّيْ قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي ۝ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُعَذِّبُ عَذَابَهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ وَ لَا  
 يُوثِقُ وَثَاقَهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ يَأْتِيهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ۝ أَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ  
 رَاضِيَةً مَرْضِيَّةً ۝ فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي ۝ وَ ادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي ۝

# LXXXIX

## AL-FAJR الفجر

Verses : 30

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

By the dawn, and the ten nights, and the even and the odd, and the night when it departs! Is there in it an oath for a man of sense?<sup>1</sup>

1-5

Have you<sup>2</sup> not seen how your Lord dealt with 'Ad Iram of lofty pillars,<sup>3</sup> the like of whom no nation was created in the lands of the world?<sup>4</sup> And with Thamūd who had hewed out the rocks in the valley?<sup>5</sup> And with Pharaoh of the stakes.<sup>6</sup> These were those who had committed great excesses in the lands of the world and spread great mischief in them. Consequently, your Lord let loose on them a scourge of the torment. Indeed, your Lord is ever lying in ambush.<sup>7</sup>

6-14

As for man,<sup>8</sup> whenever his Lord tries him and honours and blesses him, he says, "My Lord has honoured me." But when He tests him and restricts his provisions for him, he says, "My Lord has disgraced me."<sup>9</sup> Indeed not!<sup>10</sup> But you do not treat the orphan with respect,<sup>11</sup> and you do not urge one another to feed the poor,<sup>12</sup> and you devour the whole inheritance greedily,<sup>13</sup> and you love the wealth with all your hearts.<sup>14</sup> Indeed not!<sup>15</sup> When the earth is incessantly pounded to become a sand-desert, and your Lord comes<sup>16</sup> while the angels shall be standing in ranks, and Hell on that Day is brought within sight, on that Day shall man understand, but what will understanding avail him then?<sup>17</sup> He will say, "Would that I had provided in advance for this life of mine!" Then none can punish as Allah shall punish on that Day, and none can bind as Allah shall bind.

15-26

27-30 (To the righteous it will be said:) "O peaceful and fully satisfied soul,<sup>18</sup> return to your Lord:<sup>19</sup> you are well-pleased (with your good end) and well-pleasing (in the sight of your Lord). Join My (righteous) servants and enter My Paradise."

1. Much difference of opinion has been expressed by the commentators in the commentary of these verses, so much so that in respect of "the even and the odd" there are as many as 36 different views. In some traditions the commentary of these verses has also been attributed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), but the fact is that no commentary is confirmed from him, otherwise it was not possible that anyone from among the Companions, their immediate successors, and later commentators would have dared to determine the meaning of these verses by himself after the commentary by the Holy Prophet.

After a study of the style one clearly feels that there was an argument already in progress in which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was presenting some thing and the disbelievers were denying it. At this, affirming what the Holy Prophet presented, it was said: "By such and such a thing", so as to say: "By these things, what Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) says is wholly based on the truth." Then, the argument is concluded with the question: "Is there an oath in it for a man of understanding?" That is, "Is there need for yet another oath to testify to the truth of this matter?" Is this oath not enough to persuade a sensible man to accept that which Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is presenting?"

Now the question arises: what was the argument for the sake of which an oath was sworn by these four things? For this we shall have to consider the whole theme which, in the following verses, commences with: "Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the 'Ād" and continues till the end of the Sūrah. It shows that the argument concerned the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter, which the people of Makkah were refusing to acknowledge and the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) was trying to convince them of this by constant preaching and instruction. At this, oaths were sworn by the dawn, the ten nights, the even and the odd, and the departing night to assert; Are these four things not enough to

convince a sensible man of the truth of this matter so that he may need yet another evidence for it?

After having determined the significance of these oaths in the context, we would inevitably have to take each of these in the meaning relevant to the subsequent theme. First of all, it is said: "By *Fajr*." *Fajr* is the breaking of day, i.e. the time when the first rays of the light of day appear in the midst of the darkness of night as a white streak from the east. Then, it is said: "By the ten nights." If the context is kept in view, it will become plain that it implies each group of the ten nights among the thirty nights of the month, the first ten nights being those during which the crescent moon starting as a thin nail, goes on waxing every night until its major portion becomes bright; the second group of the ten nights being those during which the greater part of the night remains illumined by the moon, and the last ten nights being those during which the moon goes on waning and the nights becoming more and more dark until by the end of the month the whole night becomes absolutely dark. Then, it is said: "By the even and the odd." Even is the number which is divisible into two equal parts, as 2, 4, 6, 8, and the odd the number which is not so divisible, as 1, 3, 5, 7. Generally, it may imply everything in the universe, for things in the universe either exist in pairs or as singles. But since the context here concerns the day and the night, the even and the odd mean the alternation of day and night in the sense that the dates of the month go on changing from the first to the second, and from second to the third, and every change brings with it a new state. Last of all, it is said: "By the night when it is departing", i.e. when the darkness which had covered the world since sunset may be at the verge of disappearing and the day be dawning.

Now let us consider as a whole the four things an oath by which has been sworn to assert that the news which Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is giving of the meting out of rewards and punishments is wholly based on the truth. All these things point to the reality that an All-Powerful Sustainer is ruling over this universe, and nothing of what He is doing is absurd, purposeless, or lacking wisdom; on the contrary, a wise plan clearly underlies whatever He does. In His world one will never see that while it is night, the midday sun should suddenly appear overhead, or that the moon should appear one evening in the shape of the

crescent and be followed next evening by the full moon, or that the night, when it falls, should never come to an end, but should become perpetual, or that there should be no system in the alternation of the day and night so that one could keep a record of the dates and know what month was passing, what was the date, on what date a particular work is to begin, and when it is to finish, what are the dates of the summer season and what of the rainy or winter season. Apart from countless other things of the universe if man only considers this regularity of the day and night intelligently and seriously, he will find evidence of the truth that this relentless discipline and order has been established by an Omnipotent Sovereign and with it are connected countless of the advantages of the creatures whom He has created on the earth. Now, if a person living in the world of such a Wise, Omnipotent and All-Mighty Creator denies the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter, he inevitably commits one of the two errors : either he is a denier of His powers and thinks that though He has the power to create the universe with such matchless order and discipline, He is powerless to recreate man and mete out rewards and punishments to him; or he denies His wisdom and knowledge and thinks that although He has created man with intellect and powers in the world, yet He will neither ever call him to account as to how he used his intellect and his powers, nor will reward him for his good deeds, nor punish him for his live deeds. The one who believes in either, is foolish in the extreme.

2. After reasoning out the judgement from the system of day and night, now an argument is being given from man's own history for its being a certainty. The mention of the conduct of a few well-known tribes of history and their ultimate end is meant to point out that the universe is not working under some deaf and blind law of nature, but a Wise God is ruling over it, and in the Kingdom of that God only one law, which man describes as the law of nature is not working, but a moral law also is operative, which necessarily calls for retribution and rewards and punishments. The results of the working of the law have been appearing over and over again even in this world, which point out to the people of understanding as to what is the nature of the Kingdom of the Universe. Any nation which carved out a system of life for itself heedless of the Hereafter and of the rewards and punishments of God, was ultimately corrupted and depraved, and whichever nation followed this way, was eventually visited with the scourge of punishment by

the Lord of the universe. This continuous experience of man's own history testifies to two things clearly: (1) That denial of the Hereafter has been instrumental in corrupting every nation and sending it ultimately to its doom; therefore, the Hereafter indeed is a reality clashing with which leads, as it has always led, to the same inevitable results; and (2) that retribution for deeds will at some time in the future take place in its full and complete form also, for the people who touched the extreme limits of corruption and depravity and were visited with punishment had been preceded by many others who had sown seeds of corruption for centuries and left the world without being visited by any scourge. The justice of God demands that all those people also should be called to account at some time and they too should suffer for their misdeeds. (Argument from history and morals for the Hereafter has been given at many places in the Qur'an and we have explained it everywhere accordingly. For example, see E.N.'s 5, 6 of Al-A'raf, E.N. 12 of Yūnus, E.N.'s 57, 105, 115 of Hūd, E.N. 9 of Ibrāhīm, E.N.'s 66, 86 of An-Naml, E.N. 8 of Ar-Rūm, E.N. 25 of Sabā, E.N.'s 29, 30 of Şuād, E.N. 80 of Al-Mu'min, E.N.'s 33, 34 of Ad-Dukhān, E.N.'s 27, 28 of Al-Jāthiyah, E.N. 17 of Qāf, E.N. 21 of Adh-Dhāriyāt).

3. 'Ād Iram implies the ancient tribe of 'Ād, who have been called 'Ād Olā in the Qur'an and Arabian history. In Sūrah An-Najm, it has been said: "And that We destroyed the ancient people of 'Ād" (v. 50), i.e. the 'Ād to whom the Prophet Hūd had been sent, and who were punished with a scourge. As against them the people of 'Ād who remained safe and flourished afterwards are remembered as 'Ād Ukhrā in Arabian history. The ancient 'Ād are called 'Ād Iram for the reason that they belonged to that branch of the Semetic race which descended from Iram son of Shem son of Noah (peace be upon him). Several other sub branches of this main branch are well known in history one of which were the Thamūd, who have been mentioned in the Qur'an; another are the Arāmaeans, who in the beginning inhabited the northern parts of Syria and whose language Aramaic occupies an important place among the Semetic languages.

The words *dhāt-il-'imād* (of lofty pillars) have been used for the 'Ād because they built high buildings and the pattern of architecture of erecting edifices on lofty pillars was introduced by them in the world. At another place in the Qur'an their this characteristic has been mentioned in connection with the Prophet Hūd, who said to

them : "What, you erect for mere pleasure a monument on every high spot, and build huge castles as if you were immortal !" (Ash-Shu'arā' : 128-129).

4. That is, they were a matchless people of their time; no other nation in the world compare with them in strength, glory and grandeur. At other places in the Qur'ān, it has been said about them : "Your Lord made you very robust." (Al-A'rāf : 69) "As for the 'Ād, they became arrogant with pride in the land, without any right, and said : 'Who is stronger than us in might'?" (Hā Mīm As-Sajdah : 15). "When you seized somebody, you seized him like a tyrant." (Ash-Shu'arā' : 130)

5. "The valley" : Wād-il-Qurā, where the Thamūd carved out dwellings in the mountains, and probably in history they were the first people who started cutting out such buildings into the rocks. (For details, see E.N.'s 57, 59 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 45 of Al-Hijr, E.N.'s 95, 99 of Ash-Shu'arā' along with the photographs).

6. The words *dhul-autād* (of the stakes) for Pharaoh have also been used in Sūrah Ṣuād : 12 above. This can have several meanings. Possibly his forces have been compared to the stakes, and "of the stakes" means "of great forces", for it was by their power and might that he ruled a firmly established kingdom; it might also imply multiplicity of forces and the meaning be that wherever his large armies camped, pegs of the tents were seen driven into the ground on every side; it may also imply the stakes at which he punished the people; and it is also possible that the pyramids of Egypt have been compared to the stakes, for they are the remnants of the grandeur and glory of the Pharaohs, and seem to have been driven into the ground like stakes for centuries.

7. The words "ever lying in ambush" have been used metaphorically for keeping watch on the movements and activities of the wicked and mischievous people. An ambush is a place where a person lies hiding in wait to attack somebody by surprise. The victim, thoughtless of his fate, comes and falls a prey. The same is the case against Allah of those wicked people who spread mischief in the world and have no sense and fear that there is God above them, Who is watching all their misdeeds. Therefore, they go on committing everyday more and more evils fearlessly until they reach the limit which Allah does not permit them to transgress. At that very moment His scourge descends upon them suddenly.



8. Now, criticising the general moral state of the people, it is being said : "After all, why shouldn't the men who have adopted such an attitude in the life of the world, be ever called to account, and how can it be regarded as a demand of reason and justice that when man has left the world, after doing all he could, he should never receive any reward or suffer any punishment for his deeds?"

9. This then is man's materialistic view of life. He regards the wealth and position and power of this world alone as everything. When he has it, he is filled with pride and says : God has honoured me; and when he fails to obtain it, he says : God has humiliated me. Thus, the criterion of honour and humiliation in his sight is the possession of wealth and position and power, or the absence of it, whereas the actual truth which he does not understand is that whatever Allah has given anybody in the world has been given for the sake of a trial. If He has given him wealth and power, it has been given for a trial to see whether he becomes grateful for it, or commits ingratitude. If He has made him poor, in this too there is a trial for him to see whether he remains content and patient in the will of God and faces his hardships bravely within permissible bounds, or becomes ready to transgress every limit of morality and honesty and starts cursing his God.

10. That is, this is not all the criterion of honour and disgrace. for the real criterion is the moral good and evil.

11. That is, "As long as his father is alive, your treatment of him is attentive and when his father dies, even the paternal and maternal uncles and the elder brothers, to say nothing of the neighbours and distant relatives, neglect him."

12. That is, "Nobody in your society feels any urge to feed the poor. Neither a man himself feels inclined to feed a hungry person, nor is there among the people any urge to do something to satisfy the hunger of the hungry, nor do they exhort one another to do so".

13. In Arabia, the women and children were as a rule deprived of inheritance and the people's idea in this regard was that the right to inheritance belonged only to those male members who were fit to fight and safeguard the family. Besides, the one who was more powerful and influential among the heirs of the deceased, would annex the whole inheritance without qualms, and usurp the shares of all those who did not have the power to secure their shares. They did not give any importance to the right and duty so that they

should honestly render the right to whom it was due as a duty whether he had the power to secure it or not.

14. That is, "You have no regard for the permissible or the forbidden, the lawful or the unlawful. You feel no qualms about acquiring wealth in any way or by any means, fair or foul, and your greed is never satisfied however much you may have acquired and amassed."

15. That is, "You are wrong in thinking that you may do whatever you like in your life of the world, but you will never be called to account for it. The meting out of rewards and punishments denying which you have adopted this mode of life, is not anything impossible and fictitious, but it has to come to pass and it will certainly come to pass at the time being mentioned below."

16. Although literally the words *jāā Rabbu-ka* mean "your Lord will come", obviously there cannot be any question of Allah Almighty's moving from one place to another; therefore, this will inevitably have to be understood as an allegoric expression, which is meant to give an idea that at that time the manifestations of Allah Almighty's power and His majesty and sovereignty will appear fully, as, for example, in the world the arrival of a king in person in the court is more awe-inspiring than the mere array of his forces and chiefs and nobles.

17. The words in the original can have two meanings : (1) That on that Day man will remember whatever he had done in the world and will regret, but what will remembrance and regretting avail him then? (2) That on that Day man will take heed and accept admonition : he will realize that whatever he had been told by the Prophets was true and he committed a folly when he did not listen to them; but what will taking heed and accepting the admonition and realizing one's errors avail one then ?

18. "Peaceful .. satisfied soul" : the man who believed in Allah, the One, as his Lord and Sustainer, and adopted the Way of Life brought by the Prophets as his way of life, with full satisfaction of the heart, and without the least doubt about it, who acknowledged as absolute truth whatever creed and command he received from Allah and His Messenger, who withheld himself from whatever he was forbidden by Allah's Religion, not unwillingly but with perfect conviction that it was really an evil thing, who offered without hesitation whatever sacrifice was required to be offered for the

sake of the truth, who endured with full peace of mind whatever difficulties, troubles and hardships he met on this way, and who felt no remorse on being deprived of the gains and benefits and pleasures in the world, which seemed to accrue to those who followed other ways, but remained fully satisfied that adherence to true Faith had safeguarded him against those errors. This very state has been described at another place in the Qur'ān as *sharḥ ṣadr*. (Al-An'ām : 125).

19. This he will be told at the time of his death as well as on the Day of Resurrection when he will rise from the dead and move towards the Plain of Assembly and also on the occasion when he will be presented in the Divine Court; at every stage he will be assured that he is moving towards the Mercy of Allah Almighty.



XC

AL-BALAD البلد



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XC

AL-BALAD    الْبَلَدُ

## INTRODUCTION

### **Name**

The Sūrah has been so named after the word *al-balad* in the first verse.

### **Period of Revelation**

Its subject-matter and style resemble those of the earliest Sūrahs revealed at Makkah, but it contains a pointer which indicates that it was sent down in the period when the disbelievers of Makkah had resolved to oppose the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace), and made it lawful for themselves to commit tyranny and excess against him.

### Theme and Subject-Matter

In this Sūrah a vast subject has been compressed into a few brief sentences, and it is a miracle of the Qur'ān that a complete ideology of life which could hardly be explained in a thick volume has been abridged most effectively in brief sentences of this short Sūrah. Its theme is to explain the true position of man in the world and of the world in relation to man and to tell that God has shown to man both the highways of good and evil, has also provided for him the means to judge and see and follow them, and now it rests upon man's own effort and judgement whether he chooses the path of virtue and reaches felicity or adopts the path of vice and meets with doom.

First, the city of Makkah and the hardships being faced therein by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and the state of the children of Adam have been cited as a witness to the truth that this world is not a place of rest and ease for man, where he might have been born to enjoy life, but here he has been created into toil and struggle. If this theme is read with verse 39 of Sūrah An-Najm (*Laisa lil-insān-i illā mā sa'ā*: there is nothing for man but what he has striven for), it becomes plain that in this world the future of man depends on his toil and struggle, effort and striving.

After this, man's misunderstanding that he is all in all in this world and that there is no superior power to watch what he does and to call him to account, has been refuted.

Then, taking one of the many moral concepts of ignorance held by man, as an example, it has been pointed out what wrong criteria of merit and greatness he has proposed for himself in the world. The person who for ostentation and display squanders heaps of



wealth, not only himself prides upon his extravagances but the people also admire him for it enthusiastically, whereas the Being Who is watching over his deeds, sees by what methods he obtained the wealth and in what ways and with what motives and intention he spent it.

Then Allah says: We have given man the means of knowledge and the faculties of thinking and understanding and opened up before him both the highways of virtue and vice: one way leads down to moral depravity, and it is an easy way pleasing for the self; the other way leads up to moral heights, which is steep like an uphill road, for scaling which man has to exercise self-restraint. It is man's weakness that he prefers slipping down into the abyss to scaling the cliff.

Then, Allah has explained what the steep road is by following which man can ascend to the heights. It is that he should give up spending for ostentation, display and pride and should spend his wealth to help the orphans and the needy, should believe in Allah and His Religion and joining the company of believers should participate in the construction of a society which should fulfil the demands of virtue and righteousness patiently and should be compassionate to the people. The end of those who follow this way is that they would become worthy of Allah's mercies. On the contrary, the end of those who follow the wrong way, is the fire of Hell from which there is no escape.



لَا أُقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ ۗ وَأَنْتَ حِينُ بَعْدَ الْبَلَدِ ۗ وَوَالِدٍ وَمَا وَلَدْتَ ۗ لَقَدْ  
 خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ۗ أَن تَنْ يَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ ۗ يَقُولُ  
 أَهْلَكَ مَا لَمْ يُبَدَأْ ۗ أَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَمْ يَرَ أَحَدٌ ۗ أَحَدٌ ۗ لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ حَيْنِينَ ۗ  
 وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ ۗ وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ۗ فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ ۗ وَمَا  
 أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ ۗ فَكَّ رَقَبَةٍ ۗ أَوْ إِطْعَمٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ ۗ  
 يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ۗ أَوْ مَسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ۗ ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
 وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ ۗ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينَةِ ۗ  
 وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا هُمْ أَصْحَابُ الشِّعْبَةِ ۗ عَلَيْهِمْ نَارٌ مُؤَصَّدَةٌ ۗ

# XC

## AL-BALAD البلد

Verses : 20

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

Nay!<sup>1</sup> I swear by this City,<sup>2</sup> while you (O Prophet,) have been made lawful in this City.<sup>3</sup> And I swear by father and the children he begot<sup>4</sup> that We have indeed created man in toil<sup>5</sup>. Does he think that no one will have power over him?<sup>6</sup> He says, "I have squandered heaps of wealth."<sup>7</sup> Does he think that no one has seen him?<sup>8</sup> Have We not given him two eyes, and a tongue and two lips,<sup>9</sup> and shown him both the highways (of good and evil)?<sup>10</sup> Yet he has not attempted the steep pass.<sup>11</sup> And what do you know what the steep pass is? It is the freeing of a neck from bondage, or the feeding in a day of hunger of a nearly related orphan, or a poor man lying in the dust.<sup>12</sup> Then (besides) one should be of those who have believed<sup>13</sup> and exhorted one another to patience and exhorted one another to mercy (for God's creatures).<sup>14</sup> These are the people of the right hand. As for those who refuse to believe in Our Revelations, they are the people of the left hand.<sup>15</sup> They shall have a Fire enveloping them.<sup>16</sup>

1-20

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1. As we have explained in E.N. 1 of Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah above, to begin a discourse with "Nay" and resume it with an oath means that the people were asserting a wrong thing to refute which it was said: "Nay, the truth is not that which you seem to assert, but I swear by such and such a thing that the truth is this and this." As for the question what it was to refute which this discourse was sent down, it is indicated by the theme that follows. The disbelievers of Makkah said that there was nothing wrong with the way of life that they were following, as if to say: "Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die in the natural process of time. Muḥammad (upon

whom be Allah's peace) without any reason is finding fault with this way of life and warning us that we would at some time in the future be called to account for it and rewarded and punished accordingly."

2. "This City": the city of Makkah. There was no need here to explain why an oath was being sworn by this City. The people of Makkah were well aware of the background and importance of their city and knew how in the midst of desolate mountains, in an un-cultivated, barren valley, the Prophet Abraham had brought his wife and suckling child and left them there without any support, how he had built a House there and proclaimed to the people to visit it as pilgrims when there was no soul for miles around to hear the proclamation, and then how this city had eventually become the commercial and religious centre of Arabia and was blessed with such sacredness that there was no other place of security beside it in that lawless land for centuries.

3. Three meanings of the words in the Text have been given by the commentators: (1) "That you are a resident of this city and your residence here has further enhanced the glory of this city"; (2) "that although this city is a sanctuary, a time will come when for some time it will become lawful for you to fight and kill the enemies of the true Faith here"; and (3) "that in this city where even] killing of animals and cutting of trees is forbidden for the people of Arabia, and where everyone is living in perfect peace, you, O Prophet, have no peace, and persecuting you and devising plans to kill you has been made lawful." Although the words are comprehensive enough to cover all the three meanings, yet when the theme that follows is considered, one feels that the first two meanings bear no relevance to it, and only the third meaning seems to be correct.

4. As the words "father and children he begot" have been used indefinitely, and this is followed by the mention of man, father could only imply Adam (peace be on him) and children the human beings who existed in the world, exist today and will exist in the future.

5. This is that for which the oaths as mentioned above have been sworn. Man's being created in toil means that man in this world has not been created to enjoy himself and live a life of ease and comfort, but the world for him is a place of enduring and undergoing toil, labour and hardship, and no man can be immune from this. The city of Makkah is a witness that a servant of Allah toiled and struggled hard, then only did it become a city and the centre

of Arabia. In this city of Makkah the condition of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is a witness that he is enduring every kind of hardship for the sake of a mission; so much so that there is full peace here for the wild animals but no peace for him. Then, every man's survival, from the time he is conceived in the mother's womb till the last breath of life, is a witness that he has to pass through trouble, toil, labour, dangers and hardships at every step. The most fortunate of us is also exposed to grave dangers of death before birth or of elimination by abortion while in the mother's womb. At birth he is only a hair-breadth away from death. After birth he is so helpless that had there not been somebody to look after him, he would perish uncared for and un-noticed. When he became able to walk he stumbled at every step. From childhood to youth and old age he had to pass through such physical changes that if any change had taken a wrong turn, his very life would have been at stake. Even if he is a king or dictator, he at no time enjoys internal peace from the fear that a rebellion might arise against him somewhere. Even if he is a conqueror he is never at peace from the danger that one of his generals might rise in revolt against him. Even if he is a Korah of his time, he is ever anxious to increase his wealth and to safeguard it. Thus, there is no one who may be enjoying perfect peace freely and without hesitation, for man indeed has been created into a life of toil and trouble.

6. That is : Is man, who is ever exposed to such hazards, involved in the delusion that he can do what he likes, and there is no superior power to seize and suppress him ? The fact, however, is that even before the occurrence of the Hereafter in this world itself, he sees that his destiny every moment is being ruled by some other Being against Whose decrees all his plans and designs prove ineffective. A single jolt of the earthquake, a blast of wind, a flood in the river and a sea-storm are enough to show how weak and feeble man is against the Divine forces. A sudden accident can reduce a strong and robust person to a cripple; one turn of the fortune deposes a mighty sovereign from the position of authority. When the fortunes of the nations, which have climbed to the very apex of glory and prosperity, change, they are humiliated and disgraced even in the world where no one could dare look them in the face. How has then this man been deluded into thinking that no one else can have power over him ?

7. Literally : "I have destroyed heaps of wealth", i.e. squandered and wasted it. These words show how proud the speaker was

of his wealth. The heaps of wealth that he spent was so insignificant as against his total wealth that he did not mind squandering it carelessly. And to what purpose did he squander it? Not for a genuine, good cause, as becomes evident from the following verses, but for display of his wealth and expression of his pride and glory. Bestowing rich awards on poetic admirers, inviting and feeding hundreds of thousands of people on marriage and death ceremonies, gambling away heaps of wealth, attending festivals with large entourages, trying to excel others in display of glory and grandeur, having heaps of food cooked on ceremonial occasions and throwing invitations to all and sundry to come and eat, or arranging and supplying running meals at the residence so as to impress the people around with one's generosity and large-heartedness; such were the expenditures of ostentation, which in the days of ignorance were regarded as a symbol of man's munificence and magnanimity, and a sign of his greatness. For these they were praised and admired; on these their praises were sung; and on account of these they prided themselves against the less fortunate.

8. That is, "Doesn't this boaster understand that there is also a God above him, Who sees by what means he obtained this wealth, in what ways he spent it, and with what intention, motive and purpose he did all this? Does he think that God will put any value on his extravagance, his fame-mongering and his boasting? Does he think that like the world, God too will be deluded by it?"

9. That is, "Have We not given him the means of obtaining knowledge and wisdom?" "Two eyes" does not imply the eyes of the cow and buffalo, but human eyes, which if used intelligently can help man see all around himself those signs which lead to the reality and distinguish the right from the wrong. "The tongue and lips" do not merely imply the instruments of speech but the rational mind behind these instruments which performs the functions of thinking and understanding and then uses them for expressing its ideas, motives and designs.

10. That is, "We have not left him alone after granting him the faculties of thinking and reasoning so that he may have to search out his own way, but We have also guided him and opened up before him both the highways of good and evil, virtue and vice, so that he may consider them seriously and choose and adopt one or the other way on his own responsibility. This same subject has been expressed in Sûrah Ad-Dahr : 2-3, thus : "Indeed We created man from a

mixed sperm-drop, to try him, and so We made him capable of hearing and seeing. We showed him the way, whether to be grateful or disbelieving." For explanation, see E.N.'s 3 to 5 of Ad-Dahr.

11. The words in the original are : *fa-laqtaham-al-'aqabah*. *Iqtihām* means to apply oneself to a hard and toilsome task, and *'aqabah* is the steep path that passes through mountains for ascending heights. Thus, the verse means : "One of the two paths that We have shown him, leads to heights but is toilsome and steep ; man has to tread it against the desires of his self and the temptations of Satan. The other path is easy which descends into chasms, but does not require any toil from man ; one only needs to give free reins to oneself, then one automatically goes on rolling down the abyss. Now, the man to whom We had shown both the paths, adopted the easy, down-hill path and abandoned the toilsome path, which leads to the heights."

12. Since in the foregoing verses the extravagances of man which he indulges in for ostentation and expression of superiority to others, have been mentioned, now here it is being stated as to what expenditure of wealth it is which leads man up to moral heights instead of causing him to sink into moral depravity and perversion. But in this there is no enjoyment for the self ; on the contrary, man has to exercise self-restraints and make sacrifices. The expenditure is that one should set a slave free, or should render a slave monetary help so as to enable him to win his freedom by paying the ransom, or free a debtor from his debt, or secure release of a helpless person without means from penalties. Likewise, the expenditure is that one should feed a nearly related orphan (i.e. an orphan who is either a relative or a neighbour) who is hungry, and a needy, helpless person who might have been reduced to extreme poverty and might have none to support and help him. Helping such people does not win a person fame and reputation, nor feeding them brings him the admiration for being wealthy and generous which one usually wins by holding banquets to thousands of well-to-do people. But the path to moral and spiritual heights passes on steep uphill roads only.

Great merits of the acts of virtue mentioned in these verses have been described by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace). For instance, about *fakku raqabah* (freeing a neck from bondage) many *ahādith* have been related in the traditions, one of which is a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, to the effect : "The Holy

Prophet said : The person who set a believing slave free, Allah will save from fire of Hell every limb of his body in lieu of every limb of the slave's body - the hand in lieu of the hand, the foot in lieu of the foot, the private parts in lieu of the private parts " (Musnad 'Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī). Ḥaḍrat 'Alī bin Ḥusain (Imām Zain al-'Ābedīn) asked Sa'd bin Marjānah, the reporter of this *Hadīth* : "Did you hear it yourself from Abū Hurairah?" When he replied in the affirmative, Imām Zain al-'Ābedīn called out his most valuable slave and set him free there and then. According to Muslim, he had an offer of ten thousand *dirhams* for the slave. On the basis of this verse, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Sha'bī have ruled : "Setting a slave free is superior to giving away charity, for Allah has mentioned it before the mention of charity."

The Holy Prophet has mentioned the merits of rendering help to the needy in many *ahādīth*, one of which is this *Hadīth* from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah : "The Holy Prophet said : The one who strives in the cause of rendering help to the widow and the needy is like the one who endeavours and strives in the cause of *Jihād* for the sake of Allah. (And Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah says :) I think that the Holy Prophet also said : He is even like him who keeps standing up in the Prayer constantly, without ever taking rest, and like him who observes the fast continuously without ever breaking it." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

As for the orphans, there are numerous sayings reported from the Holy Prophet. Ḥaḍrat Sahl bin Sa'd has reported : "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said : I and the one who supports a nearly related or un-related orphan, shall stand in Paradise like this—saying this he raised his index finger and the middle finger, keeping them a little apart." (Bukhārī). Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah has reported this saying of the Holy Prophet: "The best among the Muslim homes is the home wherein an orphan is treated well and the worst the one wherein an orphan is mistreated." (Ibn Mājah, Bukhārī in *Al-Adab al-Mufrad*). Ḥaḍrat Abū Umāmah says that the Holy Prophet said : "The one who passed his hand on the head of an orphan, only for the sake of Allah, will have as many acts of virtue recorded in his favour as the number of the hair on which his hand passed, and the one who treated an orphan boy or girl well will stand in Paradise with me like this...saying this the Holy Prophet joined his two fingers together." (Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhī). Ibn 'Abbās says : The Holy Prophet said : "The one who made an orphan join him in eating and drinking, Allah will



make Paradise obligatory for him unless he commits a sin which cannot be forgiven." (*Sharh as Sunnah*). Hadrat Abū Hurairah says: A man complained before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), saying: "I am hard-hearted." The Holy Prophet said to him: "Treat the orphan with kindness and love, and feed the needy one." (*Musnad Ahmad*).

13. That is, "In addition to these qualities it is essential that one should be a believer, for without faith no act is an act of virtue, nor acceptable in the sight of Allah. At numerous places in the Qur'an it has been stated that only such an act of virtue is appreciable and becomes a means of salvation as is accompanied by faith. In Sūrah An-Nisā', for example, it has been said: "The one who does good deeds, whether man or woman, provided that the one is a believer, will enter Paradise (v. 124)." In Sūrah An-Nahl: "Whosoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, provided that he is a believer, We shall surely grant him to live a pure life in this world, and We will reward such people (in the Hereafter) according to their best deeds" (v. 97). In Sūrah Al-Mu'min: "Whoever does good, whether man or woman, provided that he is a believer, all such people shall enter Paradise wherein they shall be provided without measure." (v. 40). Whichever studies the Qur'an, will see that in this Book wherever the good reward of a righteous act has been mentioned, it has always been made conditional upon the faith, a good act without faith has nowhere been regarded as acceptable to God, nor has any hope been given for a reward for it.

Here, the following important point also should not remain hidden from view: In this verse it has not been said: "Then he believed", but: "Then he joined those who believed." This means that mere believing as an individual and remaining content with it is not what is desired; what is desired is that every new believer should join those who have already believed so as to form a party of the believers, to bring about a believing society, which should work for establishing the virtues and wiping out the vices as demanded by the faith.

14. These are two of the important characteristics of the believing society, which have been expressed in two brief sentences. The first characteristic is that its members should exhort one another to patience, and the second that they should exhort one another to compassion and mercy.

As for patience, we have explained at many places that in view of the extensive meaning in which the Qur'ān has used this word, the entire life of a believer is a life of patience. As soon as a man steps on to the path of the faith, test of his patience starts. Patience is required to be exercised in performing the acts of worship enjoined by Allah ; patience is needed in carrying out the commands of Allah ; abstention from the things forbidden by Allah is not possible without patience ; patience is needed in abandoning the moral evils and in adopting the pure morals ; temptations to sin faced at every step can be resisted only by recourse to patience. On countless occasions in life obedience to God's law entails losses, troubles, hardships and deprivations, and disobedience to the law seems to bring benefits and pleasures. Without patience no believer can fare well on such occasions. Then, as soon as a believer has adopted the way of the faith, he has to meet with resistance not only from his own self and personal desires but also from his children, family, society, country and nation and from the base-hearted among men and jinn of the entire world ; so much so that he is even required to abandon his country and undertake *Jihād* in the cause of God. Under all these conditions only the quality of patience can cause a man to remain steadfast to principles. Now, obviously, if every believer individually was put to such a hard test, he would be faced with the danger of defeat at every step and would hardly be able to pass through the test successfully. On the contrary, if there existed a believing society every member of which was not only himself possessed of patience but all its members also were supporting one another mutually in the test of patience, successes would fall to its lot, a tremendous power would be generated to face the evil, a mighty force of good individuals would be ready to help bring the entire society on to the path of virtue and righteousness.

As for mercy and compassion, it is the distinctive feature of the society of believers that they are not a hard-hearted, merciless and unjust people but a society whose members are merciful and compassionate to humanity at large and sympathetic and friendly among themselves. A believer as an individual is an embodiment of Allah's quality of mercy and the group of the believers as a party also is a representative of Allah's Messenger, who has been described thus : "O Muḥammad, We have sent you to be a real blessing for the people of the world." (Al-Anbiyā' : 107). The highest moral

quality which the Holy Messenger (upon whom be Allah's peace) tried his utmost to inculcate among his followers was this very quality of mercy. Consider the following of his sayings, which show what importance he attached to it. Ḥaḍrat Jarīr bin 'Abdullah says that the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) said :

"Allah does not show mercy to him who does not show mercy to others." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ says that the Holy Prophet said : "The *Raḥmān* (Merciful) shows mercy to those who show mercy (to others). Show mercy to those who live in the earth, the One Who is in heaven will show mercy to you." (Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī).

Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'id Khudrī has reported that the Holy Prophet said : "The one who does not show mercy, is not shown mercy." (Bukhārī in *Al-Adab al-Mufrad*).

Ibn 'Abbās says that the Holy Prophet said : "The one who does not treat our young ones mercifully and does not treat our elderly ones respectfully, does not belong to us." (Tirmidhī).

Abū Da'ūd has related this same saying of the Holy Prophet on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr, thus : "The one who did not feel pity on our young and did not respect our elderly does not belong to us."

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah says : "I have heard Abul-Qāsim, the Truthful (upon whom be peace), say : 'The heart of the wretched one is deprived of the quality of mercy altogether'." (Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhī).

Ḥaḍrat 'Iyād bin Ḥimād relates that the Holy Prophet said : "Three kinds of men belong to Paradise, one of whom is the person who is kindly and compassionate to every relative and every Muslim." (Muslim).

Ḥaḍrat Nu'mān bin Bashīr has reported that the Holy Prophet said : "You will find the believers like a body in the matter of mutual kindness, love and sympathy, so that if one part of the body suffers the whole body suffers and becomes restless because of it." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī says that the Holy Prophet said : "The believer is for the other believer like a wall each part of which supports and strengthens the other part." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar has reported that the Holy Prophet said : "A Muslim is a brother of the other Muslim : neither treats him unjustly, nor withholds his help from him. The person who works to fulfil a need of his brother, Allah will seek to fulfil his need ; and the one who rescues a Muslim from an affliction, Allah will rescue him from an affliction of the afflictions of the Resurrection Day ; and the one who conceals the fault of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his fault on the Resurrection Day." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

These traditions indicate what kind of a society is envisaged by the Qur'ānic instruction given in this verse, which exhorts the righteous people to join the group of the believers after they have affirmed the faith.

15. For an explanation of "the people of the right hand and of the left hand", see E.N.'s 5, 6 of Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah. .

16. That is, fire will be so covering them from every side that they will find no way of escape from it.

XCI

ASH-SHAMS الشمس



## XCI

### ASH-SHAMS الشَّمْسُ

#### INTRODUCTION

##### **Name**

The Sūrah has been so designated after the word *ash-shams* with which it opens.

##### **Period of Revelation**

The subject-matter and the style show that this Sūrah too was revealed in the earliest period at Makkah at a stage when opposition to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had grown very strong and intense.

##### **Theme and Subject-Matter**

Its theme is to distinguish the good from the evil and to warn the people, who were refusing to under-

stand this distinction and insisting on following the evil way, of the evil end.

In view of the subject-matter this Sūrah consists of two parts. The first part consists of vv. 1-10, and the second of vv. 11-15. The first part deals with three things: (1) That just as the sun and the moon, the day and the night, the earth and the sky, are different from each other and contradictory in their effects and results, so are the good and the evil different from each other and contradictory in their effects and results; they are neither alike in their outward appearance nor can they be alike in their results. (2) That Allah after giving the human self powers of the body, sense and mind has not left it un-informed in the world, but has instilled into his unconscious by means of a natural inspiration the distinction between good and evil, right and wrong, and the sense of the good to be good and of the evil to be evil. (3) That the future of man depends on how by using the powers of discrimination, will and judgement that Allah has endowed him with, he develops the good and suppresses the evil tendencies of the self. If he develops the good inclination and frees his self of the evil inclinations, he will attain to eternal success, and if, on the contrary, he suppresses the good and promotes the evil, he will meet with disappointment and failure.

In the second part citing the historical precedent of the people of Thamūd the significance of Apostleship has been brought out. A Messenger is raised in the world, because the inspirational knowledge of good and evil that Allah has placed in human nature, is by itself not enough for the guidance of man, but on account of his failure to understand it fully man has been proposing wrong criteria and theories of good and evil and thus going astray. That is why Allah sent down clear and



definite Revelation to the Prophets (peace be upon them) to augment man's natural inspiration so that they may expound to the people as to what is good and what is evil. Likewise, the Prophet Ṣāliḥ (peace be upon him) was sent to the people of Thamūd, but the people overwhelmed by the evil of their self, had become so rebellious that they rejected him. And when he presented before them the miracle of the she-camel, as demanded by themselves, the most wretched one of them, in spite of his warning, hamstrung it, in accordance with the will and desire of the people. Consequently, the entire tribe was overtaken by a disaster.

While narrating this story of the Thamūd nowhere in the Sūrah has it been said: "O people of Quraish, if you rejected your Prophet, Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), as the Thamūd had rejected theirs, you too would meet with the same fate as they met." The conditions at that time in Makkah were similar to those that had been created by the wicked among the people of Thamūd against the Prophet Ṣāliḥ (peace be upon him). Therefore, the narration of this story in those conditions was by itself enough to suggest to the people of Makkah how precisely this historical precedent applied to them.



وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا ۝ وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا ۝ وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّهَا ۝  
 وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا ۝ وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا ۝ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا ۝  
 وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ۝ فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ۝ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ  
 رَزَقَهَا ۝ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ۝ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَاهَا ۝ إِذِ  
 انْتَبَعَتْ أَشْقَاهَا ۝ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا ۝  
 فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا ۝ فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ فَحَسَّاهَا ۝  
 وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاهَا ۝

# XCI

## ASIL-SIAMS

الشمس

Verses : 15

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

By the sun and his brightness,<sup>1</sup> and by the moon when she follows him, and by the day when it makes (the sun) conspicuous and by the night when it covers up (the sun),<sup>2</sup> and by the heaven and Him Who established it,<sup>3</sup> and by the earth and Him Who spread it, and by the human self and Him Who balanced it,<sup>4</sup> then inspired it with its wickedness and its piety;<sup>5</sup> Truly successful is he who purified his self and a failure he who suppressed it.<sup>6</sup>

1-10

Thamūd<sup>7</sup> belied (the Truth) because of their transgression.<sup>8</sup> When the most wretched of them rose up, in his rage, the Messenger of Allah warned them, saying, “(Do not molest) the she-camel of Allah, and (do not hinder her from) drinking water.”<sup>9</sup> But they belied what he said and killed the she-camel.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, their Lord let loose on them a scourge in consequence of their sin and levelled them down all together, and He has no fear of any evil result (of His this action).<sup>11</sup>

11-15

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1. The word *duḥā* as used in the original applies both to the light of the sun and to its heat. Although in Arabic its well known meaning is the time between sunrise and meridian when the sun has risen high, at that height it does not only give light but heat too. Therefore, when the word *duḥā* is attributed to the sun, its full meaning can be expressed more appropriately by its radiant brightness than by its light, or by the time of the day that it indicates.

2. That is, when the night comes, the sun hides and its light remains hidden throughout the night. This state has been described, saying that the night covers up the sun, for the night actually signifies the sun's hiding behind the horizon because of which its

light cannot reach that part of the earth where the night has fallen.

3. "Who established it" : Who established it like a vault over the earth. In this verse and in the two succeeding verses, the word *mā* has been used. A section of the commentators has taken this *mā* as an infinitive, and interpreted these verses to mean : "By the heaven and its being established, by the earth and its being spread out, and by the human self and its being balanced." But this meaning is not correct for the reason that the following sentence : "then inspired it with its wickedness and its piety", does not fit in with the context. Other commentators have taken *mā* here in the meaning of *mun* or *alladhi*, and they interpret the sentence to mean : "Who established the heaven, Who spread out the earth, and Who balanced the human self." This second meaning is correct in our view, and no one can object that *mā* in Arabic is used for lifeless things and irrational creatures. For in the Qur'ān itself there are numerous instances that *mā* has been used in the meaning of *mun*, e.g. *wa lā antum 'ābidūna mā a'bud* ("nor are you the worshippers of Ilīm Whom I worship"), *fankihū mā ṭabā lakum-min-an-nisā'* ('so, marry from among the women those whom you like'), *wa lā tankihū mā nakaha abā'ukum min-nisā'* ("do not marry those women whom your fathers had married").

4. "Balanced it" : gave man such a body which by virtue of its erect stature, its hands and feet, and its brain was most appropriate for him to live as man in the world. He blessed him with the senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell which on account of their combination and their characteristics could become the best means of obtaining knowledge for him. He endowed him with the faculties of thinking and reasoning, imagination, memory, discrimination, judgement, will-power and such other mental powers by virtue of which he is able to perform the functions fit for man in the world. In addition, balancing also means that man was not created a sinner by birth and a criminal by instinct but on right and sound nature, and was not characterised with any inborn crookedness because of which he may be unable to adopt the right path even if he wanted to do so. This same thing has been expressed in Sūrah Ar-Rūm, saying : "Be steadfast on the nature whereupon Allah has created mankind." (v. 30), and the same has been explained by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in a *Hadith*, saying : "Every new-born child is born on true human nature ; it is his parents who

make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian, afterwards. Its example is of an animal giving birth to complete and sound young one. Do you find any one with a torn or slit ear?" (Bukhārī, Muslim). That is, it is the polytheistic people who on account of their superstitions of ignorance tear and slit the ears of animals afterwards; otherwise God does not cause an animal to be born with torn ears from its mother's belly. In another *Ḥadīth*, the Holy Prophet said: "My Lord says: I had created all My servants on true Faith (i.e. on sound nature); then the satans came and led them astray from their Faith (i.e. the true natural Faith) and made unlawful what I had made lawful for them, and commanded them to associate with Me those for whom I had sent down no authority." (Musnad Aḥmad; Muslim also has related a saying from the Holy Prophet in similar words).

5. The word *ilhām* is derived from *lahm* which means to swallow. According to this very basic meaning, the word *ilhām* is used terminologically for Allah's inspiring a man with a concept or idea unconsciously. Inspiring the human self with its wickedness and its piety and virtue has two meanings: (1) That the Creator has placed in it tendencies to both good and evil, and this is the thing that every man feels in himself. (2) That Allah has endued every man's unconscious mind with the concept that there is a moral good and there is a moral evil, that good morals and acts and evil morals and acts are not equal and alike; *fujūr* (immorality) is an evil thing and *taqva* (abstention from evils) a good thing. These concepts are not new to man; he is conscious of these by nature, and the Creator has endowed him with the ability to distinguish between good and evil naturally. This same thing has been said in *Sūrah Al-Balad*: "And We showed him both the highways of good and evil." (v. 10); and in *Sūrah Ad-Dahr*, thus: "We showed him the way, whether to be grateful or disbelieving." (v. 3); and the same has been expressed in *Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah*, saying: "In man there is the reproaching self (conscience) which reproaches him when he commits evil (v. 2)," and "Man knows his own self best, even though he may offer many excuses." (vv. 14-15).

Here, one should also understand well that Allah has blessed every creature with natural inspiration according to its position and nature, as has been pointed out in *Sūrah Ṭā Hā*: "Who has given a distinctive form to everything and then guided it aright." (v. 50). For example, every species of animals has been given inspirational

knowledge according to its needs by virtue of which the fish learns to swim, the bird to fly, the bee to make the hive and the weaver-bird to build the nest instinctively. Man also in view of his different capacities has been granted separate kinds of inspirational knowledge. His one capacity is that he is an animal being; as such the most significant instance of the inspirational knowledge that he has been given is that the human child starts sucking the mother's milk soon on birth, which no one could teach it had it not been taught it instinctively by God. Another position of man is that he is a rational being. As such God has been blessing him with inspirational guidance continuously since the time of his creation, by virtue of which he has been discovering things and making inventions to develop his civilization. Anyone who studies the history of these discoveries and inventions will realize that there was hardly any which might be the result of man's own effort of thought, but mostly it so happened that suddenly an idea struck a person and he discovered or invented something. Besides these two, another position of man is that he is a moral being. In this position too Allah has blessed him by inspiration with discrimination between good and evil and of the realization of the good to be good and of the evil to be evil. This sense of discrimination and realization is a universal truth on account of which no human society in the world has ever been without the concepts of good and evil; there has never been in history, nor is there now, a society which may not be having some kind of a system of rewarding the good and punishing the evil. This fact being prevalent in every age, at every place, and at every stage of civilization is a clear proof of its being natural and innate. Furthermore, this is also proof that a Wise Creator possessed of knowledge has endued man's nature with it, for in the elements of which man is made up and the laws which govern the material system of the world, no human origin of morals can be traced out,

6. This is for which an oath has been sworn by the things mentioned in the above verses. Let us now consider how those things bear upon it. The rule that Allah has followed in the Qur'ān is that to bear testimony to the truths that He wants to impress on the human mind, He cites some of the most conspicuous, common-place things which every man sees in his surroundings, or in his own self. Accordingly here, pairs of contradictory things have been cited, each unlike the other in its effects and results, rather opposite and reverse. The first pair is of the sun and the moon. The light of the sun is intensely bright and also hot. As against it

the moon has no light of its own. Even if it is there in the sky when the sun shines, it is without light. It shines when the sun hides, and even then its light is neither so bright that it may change the night into day nor is there any heat in it that it may have the same effect as the sun's light. Nevertheless, it has its own effects which are quite different from the effects of the sun. Likewise, there is the pair of the day and the night. Each is the reverse of the other. The effects and results of each are so different from the other that no one can say they are alike; so much so that even a most foolish person cannot possibly say that the day's being the day or the night's being the night does not make any difference. Likewise, there is the pair of the sky and the earth; the former has been raised high by the Creator and the latter spread like a carpet beneath it. Although both are serving the same universe, its system and expediences, yet there is a world of difference between their functions and their effects and results. After citing these universal evidences, man's own self has been considered, and it has been said that after balancing it with suitable combination of the limbs, senses and mental powers and faculties the Creator has placed in it tendencies, inclinations and motives to both good and evil, which are contradictory to each other, and made him understand by inspiration the distinction between the two: that one is *fujūr*, which is evil, and the other is *taqva*, which is good. Now, if the sun and the moon, the day and the night, the earth and the heaven, are not alike but necessarily different from each other in their effects and results, how can *fujūr* and *taqva* of the self be alike in spite of being reverse of each other? Man himself in this world does not regard and acknowledge the good and the evil as equal no matter what criteria of good and evil he might have devised for himself according to his self-propounded philosophies. In any case, about whatever he regards as good, he holds the opinion that it is appreciable and worthy of praise, reward and recompense. On the contrary, about whatever he regards as evil, it is his own objective opinion that it is worthy of condemnation and punishment. But the real judgement does not lie with man; it lies with the Creator, Who has inspired man with his *fujūr* and *taqva*. The *fujūr* is that which is *fujūr* in the sight of the Creator and the *taqva* that which is *taqva* in His sight, and both have separate results in the sight of the Creator. The result of the one is that he who purifies his self, should attain to eternal success, and the result of the other is that he who suppresses his self, should be a failure.

*Ta-kiyah* means to purify, develop and cultivate. In the context it clearly means : The one who purifies his self of *fujūr* and develops it to the level of *taqva* and cultivates in it the good, will attain to eternal success. As against this, the word *dassāhā* has been used the infinitive of which is *tadstiyah*, which means to suppress, conceal, seduce and lead astray. The meaning of this also becomes clear from the context; i.e. the one who suppresses the tendency in his self towards good instead of developing and cultivating it, who seduces it into doing evil, and makes *fujūr* dominate over *taqva* so as to cover it up completely like the dead body which is buried and covered with earth, will be a failure. Some commentators have interpreted this verse to mean : "Truly successful was he whom (whose self) Allah purified and a failure, he whom (whose self) Allah suppressed." But this commentary is, firstly, opposed to the style of the Qur'ān in view of the language, for if Allah had meant to say this, He would have said : "Truly successful was the self which Allah purified and a failure the self which Allah suppressed;" secondly, this commentary clashes with the other statements of the Qur'ān on this subject. In Sūrah Al-A'lā, Allah says : "Truly successful was he who adopted purity." (v. 14). In Sūrah 'Abasa, Allah has addressed His Holy Messenger, saying : "And you would not be responsible if he did not adopt purity." In both these verses, adoption of purity has been regarded as an act of man. Besides, the truth stated at many places in the Qur'ān is that man in this world is being put to the test. For example, in Sūrah Ad-Dahr, it is said : "We created man from a mixed sperm-drop, to try him, and so We made him capable of hearing and seeing." (v. 2). In Sūrah Al-Mulk it is stated : "Who created death and life that He may try you to see which of you is best in deeds." (v. 2). Now, obviously, if the examiner at the outset encourages one candidate and discourages the other, the test would be a farce. Therefore, the correct commentary is that which Qatādah, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid and Sa'id bin Jubair have given, saying that the subject of *zakkāhā* and *dassāhā* is man and not God. As for the *Hadith* which Ibn Abī Hātim has related on the authority of Juwaybir bin Sa'id from Ḍaḥḥāk from Ibn 'Abbās, saying that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself interpreted this verse to mean : "Truly successful was the self whom the Almighty Allah purified", this saying is not confirmed to be from the Holy Prophet, for its one reporter, Juwaybir, has been rejected as a narrator of *Hadith*, and Ḍaḥḥāk did not meet Ibn 'Abbās. However, the *Hadith* which Imām Ahmad, Muslim, Nasā'i and Ibn Abī Shaibah have related



on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Arqam, is correct which says that the Holy Prophet used to pray: "O Allah, grant my self its *taqva* and purify it: You alone are the best to purify it; You alone are its Guardian and Master." In almost similar words, this supplication of the Holy Prophet has been related by Ṭabarānī, Ibn Mardūyah and Ibn al-Mundhir from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Imām Aḥmad from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah. It actually means that man can only desire and seek *taqva* and *tazkiyah*; as for its attainment, it depends in any case on Allah's grace and favour alone. And the same also is true of *tadsiyah*: Allah does not suppress a self forcibly, but when a man is resolved on iniquity, Allah deprives him of the grace of *taqva* and *tazkiyah*, and leaves him alone to suppress and bury his self under any heap of filth he likes.

7. The things stated in principle in the above verses, are now being explained by an historical precedent. Of what it is a precedent and how it relates to what has been stated above, one should consider well in the light of the other statements of the Qur'ān the two basic truths which have been expressed in vv. 7-10.

Firstly, in these it has been stated that after creating the human self on balanced and sound nature, Allah inspired it with its *fujūr* and its *taqva*. The Qur'ān along with stating this truth also makes explicit that this inspirational knowledge of the *fujūr* and *taqva* is not enough for every man that he may by himself obtain detailed guidance from it, but for this purpose Allah gave detailed guidance to the Prophets through Revelation in which it was explained what is *fujūr* and what it applies to, which one should avoid, and what is *taqva*, which one should attain and develop. If man does not accept and acknowledge this clear and definite guidance sent down through Revelation, he can neither avoid *fujūr* nor find the way to *taqva*.

Secondly, in these verses it has been stated that the rewards and punishments are the necessary results which accrue from adoption of either *fujūr* or *taqva*. The result of cleansing the self of *fujūr* and developing it with *taqva* is eternal success and the result of suppressing its good tendencies and causing it to be overwhelmed with *fujūr* is failure, ruin and destruction.

To make man understand this truth a historical precedent is being cited and for this the tribe of Thamūd has been taken as an illustration, for the various tribes destroyed in antiquity, the territory of the Thamūd was closest to Makkah. In northern Hijāz its historical ruins were extant, which the people of Makkah passed by

during their trade journeys to Syria, and the way this tribe has been frequently referred to in the pre-Islamic poetry shows that its destruction was a common subject of talk among the Arabs.

8. "Belied the truth" : belied the Prophethood of the Prophet Ṣāliḥ, who was sent for their guidance. On account of their rebellious attitude they were not prepared to give up the *fujūr* in which they were involved, and they were not inclined to accept the *taqva* to which the Prophet Ṣāliḥ was calling them. For details, see Al-A'rāf : 73-76, Hūd : 61-62, Ash-Shu'arā' : 141-153, An-Naml : 45-49, Al-Qamar : 23-25.

9. At other places in the Qur'ān the following details are given. The people of Thamūd challenged the Prophet Ṣāliḥ to present a sign (a miracle) if he was truthful. Thereupon the Prophet presented a she-camel miraculously before them and warned them to the effect : "This is Allah's she-camel. She will graze at will in the land. One day will be for her to drink and one day for you and your cattle. If you molest her, you will be punished with a scourge." This proved to be a deterrent for some time. Then they appealed to their most wicked and rebellious chief to put an end to the she-camel, and he took up the responsibility and hamstringed her. (Al-A'rāf : 73, Ash-Shu'arā' : 154-156, Al-Qamar : 29).

10. According to Sūrah Al-A'rāf : 77, after they had killed the she-camel, the people of Thamūd said to the Prophet Ṣāliḥ : "Bring the scourge with which you threatened us." And according to Hūd : 65, the Prophet Ṣāliḥ said to them : "Well, you have only three more days to enjoy yourselves in your houses. This is a limit that will not prove false."

11. That is, Allah is not like the kings of the world and the rulers of governments, who, when they want to take some action against a people, are compelled to consider what will be the consequences of their action. Allah's power is supreme. He had no apprehension that some supporting power of the Thamūd would come out to avenge itself on Him.

XCII

AL-LAIL أَلَيْل



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## XCII

### AL-LAIL أَلِيل

#### INTRODUCTION

##### **Name**

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *wal-lail* with which it opens.

##### **Period of Revelation**

Its subject-matter so closely resembles that of Sūrah Ash-Shams that each Sūrah seems to be an explanation of the other. It is one and the same thing which has been explained in Sūrah Ash-Shams in one way and in this Sūrah in another. This indicates that both these Sūrahs were sent down in about the same period.

##### **Theme and Subject-Matter**

Its theme is to distinguish between the two different ways of life and to explain the contrast between their

ultimate ends and results. In view of the subject-matter this Sūrah consists of two parts, the first part consisting of vv. 1-11 and the second of vv. 12-21.

In the first part, at the outset it has been pointed out that the strivings and doings that the individuals, nations and groups of mankind are engaged in in the world, are, in respect of their moral nature, as divergent as the day is from the night, and the male from the female. After this, according to the general style of the brief Sūrahs of the Qur'ān, three moral characteristics of one kind and three moral characteristics of the other kind have been presented as an illustration from among a vast collection of the strivings and activities of man, from which every man can judge which style of life is represented by one kind of the characteristics and which style of life by the other kind. Both these styles have been described in such brief, elegant and pithy sentences that they move the heart and go down into memory as soon as one hears them. Characteristics of the first kind are that one should spend one's wealth, adopt God-consciousness and piety, and acknowledge the good as good. The second kind of the characteristics are that one should be miserly, should least care for God's pleasure and His displeasure, and should repudiate what is good and right. Then it has been stated that these two modes of action which are clearly divergent, cannot be equal and alike in respect of their results. But, just as they are divergent in their nature, so they are divergent in their results. The person (or group of persons) who adopts the first mode of action, Allah will make easy for him the correct way of life, so much so that doing good will become easy for him and doing evil difficult. On the contrary, he who adopts the second mode of life, Allah will make easy for him the difficult and hard way of life, so much so that doing evil will

become easy for him and doing good difficult. This passage has been concluded with a most effective and touching sentence, saying: "This worldly wealth for the sake of which man is even prepared to risk his life, will not go down with him into the grave; therefore, what will it avail him after death?"

In the second part also three truths have been stated equally briefly. First, that Allah has not left man uninformed in the examination hall of the world, but He has taken on Himself the responsibility to tell him which one is the straight and right way out of the different ways of life. Here, there was no need to point out that by sending His Messenger and His Book He has fulfilled His this responsibility, for both the Messenger and the Book were present to afford the guidance. Second, that the Master of both the world and the Hereafter is Allah alone. If you seek the world, it is He Who will give it, and if you seek the Hereafter, again it is He Who will give it. Now, it is for you to decide what you should seek from Him. The third truth that has been stated is that the wretched one who rejects the good, which is being presented through the Messenger and the Book, and turns away from it, will have a blazing fire ready for him. As for the God-fearing person who spends his wealth in a good cause, without any selfish motive, only for the sake of winning his Lord's good pleasure, his Lord will be pleased with him and will bless him with so much that he will be well pleased with Him.



وَائِيلٍ إِذَا يَغْشَىٰ ۙ وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّىٰ ۙ وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ ۙ  
 إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّىٰ ۙ فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَاتَّقَىٰ ۙ وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ ۙ  
 فَسَنِّيَرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ ۙ وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَىٰ ۙ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ ۙ  
 فَسَنِّيَرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَىٰ ۙ وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّىٰ ۙ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَىٰ ۙ  
 وَإِنَّ لَنَا لَلْآخِرَةَ وَالْأُولَىٰ ۙ فَأَنْذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظَّىٰ ۙ لَا يَصْلَاهَا إِلَّا  
 الْأَشْقَى ۙ الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ۙ وَسَيَجْزِيهَا الْآتِقَى ۙ الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ  
 يَتَوَلَّىٰ ۙ وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تُجْزَىٰ ۙ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ  
 الْأَعْلَىٰ ۙ وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَىٰ ۙ



# XCII

## AL-LAIL الليل

Verses : 21

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

By the night when it spreads, and the day when it shines forth, and Him Who created the male and the female: In fact, your endeavours (O men,) are for different ends.<sup>1</sup> So he who gave wealth (in God's Way) and avoided (God's disobedience), and believed in goodness,<sup>2</sup> for him We shall facilitate the easy way.<sup>3</sup> As for him who was niggardly and lived as though he was independent (of God) and belied goodness,<sup>4</sup> for him We shall facilitate the hard way.<sup>5</sup> And what will his wealth avail him when he perishes?<sup>6</sup> 1-11

Indeed, it is for Us to tell the Way,<sup>7</sup> and, indeed, Ours are both the Hereafter and this present life.<sup>8</sup> So, I have warned you of the blazing Fire. None shall burn in it but the most wretched one, who belied and turned away. And away from it shall be kept the most pious one, who gives away his wealth in order to purify himself.<sup>9</sup> He has received no favour from anyone for which he may have to return a reward. He only seeks the goodwill of his Lord, the Exalted,<sup>10</sup> and He will certainly be well-pleased (with him)<sup>11</sup>. 12-21

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1. This is that for which an oath has been sworn by the night and the day, and the creation of the male and the female. It means to say : Just as the night and the day, and the male and the female, are different from each other, and their effects and results are mutually contradictory, so are the aims and objects for which men are endeavouring and struggling, different in their nature and contradictory with regard to their results. In the following verses, it has been told that all these diverse endeavours are divided into two main kinds.

2. This is the first kind of endeavours, which includes three things, and a little consideration shows that they comprehend all virtues: (1) That man should refrain from wealth-worship, but should spend whatever Allah has given him generously in rendering Allah's and His servants' rights, for good works and for helping others; (2) that he should fear God and refrain from things which cause His displeasure in his moral, social, economic and other dealings with the people; (3) that he should believe in goodness. Goodness is a comprehensive word, which includes goodness of belief, morals and acts. Goodness of belief means that one should give up polytheism, atheism, and disbelief, and affirm faith in *Tauhid*, the Hereafter and Prophethood. Affirming belief in goodness of morals and acts is that one should not be doing good and right merely unconsciously, outside a definite system, but one should acknowledge as right and sound the system of goodness which God has sent, which combines every kind of goodness in all its forms and aspects into a system comprehensively called the Divine Shari'ah.

3. This is the result of the first kind of endeavouring and struggling. The easy way implies the way which is in accordance with human nature, which is in accordance with the will of the Creator, Who has created man and the whole universe. It is a way in which man has not to fight his conscience, in which he does not have to force his faculties of mind and energies of body into doing works for which they are not given but to do things for which they have actually been given him. It is a way in which man has not to experience war, resistance and conflict on every side, which he has to experience in a life full of sin, but a human society in which at every step he experiences peace and concord, appreciation and honour. Obviously, the person who spends his wealth for public welfare, treats every other person kindly and well, whose life is free from crime, sin and immorality, who is righteous and fair in his dealings, who neither cheats others nor proves false in his promises, from whom no one apprehends dishonesty, injustice and excess, and with whose character no one finds any fault, will in any case be honoured and respected in any society however corrupt and depraved it may be. Hearts will be attracted towards him in esteem and regard; his own heart and conscience will be satisfied, and he will attain to dignity in society which no immoral person can ever attain. This same thing has been expressed in Sûrah An-Nahl, thus: "Whoever does righteous deeds whether male or female, provided that he is a

believer, We will surely grant him to live a pure life in this world (v. 97)", and in Sūrah Maryam, thus : "The Merciful will fill with love the hearts of those who believe and do righteous deeds (v. 96)". This then is the way in which there is nothing but joy and tranquillity for man, from the world till the Hereafter. Its results are not transient and temporary but eternal and everlasting.

Concerning this Allah says : "We shall facilitate for him the easy way." It means to say : "When after affirming goodness he decides that this way alone suits him, and the evil way does not suit him, and when by making sacrifices and adopting the life of *taqva* practically he proves that he is true in his affirmation, Allah will make easy for him to walk this way. Then, to commit evil will become difficult for him, and to do good easy. When unlawful wealth comes before him, he will not regard it as a good bargain, but consider it a hot piece of burning coal, which he cannot hold in his hand. When opportunities for sin appear before him, he will not rush to seize them as opportunities for pleasure and enjoyment, but will look upon them as gates to Hell and will flee them. The Prayer will not be hard for him, but he will have no internal peace until he has performed it at its appointed time. He will not feel hurt when paying the *zakāt*, but will regard his wealth as impure until he has paid out the *zakāt* from it. In short, at every step, Allah will favour him with His grace and help him to follow this way; conditions will be made favourable for him and he will be helped out of every difficulty.

Now, the question arises that in Sūrah Al-Balad above this very way has been called an uphill road, and here it has been described as an easy way. How can the two things be reconciled ? The answer is that before a man has adopted this way, it appears to be a steep, uphill road, for ascending which he has to fight his desires, his materialistic members of the family, his relatives, his friends and those with whom he has social and other dealings, and above all, Satan, for each one of them obstructs his way, and makes it seem dreadful. But after man has affirmed goodness and resolved to follow this way, and giving away his wealth in the cause of God and adopting the way of *taqva*, has practically strengthened his resolve, ascending the steep road becomes easy and slipping into the abyss of moral depravities becomes difficult for him.

4. This is the second kind of human endeavouring, which in every part of it is different from the corresponding part of the first

kind. Niggardliness (*bukhl*) is not merely the niggardliness because of which people generally regard a person as niggardly if he hoards money : neither spends it on himself nor on his children, but *bukhl* here implies to refrain from spending in the cause of Allah and public welfare. According to this, niggardly is every person who spends generously, rather squanders money, on his self, for his own ease and comfort, interests and enjoyments, but, as for a good cause, spends nothing, or, if at all he spends anything, it is for display, or to win a reputation and name, or to have access to officers, or to obtain some benefit and gain. "Independence of God" implies that one should make worldly, material benefits only the object of all one's endeavours and strivings and being independent of God should least care to see what pleases Him and what displeases Him. As for belying goodness, it is in sharp contrast to believing in goodness in every detail. Therefore, it need not be explained here as it has already been explained above.

5. This way has been called the hard way, for although the one who follows it, does so for the sake of material benefits, worldly enjoyments and superficial successes, yet while following it he is always at war with his nature, his conscience, the laws made by the Creator of the universe and the society in which he lives. When he transgresses all moral limits of truth, honesty, nobility, purity and chastity and endeavours to satisfy his interests and desires in every way, when the people feel harmed by him rather than benefiting from him, and when he encroaches upon the rights of others and violates people's honour, he feels disgraced in his own eyes and has to clash at every step with the society in which he lives. If he is weak, he has to suffer every kind of punishment on account of his conduct, and if he is wealthy, strong and influential, the world may lie low before him, but no one cherishes any good wishes, any feeling of honour and love for him; so much so that even his associates and companions regard him as a wicked man. And this thing is not only restricted to individuals, even when a strong and powerful nation transgresses the bounds of morality and adopts an immoral conduct, in arrogance of pride and wealth, it earns on the one hand, the enmity of the outside world; on the other, its own society falls a victim to all sorts of crime, prevalence of suicide, intoxication, venereal diseases, destruction of family life, waywardness of the new generation, class conflict and ever-increasing injustice and tyranny. So much so that when it falls from its position of prestige, it leaves

nothing behind except curses and condemnation for itself in the history of the world.

As for saying that "We shall facilitate for him the hard way", it means: He will be deprived of the grace to follow the way of good, gates of evil will be opened up for him, means and resources for the same will be provided for him, doing evil will become easy, and doing good will become toilsome and risky for him. This same theme has been expressed at another place in the Qur'ān, thus: "So whomever Allah wills to guide aright, He makes his breast wide open to Islam, and whomever He wills to let go astray, He makes his breast narrow and squeezes it so tightly that (at the very idea of Islam) he begins to feel as though his soul were climbing up towards the sky." (Al-An'ām : 125). At another place it has been said: "No doubt, *ṣalāt* is a hard task but not for the obedient servants." (Al-Baqarah : 46). And about the hypocrites it has been said: "When they come to offer the *ṣalāt*, they come reluctantly and they expend in the way of Allah with unwilling hearts." (Al-Taubah : 54), and that: "There are such among them, who regard what they expend in the way of Allah as a penalty." (Al-Taubah : 98).

6. In other words it means that he has to die one day and leave behind in the world whatever he had amassed for his ease and enjoyment. If he did not earn and send forward something for the Hereafter, what would this wealth avail him? He will not take his palatial residence, his majestic conveyance, his property and wealth into the grave.

7. That is, Allah as the Creator of man has on the basis of His wisdom, His justice and His mercy, taken on Himself the responsibility not to leave him uninformed in the world, but to tell him what is the right way and what are the wrong ways, what is good and what is evil, what is lawful and what is unlawful, what attitude and conduct will make him an obedient servant and what attitude and conduct will make him a disobedient servant. This same thing has been expressed in Sūrah An-Nahl, thus: "Allah has taken upon Himself to show the Right Way, when there are also crooked ways." (v. 9) (For explanation, see E.N 9 of An-Nahl).

8. This statement has several meanings and all are correct: (1) "That from the world till the Hereafter, you are nowhere beyond Our grasp, for Ours are both this and the next world;" (2) "that both this world and the Hereafter are in any case under Our sovereignty, whether you follow the way shown by Us or not. If you adopt error,

you will not harm Us but only yourselves; and if you adopt the right way, you will not do any good to Us, but will do good only to yourselves. Your disobedience cannot cause any decrease in Our sovereignty and your obedience cannot cause any increase in it;" (3) "that We alone are Master of both the worlds. If you seek the world, We alone can grant it; and if you seek the well being of the Hereafter, We alone have the power to bestow it too." This very theme has been expressed in *Āl-'Imrān* : 145 : "Whoso makes effort with the intention of the reward of this world, We will reward him in this world, and whoso makes effort with the intention of the reward of the Hereafter, We shall grant him thereof", and the same has been expressed in *Ash-Shu'arā'* : 20, thus : "Whoever seeks the harvest of the Hereafter, We do increase his harvest; and whoever seeks the harvest of this world, We do give him of it here, but in the Hereafter he will have no share at all." (For explanation, see E.N. 105 of *Āl-'Imrān*, E.N. 37 of *Ash-Shūrā'*).

9. This does not mean that no one will enter the fire except the most wretched one, and no one will be saved from it except the most pious one, but the object is to describe the extremely contradictory fate of the two extremely contradictory characters. One of them is the person who belies the teachings of Allah and His Messenger and turns away from obedience; the other one is the person who not only believes but also spends his wealth in the cause of Allah sincerely, without any desire for display and reputation, only in order to be regarded as a pure man in His eyes. Both these types of character were present in the Makkah society of that day. Therefore, without mentioning any name, the people have been told that the man of the first type of character only will burn in the fire of Hell and not the man of the second type of character; the man of the second type of character only will be kept away from it and not the man of the first type of character.

10. This is further explanation of the sincerity of the *Ṣalīm* man. He was not indebted in any way to the people on whom he spends his wealth so that he may be doing so in order to repay for favours received, or may be giving gifts and holding banquets to them in order to further benefit from them, but he is helping such people only in order to seek the goodwill of his Lord, the Supreme. He was neither indebted to them before, nor he expects any favours from them in the future. Its best illustration is the act of *Hadrat Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq* (may Allah bless him). He would not give and

set free the poor slaves and slaves-girls who accepted Islam in Makkah and were cruelly treated by their masters on that account. Ibn Jarir and Ibn 'Asākir have related, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Āmir bin 'Abdullah bin Zubair, that when Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr's father saw him spending money to purchase the freedom of the poor slaves and slave-girls, he said to him: "Son, I see that you are setting the weak people free; had you spent this money on the freedom of strong, young men, they would have become your helpers and supporters." Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr replied: "Dear father, I only seek the reward that is with Allah."

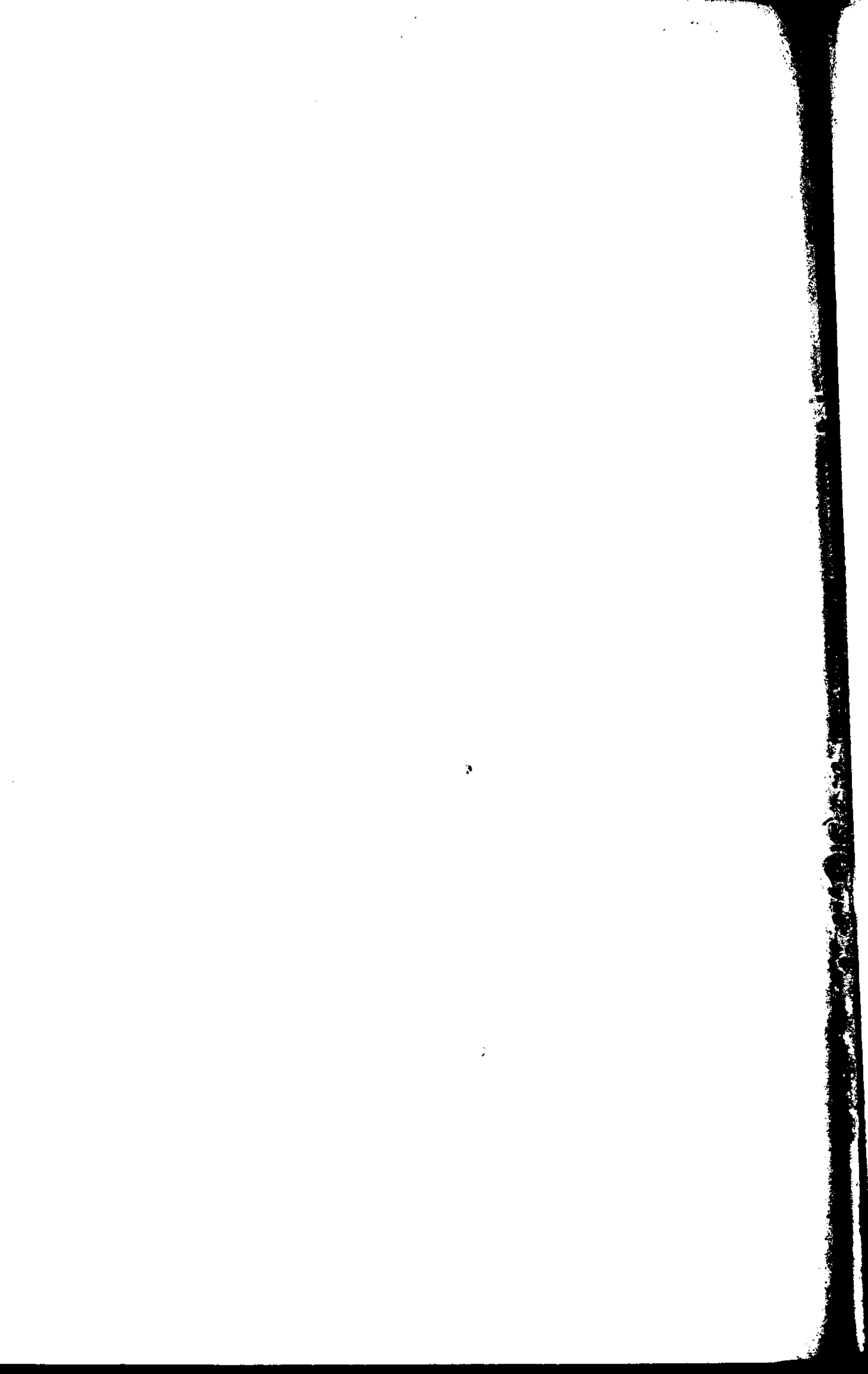
11. This verse can have two meanings and both are correct: (1) "That Allah certainly will be well pleased with him;" and (2) "that Allah soon will bless this man with so much that he will be happy."





XCIII

AD-DUHĀ الضحىٰ



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## XCIII

AD-DUHĀ الضحى

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Name**

The Sūrah takes its name *Ad-Duhā* from the very first word.

#### **Period of Revelation**

Its subject matter clearly indicates that it belongs to the earliest period at Makkah. Traditions also show that the revelations were suspended for a time, which caused the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) to be deeply distressed and grieved. On this account he felt very anxious that perhaps he had committed some error because of which his Lord had become angry with him and had forsaken him. Thereupon he was given the consolation that revelation had not been

stopped because of some displeasure but this was necessitated by the same expediency as underlies the peace and stillness of the night after the bright day, as if to say: "If you had continuously been exposed to the intensely bright light of Revelation (*Wahī*), your nerves could not have endured it. Therefore, an interval was given in order to afford you peace and tranquillity." This state was experienced by the Holy Prophet in the initial stage of the Prophethood when he was not yet accustomed to bear the intensity of Revelation. On this basis, observance of a pause in between was necessary. This we have already explained in the Introduction to *Sūrah Al-Muddaththir*; and in E.N. 5 of *Sūrah Al-Muzzammil* also we have explained what great burden of the coming down of Revelation he had to bear. Later, when the Holy Prophet developed the power to bear this burden, there was no longer any need for long gaps.

### **Theme and Subject Matter**

Its theme is to console the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and its object to remove his anxiety and distress, which he had been caused by the suspension of Revelation. First of all, swearing an oath by the bright morning and the stillness of night, he has been re-assured, so as to say: "Your Lord has not at all forsaken you, nor is He displeased with you." Then, he has been given the good news that the hardships that he was experiencing in the initial stage of his mission, would not last long, for every later period of life for him would be better than the former period, and before long Allah would bless him so abundantly that he would be well pleased. This is one of the express prophecies of the Qur'ān, which proved literally true afterwards, whereas when this prophecy was made there seemed not to be the remotest chance that the helpless and powerless man who had come out to wage a war against the

ignorance and paganism of the entire nation, would ever achieve such wonderful success.

Then, addressing His Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) Allah says: "O My dear Prophet, what has caused you the anxiety and distress that your Lord has forsaken you, and that We are displeased with you? Whereas the fact is that We have been good to you with kindness after kindness ever since the day of your birth. You were born an orphan, We made the best arrangement for your upbringing and care; you were unaware of the Way, We showed you the Way; you were indigent, We made you rich. All this shows that you have been favoured by Us from the very beginning and Our grace and bounty has been constantly focussed on you." Here, one should also keep in view vv. 37-42 of Sūrah Tā Hā, where Allah, while sending the Prophet Moses to confront a tyrant like Pharaoh, encouraged and consoled him, saying: "We have been looking after you with kindness ever since your birth; therefore, you should be satisfied that you will not be left alone in this dreadful mission. Our bounty will constantly be with you."

In conclusion, Allah has instructed His Prophet (upon whom be peace) telling him how he should treat the creatures of God to repay for the favours He has done him and how he should render thanks for the blessings He has bestowed on him.

فقر  
منا  
منا  
منا



وَالضُّحَىٰ ۝ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ ۝ مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ ۝  
 لَكَ مِنَ الْوَالِدِ ۝ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ ۝ مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ ۝  
 فَأَوَىٰ ۝ وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ ۝ وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ ۝ فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ  
 فَلَا تَنْهَرُهُ ۝ وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرُهُ ۝ وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ۝

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### XCHII

## الضُّحَىٰ AD-DUHĀ

Verses : 11

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

By the day, full of light,<sup>1</sup> and the night when it falls peacefully,<sup>2</sup> your Lord has not forsaken you (O Prophet), nor is He displeased.<sup>3</sup> And surely the later period is better for you than the earlier period,<sup>4</sup> and soon your Lord shall give you so much that you shall be well pleased.<sup>5</sup> Did He not find you an orphan and then He sheltered you?<sup>6</sup> And He found you unaware of the Way, then He guided you;<sup>7</sup> and He found you poor, then He enriched you.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, do not be harsh to the orphan,<sup>9</sup> and do not scold the beggar,<sup>10</sup> and do proclaim the bounty of your Lord.<sup>11</sup>

1-11

1. Here, the word *duḥā* has been used in contrast to the night; therefore, it implies the bright hours of the day. A precedent of it are vv. 97-98 of Sūrah Al-A'rāf, which say: "Do the people of the settlements now feel secure that Our punishment will not come to them all of a sudden at night, while they might be fast asleep? Or, do they feel secure that Our punishment will not smite them all of a

sudden during the day while they might be engaged in pastimes?" In these verses also since the word *duḥā* has been used in contrast to the night, it implies the day and not just forenoon.

2. The word *sajā* in the original does not only signify the spreading of darkness but it also contains the meaning of stillness and peace that prevails at night. This quality of night deeply relates to the theme that follows.

3. Traditions show that Revelations to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had remained suspended for some period of time. Different traditions have mentioned different durations of this period. Ibn Juraij has mentioned it to be 12 days, Kalbī 15 days, Ibn 'Abbās 25 days, and Suddī and Muqātil have stated that it extended to 40 days. In any case the period was so long that it made the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) sorrowful, and the opponents also had the opportunity to taunt him. For whenever a new sūrah came down, the Holy Prophet would recite it before the people. Therefore, when he did not recite any new Revelation to them for quite some days, the opponents thought that the fountainhead from where the revelations came, had dried up. Jundub bin 'Abdullah al-Bajali has related that when Gabriel (peace be on him) stopped coming, the pagans started saying that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) had been forsaken by his Lord. (Ibn Jarīr, Ṭabarānī, 'Abd bin 'Umayyid, Sa'īd bin Manṣūr, Ibn Mardūyah). Other traditions show that Umm Jamīl, wife of Abū Lahab, who was an aunt of the Holy Prophet and whose house adjoined his, said to him: "It appears your satan has forsaken you." 'Aufī and Ibn Jarīr have related, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, that when Gabriel did not visit him for several days, the Holy Prophet became anxious and distressed, and the pagans began to say that his Lord had become angry with him and had forsaken him. In the *nursal* traditions of Qatādah and Ḍaḥḥāk almost the same theme has been expressed. The Holy Prophet's extreme grief and anguish in this condition has also been referred to in several traditions. And this was natural. The apparent indifference on the part of the beloved, the apparent deprivation of the contact with the source of power, which was his chief support, in the soul-destroying conflict between belief and unbelief, and above all, the taunts and jeers of the enemy, when all these things combined, they must have caused great anguish to the Holy Prophet, and he



must be thinking that because of some error that he might have committed his Lord had become displeased with him and had forsaken and left him to fight the battle between truth and falsehood alone.

This was the state when this Sūrah was sent down to console the Holy Prophet. In it, swearing an oath by the light of the day and the peacefulness of the night, he has been told: "Your Lord has neither forsaken you, nor is He displeased with you." The relevance of the oath by these two things to the theme is: "Just as brightening up of the day and spreading of the night with darkness and stillness is not for the reason that Allah is pleased with the people during the day and displeased with them during the night, but both states are based on supreme wisdom and expedience, so sending down of revelation to you at one-time and suspending it at another time, also is based on wisdom and expedience; it has nothing to do with Allah's being pleased with you when He sends down revelation and His being displeased with you when He suspends it. Besides, another relevance of the oath to the subject is that if man is constantly exposed to the light of day, it wearies him; so, it is necessary that night should fall after the day has remained bright for a certain period so that man may have rest and peace in it. Likewise, if you are constantly exposed to the light of revelation, your nerves would not stand it. Therefore, *fatrah* (break or gap in the revelation) also has been provided by Allah on account of expedience so that the effects of the strain of revelation that you have to bear pass away and complete peace is restored to you. In other words, rising of the sun of revelation is analogous to the bright day and the period of the *fatrah* to the stillness and peace of the night."

4. This good news was given by Allah to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in a state when he had only a handful of Muslims with him, the entire nation was hostile and there was no remote chance of success even. The candle of Islam was flickering only in Makkah and storms were brewing all around to blow it out. At that juncture Allah said to His Prophet: "Do not at all grieve at the hardships of the initial stage: every later period of life will be better for you than the former period. Your power and glory, your honour and prestige, will go on enhancing and your influence will go on spreading. This promise is not only confined to the world, but it also includes the promise that the rank and position you will be granted in the Hereafter will be far higher and nobler than the rank

and position you attain in the world." Ṭabarānī in *Awsai* and Baihaqī in *Ad-Dalā'il* have related, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, that the Holy Prophet said: "All the victories which would be attained by my *Ummah* after me, were presented before me. This pleased me much. Then, Allah sent down this Word, saying: 'The Hereafter is far better for you than the world'."

5. That is, "Although it will take some time, yet the time is not far when your Lord will bless you with so much that you will be well pleased." This promise was fulfilled during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet and all Arabia, from the southern coasts to the Syrian frontiers of the Byzantine empire and the Iraqi frontiers of the Persian empire in the north, and from the Persian Gulf in the east to the Red Sea in the west, came under his control. For the first time in the history of Arabia this land became subject to one law and rule. Whichever power clashed with it was doomed to destruction. The slogan of *Lā ilāha ill-Allāh-u Muḥammad ur-Rasūl-Allāh* reverberated throughout the land where the polytheists and the followers of the earlier scriptures had tried their utmost to keep their false creeds and slogans aloft till the last. The people not only bowed their heads in obedience, their hearts also were conquered, and their beliefs, morals and acts were revolutionised. There is no precedent in human history that a nation sunk in paganism might have completely changed in only 23 years. Then the movement started by the Holy Prophet gathered such power that it spread over a large part of Asia, Africa and Europe and its influence reached every nook and corner of the world. This much Allah gave His Messenger in the world; the glory and extent of what He will give him in the Hereafter, cannot be imagined." (Also see E.N. 112 of Sūrah Ṭā Hā).

6. That is, "There can be no question of forsaking you and being displeased with you; We have, in fact, been good to you ever since the time you were born an orphan." The Holy Prophet's father passed away three months before his birth; thus he was an orphan at birth. But Allah did not leave him without support even for a day. Up to six years of age his mother nourished and looked after him. After her death, his grandfather took him and brought him up with great love. He would proudly tell the people: "My this son has a great future." When he also died, his uncle, Abū Ṭālib, became his guardian and treated him with such rare love that no father could treat his son better. So much so that when after his proclamation to be a Prophet the entire nation turned

hostile, Abū Ṭālib alone stood firm as his chief supporter for as long as ten years.

7. The word *dāllan* as used in the original is derived from *dalālat*, which has several meanings in Arabic. Its one meaning is to be lost in error and deviation; another, to be unaware of the way and to be bewildered at the cross-roads as to which way one should choose; still another meaning is of being lost and astray. The tree also is *dāllah* which stands alone and lonely in the desert; the word *dalāl* is also used for a thing which is wasting in unfavourable and uncongenial condition and climate, and also for heedlessness, of which there is an example in the Qur'ān itself: *Lā yaḍillu Rabbi wa lā yansa*: "My Lord is neither heedless nor He forgets." (Ṭā Hā : 52). Out of these different meanings the first meaning does not apply here, for in the historical accounts of the Holy Prophet's life, from childhood till just before Prophethood, there is no trace that he ever might have been involved in idolatry, polytheism or atheism, or in any of the acts, customs and practices of paganism prevalent among his people. Therefore, inevitably *wa wajadaka dāllan* cannot mean that Allah had found him erring and astray in respect of creed or deed. The other meanings, however, can be applicable here in one or other aspect, and possibly all are applicable in their own particular aspect. Before Prophethood the Holy Prophet was certainly a believer in the existence of Allah and His Unity, and his life was free from sin and reflected excellent morals, yet he was unaware of true Faith, its principles and injunctions, as it has been pointed out in the Qur'ān: "You did not know at all what was the Book and what was the Faith." (Ash-Shūrā : 52). This verse may also mean that the Holy Prophet was lost in a society, engrossed in ignorance, and his personality as a guide and leader was not in any way prominent before Prophethood. It may as well mean that in the desert of ignorance, he was standing like a lonely tree, which had the capability to bear fruit and turn the whole desert into a garden, but this capability was not being put to any use before Prophethood. It may also imply that the extraordinary powers that Allah had blessed him with, were going waste in the unfavourable environment of ignorance. *Dalāl* can also be taken in the meaning of heedlessness, so as to say: "You were heedless of the truths and sciences of which Allah made you aware after Prophethood." This thing also has been referred to in the Qur'ān itself: "Though before this you were

utterly unaware of these truths." (Yūsuf : 3). (Also see Al-Baqarah : 282, Ash-Shu'arā' : 20).

8. The Holy Prophet's father had left only a she-camel and a slave-girl in heritage for him; so he started his life in a state of poverty. Then a time came when the wealthiest lady among the Quraish, Hadrat Khadijah, first made him her partner in trade, then married him, and he took charge of all her trade and business. Thus, he not only became wealthy but his riches in no way were dependent on the resources of his wife; his own hardwork and ability had gone a long way towards promoting her trade and commerce.

9. That is, "As you yourself have been an orphan, and Allah graced you with the bounty that He made the best possible arrangements to help you in that state, therefore, in gratitude you should see that no orphan is treated unjustly and harshly."

10. It has two meanings : (1) If *sā'il* is taken in the sense of a needy person, who asks for help, it would mean that if you can, you should help him ; if you cannot you should excuse yourself politely; but should never scold him. In this sense the instruction corresponds to Allah's this favour : "You were poor, then Allah enriched you." And if *sā'il* is taken in the sense of the one who inquires, i.e. asks for enlightenment on a religious matter or injunction, it would mean that even if such a person be extremely ignorant and ill-mannered and might put the question, or present his problem, impolitely, you should in any case answer him politely and kindly, and should not turn him away like the rude people proud of their knowledge. In this meaning, the instruction corresponds to Allah's this favour : "You were unaware of the Way, then He guided you." Hadrat Abud-Dardā', Hasan Baṣrī, Sufyān Thaurī and some other scholars have preferred this second meaning, for in view of the order and sequence this instruction corresponds to : *wa wajadaka dāllan fa-hadā*.

11. The word *ni'mat* (bounty) is general, which also implies those bounties, which Allah had bestowed on His Messenger until the revelation of this Sūrah as well as those which He bestowed on him afterwards according to the promise made in this Sūrah, which He fulfilled completely. Then, it is enjoined : "O Prophet, mention and proclaim every bounty that Allah has favoured you with." Now, obviously, there can be different forms and ways of mentioning and proclaiming the bounties and every bounty in view of its nature, requires a special form or its mention and proclamation. As

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a whole, the way of proclaiming the bounties is that Allah be thanked with the tongue and the truth be acknowledged that all the bounties received are only due to His grace and favour, and none is the result of any personal excellence and merit on his part. The blessing of Prophethood can be proclaimed by preaching and conveying its message in the best way possible. The blessing of the Qur'ān can be proclaimed by publicising it widely and impressing its teachings on the people's minds as far as one can. The blessing of Allah's guidance can be proclaimed by showing the right way to the people, who are gone astray and by enduring patiently all the bitternesses and hardships of the way. The favour that Allah has done of helping during orphanhood, demands that the orphans be treated well. The favour that Allah did of enriching after poverty requires that Allah's needy servants be helped and supported. In short, this is a very comprehensive instruction which Allah gave His Messenger (upon whom be His peace) in this brief sentence after having described His bounties and blessings.



**XCIV**

**ALAM-NASHRAH** اَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ





## XCIV

### ALAM-NASHRAH آلم نَشْرَح

#### INTRODUCTION

##### **Name**

The Sūrah is so designated after the first sentence.

##### **Period of Revelation**

Its subject-matter so closely resembles that of Sūrah Ad-Duhā that both these Sūrahs seem to have been revealed in about the same period, under similar conditions. According to Ḥadrat ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbās, it was sent down in Makkah just after waḍ-Duhā.

##### **Theme and Subject Matter**

The aim and object of this Sūrah too is to console and encourage the Holy Messenger (upon whom be

Allah's peace). Before his call he never had to encounter the conditions which he suddenly had to encounter after it when he embarked on his mission of inviting the people to Islam. This was by itself a great revolution in his own life of which he had no idea in his life before Prophethood. No sooner had he started preaching the message of Islam than the same society which had esteemed him with unique honour, turned hostile to him. The same relatives and friends, the same clansmen and neighbours, who used to treat him with the highest respect, began to shower him with abuse and invective. No one in Makkah was prepared to listen to him; he began to be ridiculed and mocked in the street and on the road; and at every step he had to face new difficulties. Although gradually he became accustomed to the hardships, even much severer ones, yet the initial stage was very discouraging for him. That is why first Sūrah Aḍ-Duḥā was sent down to console him, and then this Sūrah.

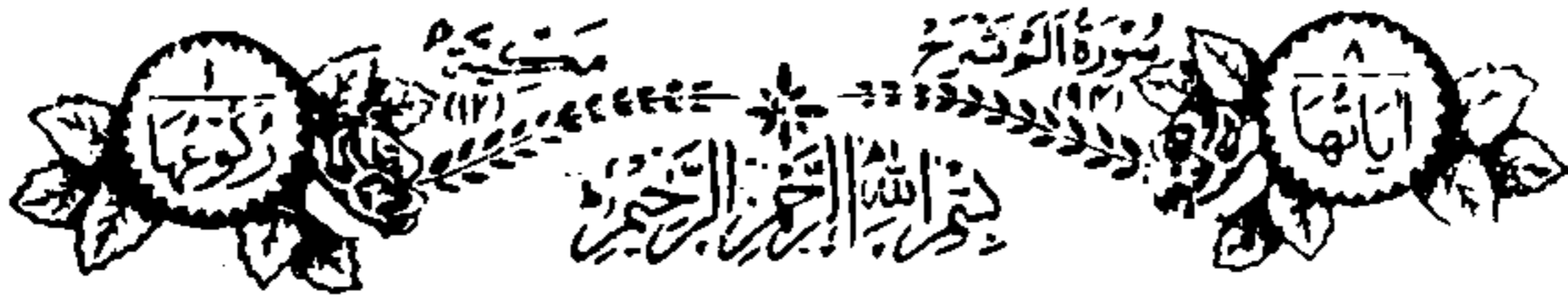
In it, at the outset, Allah says: "We have favoured you, O Prophet, with three great blessings; therefore, you have no cause to be disheartened. The first is the blessing of *Sharḥ Sadr* (opening up of the breast), the second of removing from you the heavy burden that was weighing down your back before the call, and the third of exalting your renown the like of which has never been granted to any man before. Further below in the notes we have explained what is implied by each of these blessings and how great and unique these blessings indeed are!

After this, the Lord and Sustainer of the universe has reassured His Servant and Messenger (upon whom be peace) that the period of hardships which he is passing through, is not very long, but following close behind it there is also a period of ease. This same thing

has been described in Sūrah Ad-Duḥā, saying: "Every later period is better for you than the former period, and soon your Lord will give you so much that you will be well pleased."

In conclusion, the Holy Prophet has been instructed, so as to say: "You can develop the power to bear and resist the hardships of the initial stage only by one means, and it is this: 'When you are free from your occupations, you should devote yourself to the labour and toil of worship, and turn all your attention exclusively to your Lord'." This same instruction has been given him in much greater detail in Sūrah Al-Muzzam mil : 1-9.





أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ ۖ وَوَضَعْنَا عَنكَ وِزْرَكَ ۚ  
 ذُكِّرْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ ۚ فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ۚ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ  
 يُسْرًا ۚ فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ ۚ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ ۚ

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## XCIV

### ALAM-NASHIRAH *آلم نشرح*

Verses : 8

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

(O Prophet,) have We not opened up your breast for you?<sup>1</sup> And removed from you the heavy burden that was weighing down your back,<sup>2</sup> and exalted your renown for you.<sup>3</sup> So, the fact is that along with every hardship there is also ease. Indeed, with every hardship there is also ease!<sup>4</sup> Hence, when you are free, devote yourself to the labour of worship, and turn all your attention to your Lord.<sup>5</sup>

1-8

1. To begin the discourse with this question, and then the subsequent theme, shows that the Holy Messenger (upon whom be Allah's peace) at that time was very disturbed and distressed at the great hardships that he was passing through in the initial stage of his mission of calling the people to Islam. Under those conditions Allah addressed him and consoling him, said : "O Prophet, have We not blessed you with such and such favour ? Then, why do you feel so disturbed and distressed at these initial difficulties ? "

A little consideration of the context wherever the word *sharḥ ṣadr* (opening up of the breast) has occurred in the Qur'ān, shows that it has two meanings : (1) In Sūrah Al-An'ām : 125, it was said : "So whomever Allah wills to guide aright, He makes his breast wide

open to Islam (*yashrah ṣadrahū lil-Islām*)"; and in Sūrah Az-Zumar ; 22 : "Can the person whose breast Allah has opened for Islam (*sharḥaḥullāhu ṣadrahū lil-Islām*) and he is walking in the light shown by his Lord..." At both these places *sharḥ ṣadr* implies to free oneself from every kind of distraction and vacillation and to be satisfied with Islam as the only right way of life, and to regard the beliefs, principles of morality and civilization, religious instructions and injunctions, which Islam has given to man, as right and true. (2) In Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā' : 12-13, it has been mentioned that when Allah appointed the Prophet Moses to the great office of Prophethood and commanded him to go and confront the Pharaoh and his mighty empire, he submitted : "My Lord, I fear that they will treat me as a liar, and my breast straitens." And in Sūrah Tā Hā : 25-26, it has been stated that on this very occasion the Prophet Moses implored Allah, saying : "Lord, open up my breast for me (*Rabbishrah-li ṣadri*) and make my task easy for me." Here, straitening of the breast implies a person's finding it too hard for himself to shoulder the onerous responsibilities of Prophethood and going out to clash with a mighty and tyrannical power of disbelief all by himself, and *sharḥ ṣadr* implies that his morale be boosted so that he is ready to undertake any campaign and any task however difficult and hard, without any hesitation, and he develops the nerve and courage to shoulder the great responsibilities of Prophethood.

A little consideration will show that in this verse "opening up of the Holy Prophet's breast" contains both these meanings. According to the first meaning, it implies that before the Prophethood the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) looked upon the religion of the polytheistic Arabs, Christians, Jews and fire-worshippers as false, and was not even satisfied with the *ḥanifiyyat* prevalent among some of the Arab monotheists, for it was an ambiguous creed which contained no detail of the right way. (This we have explained in E.N. 5 of As-Sājdah). But since he himself did not know what was the right way, he was mentally confused and distracted. With the blessing of Prophethood Allah removed his mental agitation and opened up before him the way of right guidance, which brought him full peace of mind. According to the second meaning, it implies that along with the blessing of Prophethood Allah also blessed him with the courage, spirit of resolution and broad-mindedness which were needed for shouldering the onerous responsibilities of the great office. He became bearer of the vast knowledge, which no other human mind

could encompass and contain. He was blessed with the wisdom which could rectify any evil however grave and wide spread. He developed the capability to stand up without any equipment and the apparent help and support of a worldly power as the standard-bearer of Islam in a society sunk in ignorance and barbarism, to brave any storm of hostility without the least hesitation, to endure patiently all the difficulties and hardships of the way so that no power might cause him to abandon his position and standpoint. Thus, "the verse means to impress the point: "When Allah has blessed you, O Prophet, with this invaluable wealth of *sharḥ ṣadr*, why do you feel distressed and depressed at the hardships you are experiencing in the initial stage of your mission."

Some commentators have taken *sharḥ ṣadr* to mean *shaqq ṣadr* (splitting up of the breast) and have declared this verse to be a proof of the miracle of *sharḥ ṣadr* as related in the traditions of the *Ḥadīth*. But the fact is that the proof of that miracle is dependent only on the traditions of the *Ḥadīth*, it is not correct to prove it from the Qur'ān. According to the Arabic language, *sharḥ ṣadr* can in no way be taken to mean *shaqq ṣadr*. 'Allāma Ālūsī in his *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī* says: "In the sight of the research scholars it is a weak thing to regard *sharḥ ṣadr* as *shaqq ṣadr*."

2. Some of the commentators have interpreted this to mean that before Prophethood, in the days of ignorance, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had happened to commit certain errors because of which he was feeling disturbed, and Allah by sending down this verse consoled and satisfied him, saying that He had forgiven him those errors. But in our opinion it is a grave mistake to interpret this verse thus. In the first place, the word *vizr* does not necessarily mean a sin, but it is also used for a heavy burden. Therefore, there is no reason why it should in every case be taken in the bad sense. Secondly, the Holy Prophet's life before Prophethood also was so clean and pure that it had been presented in the Qur'ān as a challenge before the opponents. So much so that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was made to point out to the disbelievers: "I have already lived a lifetime among you before the revelation of this Qur'ān." (Yūnus : 16). And he was also not the type of a person who would commit a sin secretly. God forbid, had he been such a man, Allah would not have been unaware of it, and would not have made him proclaim the thing before the people openly, which He made him proclaim in the above-mentioned verse of Sūrah

Yūnus, if his person carried the blot of a sin committed secretly. Thus, in fact, in this verse *vizr* means a heavy burden and it implies the burden of distress, anguish and anxiety that was telling on his sensitive nature when he saw his nation deeply sunk in ignorance and barbarism. Idols were being worshipped, the community was engrossed in idolatry and polytheistic customs and practices, filth of immorality and indecency prevailed all around, wickedness and corrupt practices were rampant in society, the powerful were suppressing the powerless, girls were being buried alive, tribes were subjecting one another to surprise attacks, and sometimes the wars of vengeance continued for a hundred years at a stretch. No one's life, property and honour was safe unless he had a strong band at his back. This grieved the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) but he could find no way to cure the malady. This same anxiety was weighing down his back. Allah by showing him the way to Guidance removed its burden from him. Then as soon as he was appointed to the office of Prophethood, he came to know that belief in the doctrine of *Tawhīd*, the Hereafter and Prophethood was the master-key by which each corruption in human life could be eradicated and the way to reform opened in every aspect of life. This guidance from Allah relieved him of his burden and he felt re-assured that by means of it he would not only be able to cure the maladies of Arabia but also of all mankind outside Arabia as well.

3. This was said at a time when no one could even conceive how the renown of the one unique individual who had only a few followers confined only to the city of Makkah, would be exalted throughout the world, and what high fame he would achieve. But Allah Almighty gave His Messenger (upon whom be peace) this good news under those very conditions and then fulfilled it in a strange way. In the first place, He took from his enemies themselves the task of exalting his renown. One of the methods that the disbelievers of Makkah adopted to defeat his mission was that in the Hajj season when the pilgrims from every corner of Arabia were attracted to their city, they would visit them at their halting places and would warn them to beware of a dangerous man called Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), who they alleged, worked such magic on the people that father was separated from son, brother from brother, and husband from wife; therefore, they should keep away from him. The same thing they said to all other people who visited Makkah on other than Hajj days in connection with pilgrim-



age or on other business. In this way although they were trying to defame the Holy Prophet, yet the result was that his name reached every nook and corner of Arabia and the enemies themselves took him out of his seclusion in Makkah and introduced him among all the tribes of the country. After this, it was but natural that the people should become curious to know as to who was this man, what he preached, what was his character like, and who were the people influenced by his "magic", and what sort of effect his "magic" had on them. As the propaganda of the Makkan disbelievers spread, the people's curiosity also grew. Then, when as a result of this curiosity the people came to know of the Holy Prophet's morals, his character and conduct, when they heard the Qur'an and found what teachings it presented, and when the people saw how different the lives of those, who had been influenced by what was being described as magic, had become from the lives of the common Arabs, the bad name started being changed into good name. So much so that by the time the *Hijrah* took place there was perhaps no tribe left anywhere in Arabia from which one or another person, one or another clan, had not accepted Islam, and in which at least some people had not developed sympathy and interest in the Holy Prophet and his message. This was the first stage of the exaltation of his renown. Then, from the *Hijrah* started the second stage in which, on the one hand, the hypocrites, the Jews and the prominent polytheists of Arabia were actively engaged in defaming him, and, on the other, the Islamic State of Madinah was presenting such a practical model of God-worship, God-consciousness, piety and devotion, purity of morals and community life, justice and equity, equality of man and man, generosity of the rich, care of the poor, fulfilment of pledges and promises and righteousness in dealings, which was conquering the hearts. The enemies tried by resort to war to impede the growing influence of the Holy Prophet, but the party of the believers, trained and developed under his own leadership, proved its superiority by their discipline, their bravery, their fearlessness of death, and their adherence to restrictions of morality even in the state of war, so convincingly that entire Arabia had to recognize it as a power to be reckoned with. Within ten years the Holy Prophet's renown became so exalted that the same land in which the opponents had exerted their utmost to defame him, reverberated with the slogan of *Ash-hadu anna Muhammad ar-Rasul-Allah* from one end to the other. Then the third stage commenced with the establishment of the righteous Caliphate when his holy name started being mentioned and

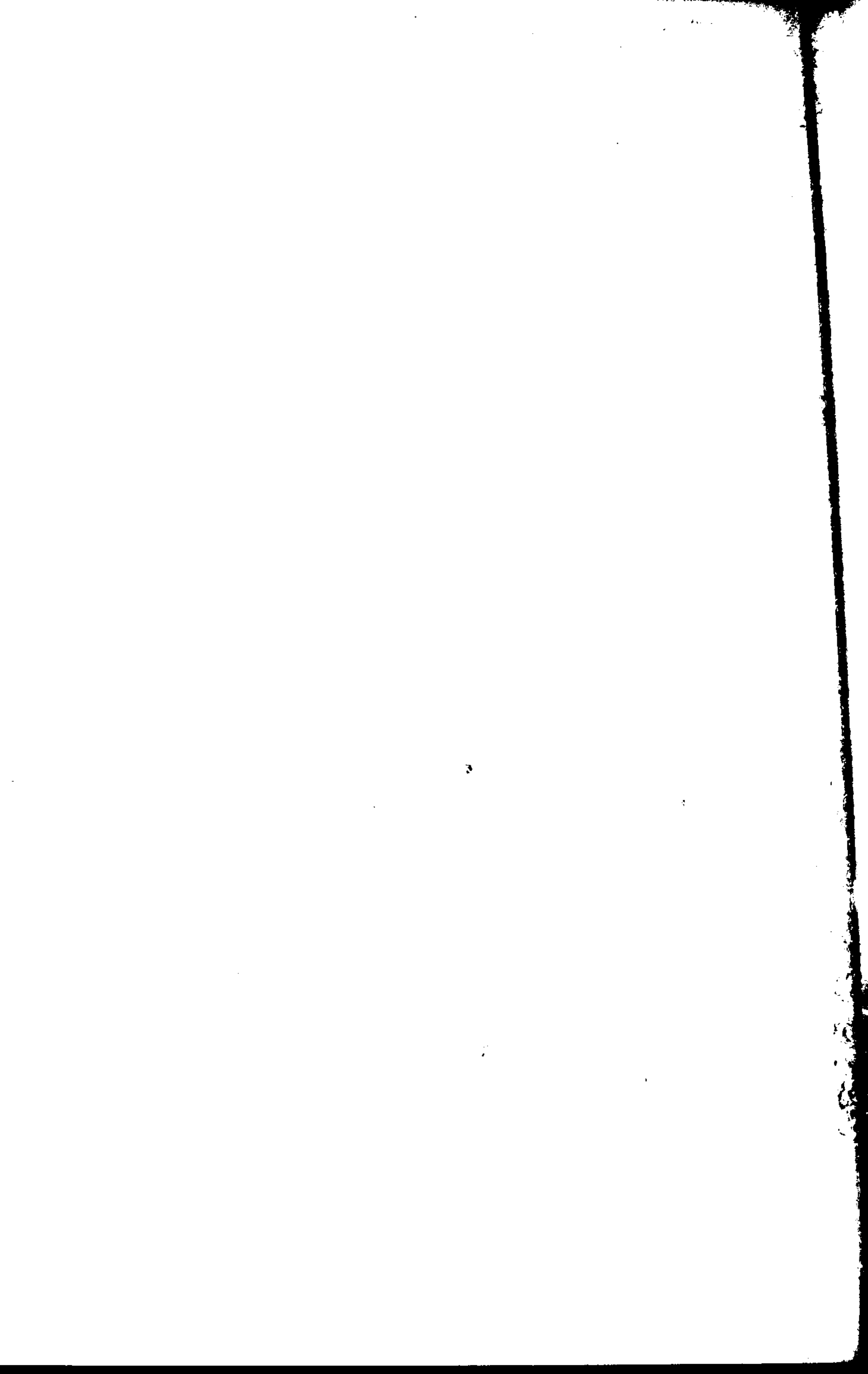
praised everywhere in the world. This process continues till today, and will continue till Resurrection if Allah so wills. Wherever in the world there exists a settlement of the Muslims, the apostleship of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is being proclaimed aloud in the call to the Prayer five times a day, blessings of Allah are being invoked on him in the Prayers, and his sacred remembrance is being made in the Friday Sermons. There is no moment in the 12 months of the year and in the 24 hours of the day when at one or another place in the world, the Holy Prophet's holy name is not being mentioned. This is a clear proof of the truth of the Qur'ān that when in the initial stage of the Prophethood Allah proclaimed *wa rafa'nā laka dhikrak*, no one could estimate and imagine with what esteem and to what great extent the Holy Prophet's renown would be exalted. In a *Hadith* Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'id Khudrī has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Gabriel came to me and said: My Lord and your Lord asks: In what ways have I exalted your renown? I submitted: Allah alone has the best knowledge. He said: Allah says: Whenever mention is made of Me, you too will be mentioned along with Me." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Musnad Abū Ya'lā, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Ḥibbān, Ibn Mardūyah, Abū Nu'aim). The whole later history stands witness that this prediction has proved literally true.

4. This has been repeated twice so as to reassure the Holy Prophet that the bad times he was passing through at that time would not last for ever, but were going to be replaced by good times in the near future. On the surface this appears to be a contradiction that hardship should be accompanied by ease, for these two things do not co-exist. But the words "hardship with ease" instead of "ease after hardship" have been used in the sense that the period of ease is so close to it as if it were a concomitant of it.

5. "When you are free...": "When you are free from other occupations, whether occupations in connection with the preaching of Divine message, or teaching and training of the new converts, or domestic occupations of mundane nature." The commandment means: "When you are no more occupied, you should spend your time in the labour and toil of Allah's worship and turn all your attention exclusively to your Lord."

XCV

التين AT-TĪN



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## XCV

التين AT-TĪN

### INTRODUCTION

#### Name

The Sūrah has been so named after the very first word *at-tīn*.

#### Period of Revelation

According to Qatādah, this Sūrah is Madani. Two different views have been reported from Ibn ‘Abbās: first that it is a Makkī Sūrah, and second that it is Madani. But the majority of scholars regard it as a Makkī revelation, a manifest symbol of which is the use of the words *hādih-al-balad-il-amīn* (this city of peace) for Makkah. Obviously, if it had been revealed at Madīnah, it would not be correct to use the words “this city” for Makkah. Besides, a study of the contents of the Sūrah shows that

it belongs to the earliest period of Makkah, for in it there is no sign whatever to indicate that during the period of its revelation any conflict had started between Islam and unbelief. Moreover, it reflects the same style of the earliest revelations of Makkah period in which briefly and succinctly the people have been made to realize that the judgement of the Hereafter is necessary and absolutely rational.

### **Theme and Subject Matter**

Its theme is the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter. For this purpose, first swearing an oath by the habitats of some illustrious Prophets, it has been stated that Allah has created man in the most excellent of moulds. Although at other places in the Qur'ān, this truth has been expressed in different ways, for example, at some places it has been said: "Allah appointed man His vicegerent on the earth and commanded the angels to bow down to him (Al-Baqarah: 30, 34, Al-An'ām: 165, Al-A'rāf: 11, Al-Hijr : 28, 29, An-Naml : 62, Şuād : 71-73);" at others that: "Man has become bearer of the Divine trust, which the earth and the heavens and the mountains did not have the power to bear (Al-Ahzāb : 72):" and at still others that: "We honoured the children of Adam and exalted them above many of Our other creatures (Banī Isrā'il : 70)," yet here the statement made on oath in particular by the habitats of the Prophets that man has been created in the finest of moulds, signifies that mankind has been blessed with such an excellent mould and nature that it gave birth to men capable of attaining to the highest position of Prophethood, a higher position than which has not been attained by any other creature of God.

Then, it has been stated that there are two kinds of men; those who in spite of having been created in the

finest of moulds, become inclined to evil and their moral degeneration causes them to be reduced to the lowest of the low, and those who by adopting the way of faith and righteousness remain secure from the degeneration and consistent with the noble position, which is the necessary demand of their having been created in the best of moulds. The existence among mankind of both these kinds of men is such a factual thing which no one can deny, for it is being observed and experienced in society everywhere at all times.

In conclusion, this factual reality has been used as an argument to prove that when among the people there are these two separate and quite distinct kinds, how can one deny the judgement and retribution for deeds? If the morally degraded are not punished and the morally pure and exalted are not rewarded and both end in the dust alike, it would mean that there is no justice in the Kingdom of God; whereas human nature and common sense demand that a judge should do justice. How then can one conceive that Allah, Who is the most just of all judges, would not do justice?







وَالَّتَيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُونَ ﴿١﴾ وَطُورِ سَيْنِينَ ﴿٢﴾ وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ ﴿٣﴾ لَقَدْ  
 خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ ﴿٥﴾ إِلَّا  
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٦﴾ فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ  
 بَعْدُ بِالذِّينِ ﴿٧﴾ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمَ الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿٨﴾

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XCV

التين AT-TĪN

Verses : 8

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

By the fig and the olive<sup>1</sup> and the Mount Sinai<sup>2</sup> and  
 this City of peace (Makkah), We have indeed created  
 man in the finest of moulds,<sup>3</sup> then We reversed him to  
 the lowest of the low,<sup>4</sup> except those who believed and  
 did good works. For them there is a reward unending.<sup>5</sup>  
 Therefore, (O Prophet,) who can after this belie. you  
 concerning the rewards and punishments?<sup>6</sup> Is not Allah  
 the best of all judges?<sup>7</sup>

1-8

1. There has been much difference of opinion among the commentators about the explanation of this verse. Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Ikrimah, 'Aṭā' bin Abī Rabāḥ, Jābir bin Zaid, Mujāhid and Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī (may Allah bless them all) say that the fig implies the same fig which the people eat, and the olive the same olive which produces oil. Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ḥākim have cited a statement from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also in support of this. And the commentators who have accepted this explanation have, in view of the uses and virtues of the fig and the olive, expressed the opinion that Allah has sworn by these two fruits because of these very qualities. There

is no doubt that the Arabic reader would understand the words *tin* and *zaytūn* in the same meaning as are their well known meanings in Arabic, yet there are two reasons for which these meanings cannot be accepted. First, that in the subsequent verses, oaths have been sworn by the Mount Sinai and the City of Makkah, and there seems to be no relevance between the oaths sworn by the two fruits and the oaths by the two places. Second, the theme that follows the oaths is borne out by the Mt. Sinai and the City of Makkah but not by the two fruits. Wherever in the Qur'ān Allah has sworn by something, He has not sworn by it because of its glory or its uses and benefits but every oath has relevance to the theme that follows it. Therefore, the virtues and qualities of these two fruits cannot be regarded as the reason for swearing the oath by them.

Some other commentators have taken *tin* and *zaytūn* to imply some places. Ka'b Aḥbār, Qatādah and Ibn Zaid say that *tin* implies Damascus and *zaytūn* Bait al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). A view of Ibn 'Abbās has been cited by Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Mardūyah to the effect that *tin* implies the mosque of the Prophet Noah, which he built on Mt. Judi, and *zaytūn* implies Bait al-Maqdis, but hearing the words *wat-tin waz-zaytūn*, no ordinary Arab could think of these meanings, nor was it well known among the Arabs, who were the first addressees of the Qur'ān that *tin* and *zaytūn* were names of the places.

However, there was a practice among the people of Arabia that they generally named a land where a certain fruit was produced in plenty after the name of the fruit itself. Accordingly, the meaning of *tin* and *zaytūn* can be the land where these fruits are grown, and it is the land of Syria and Palestine, for among the Arabs of that period this very land was well known for the production of fig and olive. Ibn Taimiyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, Zamakhsharī and Ālūsī (may Allah show them mercy) have adopted this very explanation; and although Ibn Jarir also has preferred the first view, yet he has conceded that *tin* and *zaytūn* may also imply the land where these fruits are grown. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr also has regarded this explanation as worthy of consideration.

2. The words in the original are *Ṭūr-i Sīnīn*. *Sīnīn* is another name for the Sinai Peninsula. It is called *Sainā* or *Sīnā* as well as *Sīnū*. In the Qur'ān itself at one place the words *Ṭūr-i Sainā* have been used. Since the land in which Mt. Sinai is located is well known as *Sīnā*, we have adopted this well known name in the translation.

3. This is the truth for which the oath has been sworn by the lands of the fig and the olive (i.e. Syria and Palestine) and Mt. Sinai and Makkah, the city of peace. Man's having been created in the most excellent of moulds means that he has been given the finest body which no other living being has been given, and he has been blessed with the noblest faculties of thought, knowledge and intellect which no other creature has been blessed with. Then, since the most sublime model of mankind's these excellences and unique merits are the Prophets (upon whom be Allah's peace), and no creation can have a higher rank than they, so that Allah may choose it for appointment to the office of Prophethood, an oath has been sworn by the places associated with the Prophets of God to bear testimony to man's having been created in the finest of moulds. The land of Syria and Palestine is the land where a large number of Prophets, from the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) to the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), were raised. Mt. Tūr is the place where the Prophet Moses was blessed with Prophethood. As for Makkah, it was founded by the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael themselves. It was on account of their association with it that it became the holiest central place of Arabia. It was the Prophet Abraham who had prayed : "O my Lord, make this city a city of peace and security." (Al-Baqarah : 126); and it was because of this prayer that in the midst of chaos and confusion prevailing everywhere in Arabia only this city continued to remain an island of peace for some 2500 years or more. Thus, the verse means to say : "We created mankind in such an excellent mould that it produced men who attained to the most sublime rank of Prophethood."

4. The commentators in general have given two meanings of this : (1) That We reversed him to the miserable state of old age in which he was no longer able to think and understand and work; and (2) that We reversed him to the lowest stage of Hell. But these two meanings cannot be an argument for the object for the confirmation of which this Sūrah was revealed. The Sūrah is meant to reason out the truth of the judgement in the Hereafter. On this, neither has this fact any bearing that some human beings are caused to reach the most miserable state of old age, nor that a section of human beings will be cast into Hell. The first thing cannot be an argument for the judgement because old age comes upon both the good and the bad people, and a person's reaching this age is no punishment which he might suffer in consequence of his deeds. As for the second thing, it will occur in the Hereafter. It cannot be presented as an argu-

ment before the people who are being convinced of the meting out of rewards and punishments in the Hereafter itself. Therefore, in our opinion the correct meaning of the verse is : After having been created in the finest of moulds when man uses the powers of his body and mind in evil ways, Allah grants him the power to do only evil and causes him to reach the lowest ebb of degradation. This is a truth which one commonly observes in human society. People become so overwhelmed by greed, selfishness, lustfulness, addiction to intoxicants, meanness, rage and fury and such other traits that morally they are actually reduced to the lowest of the low. Consider only one example : When a nation is blinded by its hostility to another country, it surpasses all savage beasts in barbarity. A wild beast preys upon its victim only for the sake of food, it does not resort to a general massacre; but man resorts to massacre of his own kind. The beast only uses its claws and teeth, but man who has been created in the best of moulds invents the gun, rifle, tank, aircraft, atom and hydrogen bombs, and countless other weapons by his intellect so that he can instantly destroy whole populations. The beast only kills or inflicts a wound, but man invents such painful methods of torturing men like himself as cannot even be imagined by a beast. Then to wreak his vengeance and fury on his enemies, he forces the women to march out in naked processions : they are subjected to rape by tens and twenties of men; they are dishonoured before the eyes of their fathers, brothers and husbands; children are massacred in front of their parents; mothers are forced to drink their children's blood; human beings are burnt and buried alive. There is no wild species of animals in the world, which may equal this human barbarity in any degree. The same is also the case with other evil traits : man proves himself to be the lowest of the low in whichever evil he indulges. So much so that he degrades even religion, which is the most sacred thing for man : he worships the trees, animals and mountains, even the sex organs of man and woman; he keeps religious prostitutes in the places of worship to win the goodwill of the gods and commits adultery with them as an act of virtue. In his mythology he attributes such filthy tales to his gods and goddesses which would make the most wretched beast to hang his head in shame.

5. The commentators who have taken *asfala sāfilin* to imply the state of extreme old age when man loses his sense and reason, interpret this verse to mean : "But the people who in the prime and

strength of their age believed and did righteous deeds, would have in this old age too the same righteous deeds credited for them and will be rewarded accordingly. No reduction will be made in their rewards on the ground that they could not perform those righteous deeds in that period of life." And the commentators who construe reversal to *sāfilin* to imply being cast into the lowest stage of Hell, interpret this verse to mean: "The people who believed and did righteous deeds are an exception: they will not be reversed to this stage, but they will have a reward unending and unfailing." But, neither of these meanings is relevant to the reasoning made in this Sūrah to justify the judgement of the Hereafter. In our opinion the verse means: "Just as it is a common observation in human society that the morally degraded are made the lowest of the low, so this also is an observation of every age that those who believed in God, the Hereafter and the Prophethood and who moulded their lives after righteousness and piety, remained secure from this degeneration and remained consistent with the best mould and nature that Allah had created them on. Therefore, they are worthy of the unending reward, i.e. the reward which will neither be less than what they deserve, nor will it ever be cut off."

6. Another translation of this verse can be: "What can after this (O man,) make you deny the judgement?" In both cases the intention and purpose remains the same. That is, when it is a common observation in human society that a section of mankind, which has been created in the best of moulds and nature, is rendered lowest of the low because of moral degradation, and the other section remains secure by adopting the path of constant faith and righteousness in view of its being created in the best of moulds and nature, how can judgement be denied after this? Does common sense require that the end of both these men be the same? Does justice demand that neither those who are reduced to the lowest of the low be punished nor those who strive to adopt a righteous life be rewarded? The same theme has been expressed at other places in the Qur'ān, thus: "Shall We then treat the obedient as We treat the culprits? What has happened to you: how ill you judge?" (Al-Qalam: 35,36). "Do those who have committed evil think that We shall hold them and those who have believed and done righteous deeds as equal so that their life and their death should be alike? Ill are the judgements they pass!" (Al-Jāthiyah: 21).

7. That is, "When you want and expect even the petty judges of the world to do justice, punish the culprits and reward the doers of good, what is your opinion about God? Is He not the greatest of all judges? If you think He is the greatest of all judges, do you think that He will not do any justice? Do you expect that He will treat the good and the evil alike? Will those who commit the vilest of deeds in the world and those who perform righteous deeds, both end in the dust: neither will any be punished for his evil deeds, nor any be rewarded for his good works?"

Imām Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn al-Mundhir, Baihaqī, Ḥākim and Ibn Mardūyah have related, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "When one of you recites *Sūrah Wa-l-lin waz-zaytūn* and reaches *Alais-Allāh-u bi-aḥkam-il-Ḥākimīn*, he should respond to it, saying: *Balā wa anā 'alā dhālika min-ash-shāhidīn* (Yes, and I am of those who bear witness to it). According to some other traditions, the Holy Prophet responded with *Subḥānaka fa-balā* when he recited this verse.

XCVI

AL-'ALAQ العلق





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

XCVI

AL-'ALAQ العلق

### INTRODUCTION

#### Name

The Sūrah is so entitled after the word '*alaq*' in the second verse.

#### Period of Revelation

This Sūrah has two parts: the first part consists of vv. 1-5, and the second of vv. 6-19. About the first part a great majority of the Islamic scholars are agreed that it forms the very first Revelation to be sent down to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). In this regard, the *Ḥadīth* from Ḥadrat 'A'ishah, which Imām Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim and other traditionists have related with several chains of authorities, is one of the most authentic *Aḥādīth* on the subject. In

it Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah has narrated the full story of the beginning of revelation as she herself heard it from the Holy Messenger of Allah. Besides, Ibn 'Abbās, Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī and a group of the Companions also are reported to have stated that these were the very first verses of the Qur'ān to be revealed to the Holy Prophet. The second part was sent down afterwards when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) began to perform the prescribed Prayer in the precincts of the Ka'bah and Abū Jahl tried to prevent him from this with threats.

### Beginning of Revelation

The traditionists have related on the strength of their respective authorities the story of the beginning of revelation from Imām Az-Zuhri, who had it from Ḥaḍrat 'Urwah bin Zubair, who had it from Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah, his aunt. She states that revelations to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) began in the form of true (according to other traditions, good) visions. Whichever vision he saw it seemed as though he saw it in broad daylight. Afterwards solitude became dear to him and he would go to the Cave of Hirā' to engage in worship there for several days and nights (Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah has used the word *tahannuth*, which Imām Zuhri has explained as *ta'abbud*: devotional exercises. This was some kind of worship which he performed, for until then he had not been taught the method of performing the Prayer by Allah). He would take provisions with him and stay there for several days, then would return to Ḥaḍrat Khadijah who would again provide for him for a few more days. One day when he was in the Cave of Hirā', Revelation came down to him unexpectedly and the Angel said to him: "Read". After this Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah reports the words of the Holy Prophet himself, to the effect: "I said; I cannot read! Thereupon the Angel took me and pressed

me until I could bear it no more. Then he left me and said: Read. I said: I cannot read! He pressed me a second time until I could bear it no more. Then he left me and said: Read. I again said: I cannot read! He pressed me for the third time until I could bear it no more. Then he left me and said: *Iqrā' bismi Rabbi kal-ladhi khalaqa*: (Read in the name of your Lord Who created) till he reached *mā lam ya'lam* (what he did not know)." Hadrat 'A'ishah says: "Then the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) returned home to Hadrat Khadijah trembling with fear, and said to her: 'Cover me, cover me', and he was covered. When terror left him, he said: 'O Khadijah, what has happened to me?' Then he narrated to her whatever had happened, and said: 'I fear for my life'. She said: 'No never! Be of good cheer. By God, never will God debase you: you treat the kindred well, you speak the truth, (one tradition adds: you restore what is entrusted to you), you bear the burden of the helpless, you help the poor, you entertain the guests, and you cooperate in good works.' Then she took him to Waraqah bin Naufal, who was her cousin. He had become a Christian in pre-Islamic days, wrote the Gospel in Arabic and Hebrew, and had become very old and blind. Hadrat Khadijah said: 'Brother, listen to the son of your brother.' Waraqah said to the Holy Prophet: 'What have you seen, nephew?' The Holy Prophet described what he had seen. Waraqah said: 'This is the same Nāmūs (the Angel of Revelation) which Allah had sent down to Moses. Would that I were a young man during your Prophethood! Would that I were alive when your tribe would expel you!' The Holy Prophet said: 'Will they expel me?' Waraqah said: 'Yes, never has it so happened that a person brought what you have brought and was not treated as an enemy. If I live till then, I would help you with all the power

at my command.' But not very long after this Waraqah died."

This narrative is explicit that even until a moment before the coming of the Angel the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be His peace) was without any expectation that he was going to be appointed a Prophet. Nothing to say of any such wish or expectation, he did not even have any idea that he would meet with such an experience. Coming down of the Revelation and appearing of the Angel face to face was an unexpected accident for him the first effect of which on him was precisely the same as could naturally be on a person meeting with such a tremendous experience, in the absence of any preparation. That is why when he proclaimed the message of Islam, the people of Makkah raised all sorts of objections, but no one said that they were already apprehending that he would make a claim, for he had been making preparations since long to become a Prophet.

From this narrative another thing which also becomes obvious is how pure was the Holy Prophet's life and how sublime was his character before Prophethood, Hadrat Khadijah was no young lady: she was 55 years old at the time this event took place and had been the Holy Prophet's life companion for 15 years. No weakness of the husband can remain hidden from the wife. She had during this long period of married life found him to be such a generous and noble man that when he told her of his experience in the Cave of Hirā', she admitted without the least hesitation that it was indeed Allah's own Angel who had come to him with Revelation. Likewise, Waraqah bin Naufal also was an old inhabitant of Makkah, who had seen the Holy Prophet grow up from childhood. Particularly, for the past 15 years because of the close relationship he was even more

intimately aware of his life, his affairs and dealings. When he also heard of his experience, he did not regard it as an evil suggestion, but immediately said that it was the Nāmūs who had descended on Moses (peace be on him). This meant that even according to him the Holy Prophet was such a sublime person that there was nothing surprising in his being elevated to the office of Prophethood.

### Occasion of Revelation of vv. 6-19

This second part of the Sūrah was revealed when the Holy Messenger of Allah began to perform the Prayer in the Islamic way in the Ka'bah and Abū Jahl threatened and tried to prevent him from this. It so happened that after his appointment to Prophethood even before he could start preaching Islam openly, he began to perform the Prayer in the precincts of the Ka'bah in the way Allah taught him; and from this the Quraish felt for the first time that he had adopted a new religion. The other people were watching it with curiosity, but Abū Jahl in his arrogance and pride threatened the Holy Prophet and forbade him to worship in that way in the Ka'bah. In this connection, quite a number of the *Aḥādīth* have been related from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Ḥaḍrat Abū Huraira, which mention the foolish behaviour of Abū Jahl.

Ḥaḍrat Abū Huraira says that Abū Jahl asked the people of Quraish: "Does Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) set his face on the ground before you?" When they replied in the affirmative, he said: "By Lāt and 'Uzzā, if I ever caught him in that act of worship, I would set my foot on his neck and rub his face in the dust." Then it so happened that he saw the Holy Messenger in that posture and came forward to set his foot on his neck, but suddenly turned

back as if in a fright and being asked what was the matter, he said there was a ditch of fire and a terrible apparition between himself and Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and some wings. On hearing this the Holy Prophet remarked: "Had he come near me, the angels would have smitten and torn him to pieces." (Aḥmad, Muslim, Nasā'i, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Abū Nu'aim Isfahānī, Baihaqī).

According to Ibn 'Abbās, Abū Jahl said: "If I caught Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) performing his Prayer by the Ka'bah, I would trample his neck down." When the Holy Prophet heard of it, he said: "If he acted so, the angels would seize him there and then." (Bukhārī, Tirmidhī, Nasā'i, Ibn Jarīr, 'Abdur Razzāq, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah).

According to another tradition from Ibn 'Abbās, the Holy Prophet was performing his Prayer at the *Maqām Ibrāhīm*. Abū Jahl passed that way and said: "O Muḥammad, did I not forbid you this, and then he started to threaten him." In reply the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) rebuked him severely. Thereupon he said: "O Muḥammad, on what strength do you rebuke me? By God, my followers in this valley far exceed yours in number." (Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasā'i, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ṭabarānī, Ibn Mardūyah).

Because of these very incidents the portion of this Sūrah beginning with *Kullā' inn-al-insāna la-yalghā* was sent down. Naturally the place of this part should be the same as assigned to it in this Sūrah of the Qur'ān, for after the coming down of the first Revelation the Holy Prophet had given expression to Islam first of all by the act of Prayer, and his conflict with the pagans.



اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ۝ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۝  
 اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ۝ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۝ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ  
 يَعْلَمُ ۝ كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِكَبَّيْطٍ ۝ إِنَّ تَرَاهُ اسْتَغْنَى ۝ إِنَّ إِلَى  
 رَبِّكَ التُّجْعَى ۝ أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَى ۝ عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّى ۝ أَرَأَيْتَ  
 إِنْ كَانَ عَلَى الْهُدَى ۝ أَوْ أَمَرَ بِالتَّقْوَى ۝ أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَذَّبَ وَ  
 تَوَلَّى ۝ أَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَى ۝ كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَه ۝  
 لَتَسْفَهًا ۝ بِالنَّاصِيَةِ ۝ نَاصِيَةٍ كَاذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ ۝ فليدء  
 نَادِيَهُ ۝ سَنَدءُ الرِّبَانِيَةِ ۝ كَلَّا ۝ لَا تُطَعُهُ ۝ وَاسْجُدْ  
 وَاقْتَرِبْ ۝

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XCVI

AL-'ALAQ العلق

Verses : 19

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Read<sup>1</sup> (O Prophet,) in the name of your Lord,<sup>2</sup> Who  
 created.<sup>3</sup> created man from a clot of congealed blood.<sup>4</sup> 1-5  
 Read: and your Lord is Most Generous, Who taught  
 knowledge by the pen:<sup>5</sup> taught man what he did not  
 know.<sup>6</sup>

Indeed not!<sup>7</sup> Man behaves rebelliously for he deems  
 himself to be self-sufficient,<sup>8</sup> (although) towards your  
 Lord indeed is the return.<sup>9</sup> Have you seen the one who  
 forbids a servant when he prays<sup>10</sup>? 6-19

What do you think : if (the Servant) be on the right path, or be exhorting to piety? What do you think : if (the one forbidding) be belying (the Truth) and turning away? Does he not know that Allah sees?<sup>11</sup> By no means!<sup>12</sup> If he does not desist, We shall drag him by his forelock, the forelock that is lying and utterly sinful.<sup>13</sup> So let him call his band of supporters;<sup>14</sup> We, too, shall call the angels of torment.<sup>15</sup> Nay, never! Do not obey him, and prostrate yourself and draw closer (to your Lord).<sup>16</sup>

1. As we have explained in the Introduction, when the Angel said to the Holy Prophet, "Read", the latter replied, "I cannot read!" This indicates that the Angel had presented these words of the Revelation before him in the written form and had asked him to read them. For if the Angel had meant that he should repeat what he recited, he should not have replied, saying: "I cannot read!"

2. "Read in the name of your Lord": Say *Bismillah* and read. This shows that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) even before the coming down of this Revelation regarded and acknowledged Allah alone as his Lord. That is why there was no need to ask who his Lord was, but it was said: "Read in the name of your Lord."

3. Only the word *khalaqa* (created) has been used absolutely, and the object of creation has not been mentioned. This automatically gives the meaning: "Read in the name of the Lord, Who is the Creator, Who created the whole universe and everything in it."

4 After making mention generally of the creation of the universe, mention has been made of man in particular, saying how Allah made him a perfect man starting his creation from an insignificant and humble state. 'Alaq is plural of 'alaqah, which means congealed blood. This is the primary state of the embryo which appears a few days after conception. Then it assumes the form of a lump of flesh, then afterwards it gradually takes human shape. (For details, see Al-Ĥajj : 5 and the corresponding E.N.'s 5 to 7).

5. That is, "It is a great favour of Allah that starting man's creation from a most insignificant state He made him possessor of knowledge which is the noblest attribute of creation, and He made him not only possessor of knowledge but also taught him the art of writing by the use of pen, which became the means of propagation,



progress, dissemination and preservation of knowledge on a large scale. Had He not given man the knowledge of the art of pen and writing (by inspiration) his intellectual faculty would have stagnated, and it would have had no opportunity to develop, expand and become a means of transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next and make future progress.

6. That is, Man originally was absolutely illiterate. Whatever of knowledge he obtained, he obtained it as a gift from Allah. Whatever doors of knowledge at any stage did Allah will to open for man, they went on opening up before him. This same thing has been expressed in the Verse of the Throne, thus: "And the people cannot comprehend anything of His knowledge save what He Himself may please to reveal." (Al-Baqarah : 255). Whatever man looks upon as his own scientific discovery was, in fact, unknown to him before. Allah gave him its knowledge whenever He willed without his realizing that Allah by His grace had blessed him with the knowledge of it.

These verses were the very first to be revealed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), as is stated in the *Hadith* reported by *Hadrat 'A'ishah*. This first experience was so intense and tremendous that the Holy Prophet could not bear it any more. Therefore, at that time he was only made aware that the Being Whom he already knew and acknowledged as his Lord and Sustainer was in direct communion with him, had started sending down Revelations to him, and had appointed him as His Prophet. Then after an intermission the opening verses of *Sūrah al-Muddaththir* were revealed in which he was told what mission he had to perform after his appointment to Prophethood. (For explanation, see Introduction to *Al-Muddaththir*).

7. That is, man should never adopt an attitude of ignorance and rebellion against the Bountiful God Who has been so generous to him.

8. That is, when the man has attained wealth, honour and rank and whatever else he desired to attain in the world, he becomes rebellious instead of being grateful and transgresses the boundaries of servitude to Allah.

9. That is, "Whatever he might have attained in the world, which makes him behave arrogantly and rebelliously, in the end he has to return to your Lord. Then he will realize what fate awaits him in consequence of his such attitude and behaviour."

10. "A Servant": the Holy Messenger of Allah himself. The Holy Prophet has been mentioned by this epithet at several places in the Qur'ān. For example, "Glory be to Him Who transported His servant one night from the *Masjid al-Harām* to the distant Temple." (Bani Isrā'il : 1); "All praise is for Allah Who has sent down this Book to His servant." (Al-Kahf : 1); "And that when the servant of Allah stood up to pray, the people got ready to assault him." (Al-Jinn : 19). This shows that it is a special style of love by which Allah makes mention of His Messenger Muḥammad (upon whom be His peace and blessings) in His Book. Besides, it also shows that Allah after appointing His Messenger to Prophethood had taught him the method of performing the Prayer. There is no mention of this method anywhere in the Qur'ān, saying: "O Prophet, perform the Prayer in this and this way." Hence, this is another proof that the Revelation sent down to the Holy Prophet did not only consist of what has been recorded in the Qur'ān, but besides this, other things also were taught to him by revelation, which are not recorded in the Qur'ān.

11. The audience here apparently is every just man, who is being asked: Have you watched the act of the person who prevents a Servant from God's worship? What do you think: if the Servant be rightly guided, or warning the people to fear God and refrain from evil, and this forbiddor be denying the Truth and turning away from it, what will his act be like? Could this man adopt such an attitude had he known that Allah is watching the man who is exhorting others to piety as well as him who is denying the truth and turning away from it? Allah's watching the oppressor and his wrongdoing and the oppressed and his misery by itself implies that He will punish the oppressor and redress the grievances of the wronged and down trodden person.

12. That is, the person who threatens that he would trample the neck of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) down when he performed the Prayer, would never be able to do so.

13. "The forelock" here implies the person with the forelock.

14. As we have explained in the Introduction, when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) rebuked Abū Jahl on his foolish behaviour, he had retorted: "O Muḥammad, on what strength do you threaten me? By God, my supporters in this valley far exceed yours in number." At this it is being said: "Let him call his band of supporters."

15. According to the explanation given by Qatādah, the word *zabāniyah* in the original, is used for the police in Arabic idiom, and *zabān* actually means to push away. The kings too kept armed attendants who would push out the one with whom the king was annoyed and angry. Therefore, what Allah means is: "Let him call his supporters; We too shall summon Our Police, i.e. the angels of torment, to deal with him and his supporters."

16. "*Sajdah*" (prostration) here implies the Prayer, so as to say: "O Prophet, continue to perform your Prayer fearlessly as you have been in the past, and seek your Lord's presence through it." In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim and other books of *Ḥadīth* there is a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Huraira to the effect: "The servant is nearest to his Lord when he is in the state of prostration", and in Muslim there is also a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah that when the Holy Prophet recited this verse, he performed a *sajdah* of recital.



XCVII

AL-QADR القدر



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## XCVII

AL-QADR      القدر

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Name**

The Sūrah has been so designated after the word *al-qadr* in the very first verse.

#### **Period of Revelation**

Whether it is a Makkī or a Madanī revelation is disputed. Abū Ḥayyān in *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt* has made the claim that the majority of scholars regard it as a Madanī Sūrah. 'Alī bin Aḥmad al-Wāḥidī in his commentary says that this is the first Sūrah to be sent down in Madīnah. Contrary to this, Al-Māwardī says that

according to the majority of scholars it is a Makki revelation, and the same view has Imām Suyūṭi expressed in *Al-Itqān*. Ibn Mardūyah has cited Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Az-Zubair and Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah as saying that this Sūrah was revealed at Makkah. A study of the contents also shows that it should have been revealed at Makkah as we shall explain below.

### **Theme and Subject-Matter**

Its theme is to acquaint man with the value, worth and importance of the Qur'ān. Its being placed just after Sūrah Al-'Alaq in the arrangement of the Qur'ān by itself explains that the Holy Book, the revelation of which began with the first five verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq, was sent down in a destiny-making night. It is a glorious Book and its revelation for mankind is full of blessings.

At the outset, Allah says: "We have sent it down." That is, it is not a composition of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) himself, but We Ourselves have revealed it.

Then, it is said that "We sent it down in the Night of Destiny." Night of Destiny has two meanings and both are implied here. First, that it is the night during which destinies are decided; or, in other words, it is not an ordinary night like the other nights, but a night in which destinies are made or marred. The revelation of this Book in this night is not merely the revelation of a book but an event which will change the destiny of not only the Quraish, or of Arabia, but of the entire world. The same thing has been said in Sūrah Ad-Dukhān for which please see Introduction to that Sūrah and E.N. 3 thereof. The other meaning is that this is a night of unique honour, dignity and glory; so much so that it is better than a thousand months. Thus, the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned, as if to say: "You on



account of your ignorance regard this Book, which Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has presented, as a calamity for yourselves and complain that a disaster has befallen you, whereas the night in which it was decreed to be sent down was such a blessed night that a task was accomplished in it for the well-being of mankind, which had never been accomplished even during a thousand months of history. This also has been said in verse 3 of Ad-Dukhān in another way, which we have explained in the Introduction to that Sūrah.

In conclusion, it has been stated that in this night the angels and Gabriel descend with every decree (which in verse 4 of Sūrah Ad-Dukhān has been described as *amr-hakim*: wise decree) by the leave of their Lord, and it is all peace from evening till morning; that is, there is no interference of evil in it, for all decrees of Allah are intended to promote good and not evil. So much so that even if a decision to destroy a nation is taken, it is taken for the sake of ultimate good, not evil.

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إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ۗ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ۗ لَيْلَةُ  
 الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ۗ تَنزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ وَالزُّجُرْجُ فِيهَا يَأْتِينَ  
 رَبَّهُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ امْرِيءٍ ۗ سَلَامٌ تُهَيِّئُ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ۗ

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## XCVII

### AL-QADR القدر

Verses : 5

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

We have sent down this (Qur'ān) in the Night of Glory.<sup>1</sup> And what do you know what the Night of Glory is? The Night of Glory is better than a thousand months.<sup>2</sup> The angels and the Spirit<sup>3</sup> descend in it with every decree, by the permission of their Lord.<sup>4</sup> That Night is peace, until the rising of the dawn.<sup>5</sup>

1-5

1. The words in the original are *anzalnā-hu*: "We Ourselves have sent it down". But although there is no mention of the Qur'ān before it, the Qur'ān is implied, for "sending down" by itself points out that the Qur'ān is meant. And there are numerous instances of this in the Qur'ān that if from the context, or the style, the antecedent of a pronoun is apparent, the pronoun is used even if the antecedent has not been mentioned anywhere before or after it. (For explanation, see E.N. 9 of An-Najm).

Here, it has been said: "We have sent down the Qur'ān in the Night of Destiny", and in Al-Baqarah : 185, "Ramaḍān is the month in which the Qur'ān was sent down." This shows that the night in which the Angel of God had brought down revelation for the first time to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) in the Cave

of Hirā, was a night of the month of Ramaḍān. This night has been described as *Lailat-ul-qadr* here and as *Lailat-im-mubarakah* in Sūrah Ad-Dukhān : 3 above.

There can be two meanings of sending down the Qur'ān in this night: first, that in this night the entire Qur'ān was entrusted to the bearers (angels) of Revelation, and then Gabriel (peace be on him) continued to reveal its verses and Sūrahs, from time to time, to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) during 23 years as the occasion and conditions demanded. This meaning has been given by Ibn 'Abbās. (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Hātim, Ḥākim, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqi). Second, that the revelation of the Qur'ān began in this night. This is Imām Sha'bī's view, although from him too the other view also is related, which is the view of Ibn 'Abbās as cited above. (Ibn Jarīr). Anyhow, in both cases, the meaning is the same that the revelation of the Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) began in this very night, and this was the night in which the five opening verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq were revealed. The fact, however, is that Allah did not compose the verses and the Sūrahs of the Qur'ān right at the time guidance was needed by the Holy Prophet for his message of Islam in respect of an occasion or affair, but even before the creation of the universe, in the very beginning, Allah had a full plan of the creation of mankind on the earth, of raising the Prophets in it, of sending down the Books to the Prophets, of raising the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) at the end of the line of the Prophets and of sending down the Qur'ān to him. In the Night of Destiny only the execution of the final phase of the plan began. No wonder if at that very time the entire Qur'ān was entrusted to the bearers of Revelation.

Some commentators have interpreted *qadr* to mean destiny (*taqdir*), i.e. it is the night in which Allah entrusts the decrees of destiny to the angels to be enforced. This is supported by verse 3 of Sūrah Ad-Dukhān: "This is a night in which every matter is decided wisely by Our command." On the contrary, Imām Zuhri says that *qadr* means glory and honour, thereby implying that it is a Night of Destiny. This meaning is supported by the words "*Lailat-ul-qadr* is better than a thousand months" of this Sūrah itself.

As for the question as to which night was, it is disputed and there are as many as 40 different views on this subject. However, a great majority of scholars hold the opinion that one of the odd nights of the last ten nights of the month of Ramaḍān is *Lailat-ul-qadr*, and among these also most scholars think that it is the 27th

night. Below we give the authentic *Ahādith* which have been reported in this connection:

According to Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said, in connection with *Lailat-ul-qadr*, that it is the 27th night. (Abū Da'ūd Ṭayālīsī). According to another tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, it is the last night of Ramaḍān. (Musnad Aḥmad).

When Zirr bin Ḥubaish asked Ḥaḍrat Ubayy bin Ka'b about *Lailat-ul-qadr*, he stated on oath, and did not make any exception, that it is the 27th night. (Aḥmad, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'i, Ibn Ḥibbān).

When Ḥaḍrat Abū Zarr was asked about it, he said: "Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat Ḥudhaifah and many other Companions of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had no doubt that it is the 27th night." (Ibn Abī Shaibah).

Ḥaḍrat 'Ubādah bin aṣ-Ṣāmit says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "*Lailat-ul-qadr* is one of the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramaḍān: 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, 29th, or the last night." (Musnad Aḥmad).

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Search for it among the last ten nights of Ramaḍān when there are still nine days in the month, or seven days, or five days." (Bukhārī). Most of the scholars have understood it to mean that by this the Holy Prophet meant the odd nights.

Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr said: "When nine days remain in the month, or seven days, or five days, or three days, or the last night." What he meant was that *Lailat-ul-qadr* should be sought among these dates. (Tirmidhī, Nasā'i).

According to Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Search for *Lailat-ul-qadr* among the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramaḍān. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī). Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar have also reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) observed *I'tikāf* (seclusion in the Mosque) during the last ten nights of Ramaḍān every year during his lifetime.

On the basis of the traditions related in this regard on the authority of great Companions like Ḥaḍrat Mu'āwiyah, Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās and others, a large number of the earliest scholars regard the 27th of Ramaḍān as *Lailat-ul-qadr*. Probably

Allah and His Messenger have not specified any one night for the reason so that the people, in their zeal to benefit from the virtues of *Lailat-ul-qadr*, should spend more and more nights in worship and devotion and should not remain content with only one night. Here the question arises that when it is night at Makkah, it is daytime in a large part of the world; therefore, the people of those parts can never take advantage of *Lailat-ul-qadr*. The answer is that the word night in Arabic is mostly used for the combination of the day and night. Therefore, the night preceding the day on any one of these dates of Ramaḍān can be *Lailat-ul-qadr* for that part of the world.

2. The commentators in general have understood this to mean that the good acts performed in this Night are superior in value to the good acts of a thousand months in which *Lailat-ul-qadr* is not included. There is no doubt that this is in itself correct and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has described great excellences and virtues of the good acts and devotions of this Night. According to a tradition related in Bukhārī and Muslim, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet said: "The one who remained standing in worship in the state of belief and for the sake of rewards from Allah during *Lailat-ul-qadr*, would have all his previous sins forgiven." And in Musnad Aḥmad, there is a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Ubādah bin aṣ-Ṣāmit, saying that the Holy Prophet said: *Lailat-ul-qadr* is among the last ten nights of Ramaḍān. The one who stood up in worship in order to take advantage of their rewards, Allah will forgive all his former and latter sins." But, the verse does not say: "To act righteously in *Lailat-ul-qadr* is better than acting righteously in a thousand months," but it says: *Lailat-ul-qadr* is better than a thousand months." And "a thousand months" also does not imply 83 years and 4 months exactly, but a very long period of time as "a thousand" denoted among the Arabs. Therefore, the verse means that in this one night a task was accomplished for the welfare of mankind the like of which had not been accomplished even during an indefinitely long period of history.

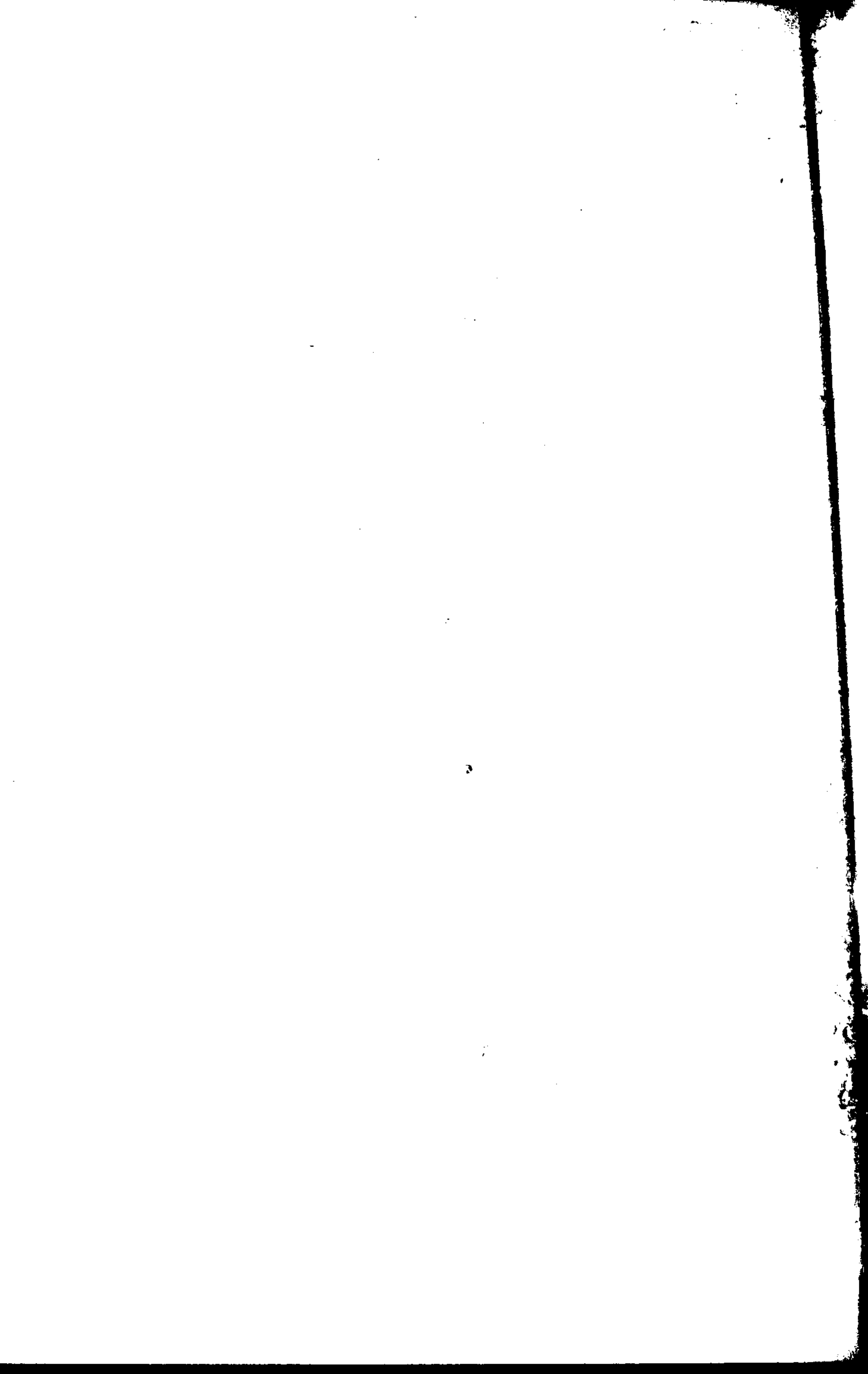
3. "The Spirit": Gabriel (peace be on him), who has been mentioned separately from the angels in view of his unique eminence, honour and merit.

4. That is, they do not descend of their own accord but by leave of their Lord, and "every decree" implies *amr ḥakim* (a wise decree) as described in Ad-Dukhān : 5.

5. That is, the entire Night, from evening till morning, is peace, free from every evil and mischief.

**XCVIII**

**AL-BAYYINAH** **البينه**





## XCVIII

### AL-BAYYINAH <sup>البينه</sup>

#### INTRODUCTION

##### **Name**

The Sūrah is so designated after the word *al-bayyinah* occurring at the end of the first verse.

##### **Period of Revelation**

Where it was revealed, at Makkah or Madīnah, is also disputed. Some commentators say it is a Makkī revelation according to most scholars; others say it is a Madanī revelation according to most scholars. Ibn Az-Zubair and 'Atā' bin Yasār hold the view that it is Madanī. Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah are reported to have held two views, first that it is Makkī, second that it is Madanī. Ḥadrat 'A'ishah regards it as a Makkī Sūrah.

Abū Ḥayyān, author of *Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*, and 'Abdul Mun'im ibn al-Faras, author of *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, also have preferred to regard it as Makkī. As for its contents, there is nothing in it to indicate whether it was revealed at Makkah or at Madīnah.

### **Theme and Subject Matter**

Its having been placed after Sūrahs Al-'Alaq and Al-Qadr in the arrangement of the Qur'ān is very meaningful. Sūrah Al-'Alaq contains the very first revelation, while Sūrah Al-Qadr shows as to when it was revealed, and in this Sūrah it has been explained why it was necessary to send a Messenger along with this Holy Book.

First of all, the need of sending a Messenger has been explained, saying: The people of the world, be they from among the followers of the earlier scriptures or from among the idolaters, could not possibly be freed from their state of unbelief, until a Messenger was sent whose appearance by itself should be a clear proof of his apostleship, and he should present the Book of God before the people in its original, pristine form, which should be free from every mixture of falsehood corrupting the earlier Divine Books, and which should comprise sound teachings.

Then, about the errors of the followers of the earlier Books it has been said that the cause of their straying into different creeds was not that Allah had not provided any guidance to them, but they strayed only after a clear statement of the Right Creed had come to them. From this it automatically follows that they themselves were responsible for their error and deviation. Now, if even after the coming of the clear statement through this Messenger, they continued to stray, their responsibility would further increase.

In this very connection, it has been stated that the Prophets who came from Allah and the Books sent down by Him, did not enjoin anything but that the way of sincere and true service to Allah be adopted, apart from all other ways, no one else's worship, service or obedience be mixed with His, the *ṣalāt* be established and the *zakāt* be paid. This same has been the true religion since ever. From this also it automatically follows that the followers of the earlier scriptures, straying from this true religion, have added extraneous things to it, which are false, and Allah's this Messenger has come to invite them back to the same original faith.

In conclusion, it has been pointed out clearly that the followers of the earlier Books and the idolaters who would refuse to acknowledge this Messenger are the worst of creatures: their punishment is an everlasting Hell; and the people who would believe and act righteously, and would spend life in the world in awe of God, are the best of creatures: their reward is eternal Paradise wherein they will live for ever. Allah became well pleased with them and they became well pleased with Allah.



لَوْ يَكُنُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالشِّرْكَائِ مُنْفَكِينَ حَتَّى  
 تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ ۚ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ اللَّهِ يَتْلُوا صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً ۚ فِيهَا كُتِبَ  
 قِيمَةٌ ۚ وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ  
 الْبَيِّنَةُ ۚ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ۗ حُنَفَاءُ  
 وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ  
 كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالشِّرْكَائِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ  
 هُمُ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ خَيْرُ  
 الْبَرِيَّةِ ۗ جَزَاءُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ  
 خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۗ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ۗ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ ۗ

## XCVIII

### AL-BAYYINAH البينه

Verses : 8

Revealed at Madinah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

The disbelievers<sup>1</sup> from among the people of the Book and the *mushriks*<sup>2</sup> would not desist (from their unbelief) until the clear evidence should come to them,<sup>3</sup> (that is,) a Messenger<sup>4</sup> from Allah, who should recite to them holy scriptures<sup>5</sup> containing sound and correct writings. 1-3

The people who were given the Book before this did not divide into sects until after the clear statement (of the Right Way) had come to them,<sup>6</sup> and the only Command they were given was to worship Allah, making their religion sincerely His, turning all their attention towards Him, and to establish the *ṣalāt* and to pay the *zakāt*: for this alone is the most true and right religion.<sup>7</sup> 4-5

Those who have disbelieved<sup>8</sup> from among the people of the Book and the *mushriks*, shall certainly enter Hell, and remain therein for ever. They are the worst of all creatures<sup>9</sup> As for those who believed and did righteous works, they are indeed the best of all creatures.<sup>10</sup> Their reward with their Lord shall be Gardens of Eternity beneath which rivers will be flowing; they shall live in them for ever and ever. Allah became well pleased with them and they with Allah. All this is for him who feared his Lord.<sup>11</sup> 6-8

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1. Here the word *kufr* (unbelief) has been used in its widest sense, which includes different forms of the unbelieving attitude. For example, some were unbelievers in the sense that they did not acknowledge Allah at all; some did acknowledge Allah but did not regard Him

as the One and only God, but worshipped others as well, thinking they were associates in Divine Being or Divine attributes and powers in one way or the other; some acknowledged oneness of God but committed some kind of *shirk* as well; some acknowledged God but did not acknowledge His Prophets and the guidance brought by them; some acknowledged one particular Prophet and disacknowledged another; others rejected the Hereafter. In short, there were different kinds of *kufir* in which the people were involved. And the statement: "the disbelievers from among the people of the Book and the *mushriks* ...", does not mean that some of them were not involved in *kufir*, but that those who were involved in *kufir* were of two kinds: the followers of the Book and the *mushriks*. Here, *min* has not been used for division but for explanation, as, for example, in Sūrah Al-Hajj : 30, where it has been said: *Fajtanib-ur-rijsa min al-athān*, which means: "therefore, guard yourselves against the filth of idols", and not: "guard yourselves against the filth which is in the idols." Likewise, *alladhīna kafarū min ahl-il-Kitābi wal-mushrikīn* means: "the disbelievers from among the followers of the Book and the *mushriks* ...", and not: "those who have disbelieved from these two groups."

2. Despite the common factor of *kufir* between them the two groups have been mentioned by separate names. The followers of the Book imply the people who possessed any of the revealed Books, even if in corrupted form, sent to the former Prophets, and they believed in it. And the *mushriks* (idolaters) imply the people who did not follow any Prophet nor believed in any Book. Although in the Qur'ān the *shirk*, (polytheism, idolatry) of the people of the Book has been mentioned at many places, e.g. about the Christians it has been said: "They say: God is one of the three" (Al-Mā'idah : 73); "The Messiah is son of God" (At-Taubah : 30); "The Messiah, son of Mary, is God" (Al-Mā'idah : 17); and about the Jews it has been said: "They say: Ezra is son of God" (At-Taubah : 30), yet nowhere in the Qur'ān has the term "*mushrik*" been used for them, but they have been mentioned as "*alladhīna ūt-ul-Kitāba*" (those who were given the Book), or by the words Jews and Christians. For they believed in the principle of *Tauhid* (Oneness of God) as the true religion, and then committed *shirk*. Contrary to this, for others than the followers of the Book, the word *mushrik* has been used as a term, for they acknowledged *shirk* (idolatry) as true religion and disacknowledged *Tauhid*. This distinction between the two groups

holds good not only in the use of the term but also in the *Shari'ah* injunctions. Animal flesh duly slaughtered by the followers of the Book has been declared lawful for the Muslims if they slaughter a lawful animal in the name of Allah in the prescribed way, and permission to marry their women also has been given. On the contrary, neither the animal slaughtered by the *mushriks* is lawful for the Muslims nor is marriage with their women.

3. That is, "There was no means of their being freed from this state of unbelief except that a clear evidence (of the truth) should come and make them understand the falsity of every form of *kufr* and its being untrue, and should present the right way before them in a clear and rational way." This does not mean that after the coming of the clear evidence they would give up *kufr*, but that in the absence of the clear evidence it was not at all possible that they would be delivered from that state. However, if even after its coming some of them still persisted in their *kufr*, then they themselves would be responsible for it; they could not complain that Allah had made no arrangement for their guidance. This same thing has been expressed in the Qur'an at different places in different ways, e.g. in Sūrah An-Nahl : 9, it is said: "Allah has taken upon Himself to show the Right Way"; in Sūrah Al-Lail : 12, it is said: "It is for Us to show the Way"; in Sūrah An-Nisā : 163-165: "O Prophet, We have sent Revelation to you just as We had sent it to Noah and other Prophets after him ... All these Messengers were sent as bearers of good news and warners so that, after their coming, the people should have no excuse left to plead before Allah"; and in Sūrah Al-Mā'idah : 19: "O people of the Book, this Messenger of Ours has come to you and is making clear to you the teachings of the Right Way after a long interval during which there had come no Messengers, lest you should say: 'No bearer of good news nor warner came to us. Lo, now the bearer of good news and warner has come.' "

4. Here, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself has been called "the clear evidence", for his life before and after Prophethood, his presenting a Book like the Qur'an in spite of being unlettered, his bringing about an extraordinary revolution in the lives of the converts to Islam through education and training, his educating the people in rational beliefs, clean and pure forms of worship, excellent morals and the best principles and injunctions for human life, perfect harmony and agreement between his word and deed, and his constancy of purpose in respect of his message in spite of

every kind of resistance and opposition, all these were clear signs of the truth that he was Allah's Messenger.

5. Lexically, *ṣuḥuf* means "written pages", but in the Holy Qur'ān this word has been used as a term for the Books revealed to the Prophets of Allah (peace be upon them); and by the holy scriptures are meant the scriptures which are free from every mixture of falsehood, every kind of error and moral filth. The full import of these words becomes evident when one studies the Bible (and the books of other religions as well) vis-a-vis the Holy Qur'ān, and finds written in them along with sound teachings such things as are not only opposed to truth and reason but are also morally contemptible. After reading them when one turns to the Qur'ān, one realizes how pure and hallowed this Book is.

6. That is, the reason why the people of the Book before this were divided into countless sects because of different kinds of error and deviation, was not that Allah had failed to send "a clear evidence" from Himself for their guidance, but the fact that they adopted the wrong way after guidance had come from Allah; therefore, they themselves were responsible for their deviation, for Allah had fulfilled His obligation towards them. Likewise, since their scriptures are no longer pure and their books no longer consist of original and correct teachings, Allah by sending a Messenger of His, as a clear evidence, with a hallowed Book, containing sound and pure teachings, has again fulfilled His obligation towards them, so that if even after that they remained divided, they themselves should be responsible for it and should have no excuse left to plead before Allah. This thing has been stated at many places in the Qur'ān, e.g. see Al-Baqarah : 213, 253; Āl-'Imrān : 19; Al-Mā'idah : 44-50; Yūnus : 93; Ash-Shūrā : 13-15; Al-Jāthiyah : 16 18, along with the corresponding notes for fuller understanding.

7. That is, the message of the same religion, which now the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is preaching, had been given to the people of the Book by the Prophets who came to them and by the Books which were sent among them; they had not been enjoined any of the false beliefs and wicked deeds which they adopted afterwards and created different sects. Right and correct religion has always been the same: that Allah alone should be served and worshipped exclusively, none else be joined with Him in worship, man should become worshipper of One Allah alone and



obedient to His Command only, should establish the *ṣalāt* and pay the *zakāt*. (For further explanation, see E.N. 19 of Al-A'rāf; E.N.'s: 108, 109 of Yūnus, E.N.'s 43 to 47 of Ar-Rūm; E.N.'s 3, 4 of Az-Zumar).

Some commentators have taken the words *dīn al-qayyimah* in this verse in the meaning of *dīn al-millat al-qayyimah*: "Religion of the righteous community". Some others have taken *qayyimah* in the superlative sense and understood it in the same meaning as we have adopted in our translation.

8. "Disbelieved": refused to acknowledge the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) as Allah's Messenger. The meaning is that the end of those from among the *mushriks* and the followers of the Book, who have not acknowledged the Messenger, whose emergence by itself is a clear evidence, and who is reciting to them hallowed pages containing sound and correct teachings, will be as is being described below.

9. That is, they are worse than all creatures of God, even than animals, for the animals do not possess reason and power, but these people reject the Truth in spite of having reason and authority.

10. That is, they are superior to all creatures of God, even to the angels, for the angels do not have the power to disobey, and these people adopt Allah's obedience in spite of having the power to disobey Him.

11. In other words, the person who did not live in the world fearless and independent of God, but feared Him at every step lest he should do something which might entail His wrath and punishment, will have this reward reserved for him with Allah.



**XCIX**

**AZ-ZILZĀL** الزلزال



## XCIX

### AZ-ZILZĀL الزلزال

#### INTRODUCTION

##### Name

It is derived from the word *zilzāl* in the first verse.

##### Period of Revelation

Whether or not it was revealed, at Makkah or Madinah, is disputed. Ibn Mas'ūd, 'Aṭā', Jābir and Mujāhid say that it is a Makki Sūrah and a statement of Ibn 'Abbās also supports this view. On the contrary, Qatādah and Muqātil say that it is Madani and another statement of Ibn 'Abbās also has been cited in support of this view. That it is a Madani Sūrah is reasoned from a tradition from Iḥādrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī, which Ibn Abi Hātim has related from him. He says: "When the verse *Fa-man ya'mal mithqāla dharratin khairan yarah, wa man ya'mal mithqāla dharratin sharran yarah*, was revealed, I said; O Messenger of Allah, shall I really see

my deeds? The Holy Messenger replied in the affirmative. I submitted: And every major sin? He replied: yes. I said: And the minor sins too? He replied: yes. Thereupon I exclaimed that I would then be ruined. The Holy Prophet said: Rejoice, O Abū Sa'īd, for each good act will be equal to ten good acts like it." The basis of the argument for this Sūrah's being Madani is that Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī was an inhabitant of Madīnah and reached maturity after the Battle of Uhud. Therefore, if this Sūrah was revealed in his presence, as is apparent from his statement, it must be a Madani Sūrah. However, the practice that the Companions and their immediate successors followed in respect of the occasion of the revelation of the verses and Sūrahs, has already been explained in the Introduction to Sūrah Ad-Dahr above. Therefore, a Companion's saying that a verse was sent down on this or that particular occasion is no proof that it was sent down on that very occasion. It may well be that after coming of age when Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd heard this Sūrah for the first time from the Holy Prophet, terrified by its last portion he might have asked the Holy Prophet the questions which we have cited above, and he might have narrated the incident saying that when this verse was revealed he put this and this question to the Holy Prophet. In the absence of this tradition every reader who reads the Qur'ān with understanding, will feel that it is a Makkī Sūrah. More than that: from its theme and style he would feel that it must have been sent down in the earliest stage at Makkah when the fundamental principles and beliefs of Islam were being presented before the people in a concise but highly effective way.

### **Theme and Subject-Matter**

Its theme is the second life after death and presentation in it before man of the full record of the deeds

done by him in the world. In the first three sentences it has been told briefly how the second life after death will take place and how confounding it will be for man. In the next two sentences it has been said that this very earth on which man has lived and performed all kinds of deeds thoughtlessly, and about which he never could fancy that this lifeless thing would at some time in the future bear witness to his deeds, will speak out on that Day by Allah's command and will state in respect of each individual person what act he had committed at a particular time and place. Then, it has been said that men on that Day, rising from their graves, will come out in their varied groups from all corners of the earth, to be shown their deeds and works, and their presentation of the deeds will be so complete and detailed that not an atom's weight of any good or evil act will be left un-noticed or hidden from his eyes.







إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا ۖ وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا ۖ وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ  
 مَا لَهَا ۖ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا ۗ بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْخِي لَهَا ۖ يَوْمَئِذٍ  
 يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا ۗ لِيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ ۖ فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ  
 خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ۖ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ۖ

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AZ-ZILZĀL الزلزال

Verses : 8

Revealed at Madinah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

When the earth is shaken with her utmost shaking,<sup>1</sup> and the earth casts out all the burdens from within her,<sup>2</sup> and man says, "What has befallen her?"<sup>3</sup>—On that Day shall she relate whatever had happened (on her),<sup>4</sup> for your Lord shall have commanded her (to do so). On that Day men shall turn up in sundry groups<sup>5</sup> to be shown their deeds.<sup>6</sup> Then, whoever has done an atom's weight of good, shall see it; and whoever has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it.<sup>7</sup>

1-8

1. *Zalzalah* means to shake violently over and over again. Thus, *zulzilāt-il-ardu* means that the earth will be shaken violently by convulsion after convulsion, and since shaking of the earth has been mentioned, it automatically gives the meaning that the entire earth will be shaken and not a limited territory of it. Then, in order to express the great intensity of the earthquake the word *zilzalahā* has been added, which literally means "its being shaken". It means: "It will be so shaken as a huge sphere like it ought to be shaken, or

shaken to its utmost intensity." Some commentators have taken it to imply the first earthquake with which the first stage of Resurrection will begin, i.e. when all living beings will perish and the present order of the world will be upset. But, according to a large section of them, it implies the earthquake with which the second stage of Resurrection will begin, i.e. when all the former and the latter generations of mankind will rise back to life. This second commentary seems to be more correct, for the whole subsequent theme supports it.

2. This same has been expressed in Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq : 4, thus : "And throws out whatever is within it, and becomes empty." It has several meanings : (1) It will cast out bodies of the dead in whatever form and state and wherever they may be lying in the earth; and the following sentence indicates that at that time all the scattered parts of the bodies will reassemble and be resurrected once again in the same form and shape as they had been in their first life, for if it were not so, how will they say : "What has happened to the earth ?" (2) It will not only cast out the dead bodies of men but also all traces and evidences of the words, deeds and activities of their former life lying buried in it; the following sentence points out that the earth will narrate all that had happened on its back. (3) A third meaning also has been given by some commentators, saying that it will cast out the treasures of gold, silver, jewels and every kind of wealth lying hidden in the earth's belly and man will see it and realize how he thirsted for these things in the world : how he committed murders, thefts, robberies and piracies in the land and sea, usurped the rights of others, waged wars and devastated vast populations. On that Day all that will lie heaped up before him, yet of no avail, but will rather become a means of punishment for him.

3. Man here may as well imply every man, for after resurrection and coming to senses the first impression of every man will be as to what was happening around him; afterwards he will realize that it was the Resurrection Day. Man may also imply the man who denies the Hereafter, for what he regarded as impossible would be happening in front of him and causing him confusion and bewilderment. As for the believers, they will not be bewildered and confused, for everything would be taking place according to their belief and conviction. To an extent, this second meaning is supported by verse 52 of Sūrah Yā Sīn, in which it has been said that the deniers of the

Hereafter at that time will exclaim : "Ah, who has roused us from our sleeping-place ?" And the reply given would be : "This is the same which the Merciful God had promised; and the Messengers sent by God had spoken the truth." This verse does not expressly say that this answer to the disbelievers would actually be given by the believers, for there is no indication of it in the verse. The probability, however, is that the believers will give them this answer.

4. According to Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) recited this verse and asked : "Do you know what annals it will relate ?" The people said : "Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge." Thereupon the Holy Prophet said : "The annals are that the earth will testify to the deeds which every man and woman has done on its back." She will say : "He or she had done such and such a thing on such and such a day. These will be the annals the earth will narrate." (Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ḥākim, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī in *Ash-Shu'ab*). According to Ḥaḍrat Rabī'ah al-Kharashī, the Holy Prophet said : "Beware of the earth, for it is your root and basis, and there is nothing which a person does on it, and it will not report, whether it is good or bad." (*Mu'jam at-Ṭabarānī*). Ḥaḍrat Anas reports that the Holy Prophet said : "The earth on the Day of Resurrection will bring out every act that would have been done on its back. Then he recited these verses." (Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī). About Ḥaḍrat 'Alī it is related that when he distributed the money of the *Bait al-Māl* (public treasury) among the needy ones and thus empty it, he would perform two *rak'ahs* of the Prayer in it and say : "You will have to bear witness that I filled you with justice and emptied you with justice."

It might have been difficult for a man of ancient times to understand how the earth will speak and narrate the annals and events happening on it on the Resurrection Day, but in the present age of scientific discoveries and the inventions of cinema, loud-speaker, radio, television, tape-recorder, electronic equipment, etc., it is no longer difficult to understand how the earth will narrate its annals. The impression of whatever man speaks is preserved in the air, in the radio waves, on the particles of the walls and floors and ceilings of the houses, and on the environments of the road, plain or field if he spoke outside the house. If Allah so wills He can make these things repeat all these voices precisely in the way these were uttered in the first instance by man. Man at that time will hear with his ears and

know that that was his own voice, and all his acquaintances also will testify that whatever they were hearing was the person's own voice and his own accent. Then whatever man has done anywhere on the earth, and in whatever state, has had its impression on everything of the environment and its image inscribed on it. Even if he did something in pitch dark, there are such rays in the Kingdom of God for which darkness and light make no difference; they can preserve his image in any case. All these images will pass before man on the Resurrection Day like a motion picture, and will show him when and where he had done something during his life on the earth.

The fact is that although Allah directly knows whatever a man does, yet in the Hereafter when He will establish His Court, He will punish every culprit only after fulfilling all the demands of justice. Any case which is brought before His Court against a criminal will be proved with such perfect evidence that no room will be left to doubt his being a criminal. The first and foremost evidence against him is the records in which the two recording angels are recording his each word and deed. (Qāf : 17-18, Al-Infīṭār : 10-12). This record will be handed over to him and he will be asked to read it, for "you yourself suffice as reckoner against yourself." (Bani Isrā'īl : 14). Reading it man will be bewildered, for "it has left nothing un-recorded of our deeds, small or great." (Al-Kahf : 49). Then there is man's own body which he had used in the world. In Allah's Court his own tongue will bear witness as to what he had been speaking through it in the world, his own hands and feet will bear witness as to what deeds he had committed through them (An-Nūr : 24). His eyes and his ears will bear witness as to what he saw and heard by their means. Even the skin of his body will bear witness to his deeds. Bewildered he will ask his limbs, "Why have you borne witness against me?" They will reply : "The same God Who has given speech to everything has given us speech." (Ḥā Mim As-Sajdah : 20-22). On top of these, there will be the witnesses which will be presented from the earth and all its environments, in which man will hear his own voice by his own ears and see the exact pictures of his own deeds by his eyes. Furthermore, the ideas, motives and aims hidden in the heart of man and the intentions with which he had performed every deed will be brought out and placed before him as is stated in Sūrah Al-'Ādiyāt below. That is why with the production of such absolute, clear and undeniable proofs, mar

will be confounded and he will be left with no chance to say anything in self-defence to excuse himself. (Al-Mursalāt : 35-36).

5. This can have two meanings : (1) That each man will present himself in his own individual capacity—families, groups, parties, nations, all will scatter away. This thing has been said at other places also in the Qur'ān, e.g. according to Sūrah Al-An'ām : 94, Allah on that Day will say to the people : "So, you have come before Us all alone, as We created you at first", and in Sūrah Maryam : "He will appear before Us all alone" (v. 80), and "Everyone of them will be presented before Him individually on the Resurrection Day." (v. 95). (2) That the people who during thousands and thousands of years had died at different places, will be rising from different corners of the earth and proceeding in groups, as has been said in Sūrah An-Nabā : "The day the Trumpet is blown, you will come out in crowds." (v. 18) Apart from these, there is no room in the word *ashtātan* for the meanings, which different commentators have given, and are, therefore, outside the literal bounds of this word, although they are correct by themselves and in accordance with the conditions depicted of the Resurrection Day in Qur'ān and the *Hadith*.

6. This can have two meanings : (1) That they are shown their deeds, i.e. each one told what he did in the world; and (2) that they are shown the rewards of their deeds. Although this second meaning also can be taken of the words *li-yurau' a'mālahum*, Allah has not said *li-yurau' jazā'a a'mālahum* (so as to be shown the rewards of their deeds) but *li-yurau' a'mālahum* (so as to be shown their deeds). Therefore, the first meaning only is preferable, especially when at several places in the Qur'ān it has been stated clearly that the disbeliever and the believer, the righteous and the wicked, the obedient and the disobedient, all will be given their records (e.g. see Al-Hāqqah : 19, 25; Al-Inshiqāq : 7, 10). Evidently, there is no difference between showing somebody his deeds and handing over to him his record. Furthermore, when the earth will narrate whatever had happened on her, the whole picture of the conflict between the Truth and the falsehood that has been raging since the beginning of time and will continue to rage till the end, also will appear before the people and they will see what part the truth-loving people played in it and what vile deeds did the supporters of falsehood commit against them. It may well be that the people will hear with their own ears all the

speeches and dialogues of the callers to right guidance and of the publicists of error and evil; the whole record of the writings and literature produced by the two sides will be placed intact before them, and the people gathered together in the Plain of Assembly will see with their own eyes the persecution of the lovers of Truth by the worshippers of falsehood and all the scenes of the bitter conflict that raged between the two parties.

7. A simple and straightforward meaning of this statement, and it is right and correct, is that not an atom's weight of good or evil done by a person, will have been left unrecorded in his conduct book, and he will see it in any case. But if seeing is taken to imply seeing its reward and punishment, it will be wrong to take it in the meaning that in the Hereafter every person will be rewarded for his most ordinary good act and punished for his most minor offence, and no one will be left un-rewarded for a good and unpunished for an evil done by him. For in the first place, it would mean that each evil act will be punished and each good act rewarded separately; secondly, it also means that no believer, however righteous and virtuous, will remain safe from being punished for a most ordinary error, and no disbeliever, however wicked and iniquitous, will be left unrewarded for a most ordinary good act. Both these meanings are opposed not only to the explanations given in the Qur'ān and the *Hadith*, but also to reason. From the point of view of reason, it is not understandable that a master would refuse to pardon a most loyal and dutiful servant for a most minor error, and along with rewarding him for each act of service and obedience, would also punish him for each and every error. Likewise, this also is not understandable from the viewpoint of reason that a person brought up and favoured by you should prove disloyal and treacherous and ungrateful in spite of your favours, and you, over-looking his collective attitude, should punish him for each act of treachery separately and reward him for each, even if most insignificant, act of service separately. As for the Qur'ān and the *Hadith*, they have laid down a detailed law of rewards and punishments for the different categories of the people, be they believers, hypocrites, disbelievers, righteous believers, erring believers, wicked and sinful believers, common disbelievers, or wicked and mischievous disbelievers, and these rewards and punishments pervade the entire life of man, from here to the Hereafter.

In this connection, the Qur'ān has stated, in principle, certain things explicitly :

First, that the deeds of the disbelievers, idolaters and hypocrites (i.e. the deeds regarded as virtuous) have been rendered vain; they will receive no reward for them in the Hereafter; if at all they deserve a reward for them, they will receive it here in the world. For this, see Al-A'rāf : 147, At-Taubah : 17, 67-69; Hūd : 15-16; Ibrāhīm : 18; Al-Kahf : 104-105; An-Nūr : 39; Al-Furqān : 23; Al-Aḥzāb : 19; Az-Zumar : 65; Al-Aḥqāf : 20.

Second, that evil will be punished to the extent that evil has been committed, but the good deeds will be rewarded much more generously than what they will actually deserve. At some places it has been explicitly stated that a good act will have a tenfold reward for it, and at others that Allah will increase the reward of the good act as much as He will please. For this, see Al-Baqarah : 261, Al-An'ām : 160, Yūnus : 26-27, An-Nūr : 38, Al-Qaṣaṣ : 84, Sabā : 37, Al-Mu'min : 40.

Third, that if the believers abstained from major sins, their ordinary offences will be forgiven. (An-Nisā' : 31, Ash-Shūrā : 37, An-Najm : 32).

Fourth, that the righteous believer shall have an easy reckoning, his evils will be overlooked and he will be rewarded according to his best deeds. (Al-'Ankabūt : 7, Az-Zumar : 35, Al-Aḥqāf : 16, Al-Inshiqāq : 8).

The *Ḥadīth* also is very explicit in this regard. In the commentary of Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq above, we have cited the *Aḥādīth* which have been reported from the Holy Prophet in connection with the explanation of easy reckoning and severe accountability. (See E.N. 6 of Al-Inshiqāq). Ḥaḍrat Anas says that once Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Ṣiddīq was having his meals with the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). In the meantime this verse was revealed. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr withdrew his hand from food and said : "O Messenger of Allah, shall I see the result of every little evil that I have happened to commit?" The Holy Prophet replied : "O Abū Bakr, whatever unpleasant and troublesome things you experience in the world, will compensate for the little evils that you happened to commit, and Allah is reserving every little good that you do for your Hereafter." (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ṭabarānī in *Al-Ausat*, Baihaqī in *Ash-Shu'ab*, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ḥākim, Ibn Mardūyah, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid). The Holy Messenger of Allah had explained this verse also to Ḥaḍrat Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī, saying : "Whoever from among you does good will

have his reward in the Hereafter, and whoever commits an evil will suffer punishment for it in this very world in the form of misery and disease. (Ibn Mardūyab). Qatādah has related this saying of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas : "Allah does not wrong a believer in the world : He provides him sustenance in lieu of his good deeds; in the Hereafter He will reward him for these. As for the disbeliever, he is recompensed for his good deeds in the world itself; then when Resurrection takes place, he will have no good work left to his credit." (Ibn Jarīr). Masrūq has related from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah that she asked the Holy Prophet : "In the pre-Islamic days of ignorance 'Abdullah bin Jud ān treated his kindred kindly, fed the poor, received his guests well, earned freedom for the captives. Will this be of any use to him in the Hereafter ? The Holy Prophet replied : No, he never said until death : *Rabbighfir-li khaṭi'atī yaum ad-din* : 'My Lord, forgive me my errors on the Judgement Day.'" (Ibn Jarīr) The Holy Prophet gave similar replies also in respect of the other people, who did good deeds in the pre-Islamic days, but died as pagans. But there are certain other sayings of the Holy Prophet, which show that although the good done by a disbeliever cannot save him from the fire of Hell, yet in Hell he will not be subjected to the severe punishment which will be the lot of the wicked, sinful and villainous disbelievers, e.g. according to a *Ḥadīth*, Ḥātim Ṭā'ī in view of his generosity will be subjected to a light punishment in Hell (*Rūḥ al-Ma'ūni*).

However, this verse warns man of a truth of vital importance which is this: Even a most ordinary good has its own weight and its own value, and the same is also true of evil: even a most ordinary evil will also be considered and taken into account; it will not just be overlooked. Therefore, no good act, however small and insignificant, should be left undone, for many such good acts can collect and be regarded as a major good act in the reckoning with Allah. Likewise, even a most ordinary evil also should not be committed, for a large number of such ordinary errors can become serious sins. The same thing has been described by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in several *Aḥādīth*. According to a tradition related in Bukhārī and Muslim, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Adī bin Ḥātim, the Holy Prophet said : "Save yourselves from the fire of Hell even if it be by giving away a bit of a date, or by uttering a good word." Again from Ḥaḍrat 'Adī, in an authentic tradition, the Holy Prophet's this



saying has been reported: "Do not look upon any good work as insignificant, even if it be emptying a bucket into the vessel of one asking for water, or receiving a brother of yours with a pleasant face." According to a tradition reported in Bukhāri from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet, addressing the women, said: "O Muslim women, no woman should look upon sending a gift to her neighbour as mean, even if it be the hoof of a goat." A tradition has been related in Musnad Aḥmad, Nasā'i and Ibn Mājah from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "O 'Ā'ishah, abstain from the sins which are looked upon as trivial, for they too will be enquired about by Allah." Musnad Aḥmad contains a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "Beware of minor sins, for they will gather together on man, so much so that they will kill him." (For the distinction between the grave and the trivial offences, see E.N. 53 of An-Nisā' and E.N. 32 of An-Najm).



C

AL-‘ĀDIYĀT العديت



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

C

AL-'ĀDIYĀT العديت

## INTRODUCTION

### Name

The Sūrah has been so entitled after the word *al-'ādiyāt* with which it opens.

### Period of Revelation

Whether it is a Makki or a Madani Sūrah is disputed. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Jābir, Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Ikrimah and 'Atā' say that it is Makki. Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik and Qatādah say that it is Madani; and from Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās two views have been reported, first that it is a Makki Sūrah, and second that it is Madani. But the subject-matter of the Sūrah and its style clearly indicate that it is not only Makki but was also revealed in the earliest stage at Makkah.

**Theme and Subject-Matter**

Its object is to make the people realize how evil man becomes when he denies the Hereafter, or becomes heedless of it, and also to warn them that in the Hereafter not only their visible and apparent deeds but even the secrets hidden in their hearts too will be subjected to scrutiny.

For this purpose the general chaos and confusion prevailing in Arabia, with which the whole country was in turmoil, has been presented as an argument. Bloodshed, loot and plunder raged on every side. Tribes were subjecting tribes to raids, and no one could have peaceful sleep at night from fear that some enemy tribe might raid his settlement early in the morning. Every Arab was fully conscious of this state of affairs and realized that it was wrong. Although the plundered bemoaned his miserable, helpless state and the plunderer rejoiced, yet when the plunderer himself was plundered, he too realized how abject was the condition in which the whole nation was involved. Referring to this very state of affairs, it has been said: Unaware of the second life after death and his accountability before God in it, man has become ungrateful to his Lord and Sustainer. He is using the powers and abilities given by God for perpetrating tyranny and pillage; blinded by the love of worldly wealth he tries to obtain it by every means, however impure and filthy, and his own state itself testifies that by abusing the powers bestowed by his Lord he is being ungrateful to Him. He would never have behaved so, had he known the time when the dead will be raised from the graves, and when the intentions and motives with which he had done all sorts of deeds in the world, will be exposed and brought out before everyone to see. At that time the Lord and Sustainer of men shall be well informed of what one had done and what punishment or reward one deserved.



وَالْعَدِيَّاتِ صَبْحًا ۚ فَاثْرَنَ بِهِ  
 نَعْمًا ۚ فَوَسَطْنَ بِهِ جَنَّةً ۚ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُودٌ ۚ وَإِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ  
 لَشَهِيدٌ ۚ وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ ۚ أَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِي الْقُبُورِ ۚ  
 وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّهُم بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيرٌ ۚ

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## العديت AL-'ADIYAT

Verses : 11

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

By the (horses) who run with panting breath;<sup>1</sup> then dash off sparks (with their hoofs);<sup>2</sup> then charge suddenly in the morning;<sup>3</sup> then raise up dust in doing so; then penetrate into a host in a body! Verily, man is ungrateful to his Lord;<sup>4</sup> and he himself is a witness to it;<sup>5</sup> and he loves the worldly wealth with all his heart.<sup>6</sup> But, does he not know the time when all that lies (buried) in the graves shall be brought out,<sup>7</sup> and all that lies (hidden) in the breasts shall be divulged and examined?<sup>8</sup> Surely, their Lord on that Day shall be well informed of them.<sup>9</sup>

1-11

1. There is no indication in the words of the verse to show whether "those who run" imply the horses; only the word *wal-'Adiyat* (by those who run) has been used. That is why the commentators have disputed as to what is implied by "those who run". One section of the Companions and their immediate successors has been to think that it implies the horses; another section says that it

implies the camels. But since the peculiar sound called *dabḥ* is produced only by the panting, snorting horses, and the following verses also in which mention has been made of striking sparks and raiding a settlement early at dawn and raising clouds of dust, apply only to the horses, most scholars are of the opinion that horses are meant. Ibn Jarīr says: "Of the two views this view is preferable that by "those who run" horses are implied, for the camel does not breathe hard in running, it is the horse which does so, and Allah has said: 'By those runners which pant and breathe hard in running'." Imām Rāzī says: "The words of these verses proclaim that horses are meant, for the sound of *dabḥ* (panting breath) is only produced by the horses, and the act of striking sparks of fire with the hoofs too is associated with the horses, and, likewise, mounting of a raid early at dawn is easier by means of the horses than by other animals."

2. "Dashing off sparks" indicates that the horses run in the dead of night, for the sparks struck by their hoofs become conspicuous only at night.

3. The practice among the Arabs was that when they had to mount a raid on a settlement, they marched out in the night so as to take the enemy by surprise; then they would launch a sudden attack early in the morning so that everything became visible in the light of day, and at the same time it did not become so bright that the victim could notice their movement from a distance and be ready to meet the offensive.

4. This is for which an oath has been sworn by the horses, which run with panting breath and dash off sparks at night, then raising dust rush to assault a settlement at dawn and penetrate into the enemy host. It is astonishing to note that a large number of the commentators have taken these horses to imply the horses of the Muslim fighters and the enemy host to imply the host of disbelievers, whereas the oath has been sworn to impress the point that "man is highly ungrateful to his Lord". Now, obviously, in the course of *Jihād* for the sake of Allah, the rushing forth of the fighters' horses and their assaulting a host of disbelievers all of a sudden, does not at all support the point that man is ungrateful to his Lord, nor the following sentences, viz. "man himself is a witness to it, and he loves the worldly wealth with all his heart," apply to the people who go out to fight in the cause of Allah. Therefore, one will have to admit that the oaths sworn in the first five verses of this Sūrah, refer, in fact, to the general blood-shed, loot and plunder prevalent in Arabia



at that time. In the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, the night was a very dreadful thing: in it the people of every tribe and settlement apprehended the danger of a sudden attack by some unknown enemy, and when the light of day appeared, they would heave a sigh of relief that the night had passed in peace. The tribes did not fight only retaliatory wars but different tribes also raided others in order to deprive them of their worldly goods and herds and to capture their women and children to be made slaves. This kind of tyranny and plunder was carried out mostly by means of the horses, which Allah is presenting here as an argument for the fact that man is ungrateful to his Lord. That is, the powers which man is employing for fighting, shedding blood and plundering had not been given him by God for this purpose. Therefore, this indeed is sheer ingratitude that the resources granted by Allah and the power given by Him should be used for causing chaos and corruption to spread in the earth, which Allah abhors.

5. That is, his own conscience and his own deeds are a witness to it; then there are many disbelievers also who by their own tongue express their ingratitude openly, for they do not even believe that God exists, to say nothing of acknowledging His blessings for which they may have to render gratitude to Him.

6. Literally, "He is most ardent in the love of *khair*". But the word *khair* is not only used for goodness and virtue in Arabic but also for worldly wealth. In Sūrah Al-Baqarah : 180, *khair* has been used in the meaning of worldly wealth. The context itself shows where *khair* has been used in the sense of goodness and where in that of worldly goods. The context of this verse clearly shows that here *khair* means worldly wealth and not virtue and goodness. For about the man who is ungrateful to his Lord and who by his conduct is himself testifying to his ingratitude, it cannot be said that he is very ardent in the love of goodness and virtue.

7. That is, the dead men will be raised back as living men from whatever state and wherever they would be lying buried in the earth.

8. That is, all the intentions, aims and objects, ideas and thoughts and the motives behind acts and deeds that lie hidden in the hearts, will be exposed and examined in order to sort out the good from the evil. In other words, judgement will not be passed only on the apparent and superficial as to what a man practically did, but the secrets hidden in the hearts also will be brought out to see what were

the intentions and motives under which a man did what he did. If man only considers this he cannot help admitting that real and complete justice cannot be done anywhere except in the Court of God. Secular laws of the world also admit in principle that a person should not be punished merely on the basis of his apparent act but his motive for so acting also should be seen and examined. But no court of the world has the means by which it may accurately ascertain the motive and intention. This can be done only by God: He alone can examine the underlying motives behind every apparent act of man as well as take the decision as to what reward or punishment he deserves. Then, as is evident from the words of the verse, this judgement will not be passed merely on the basis of the knowledge which Allah already has about the intentions and motives of the hearts, but on Resurrection Day these secrets will be exposed and brought out openly before the people and after a thorough scrutiny in the Court it will be shown what was the good in it and what was the evil. That is why the words *huṣṣila mā fiṣṣudūr* have been used. *Tahṣil* means to bring out something in the open, and to sort out different things from one another. Thus, the use of *tahṣil* concerning hidden secrets of the hearts contains both the meanings: to expose them and to sort out the good from the evil. This same theme has been expressed in Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭāriq, thus: "The Day the hidden secrets are held to scrutiny." (v. 9)

9. That is, He will be knowing full well who is who, and what punishment or reward he deserves.

CI

AL-QĀRIʿAH القَارِعَة



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

CI

AL-QĀRI'AH الْقَارِعَة

## INTRODUCTION

### **Name**

The Sūrah takes its name from its first word *al-qāri'ah*. This is not only a name but also the title of its subject-matter, for the Sūrah is devoted to Resurrection.

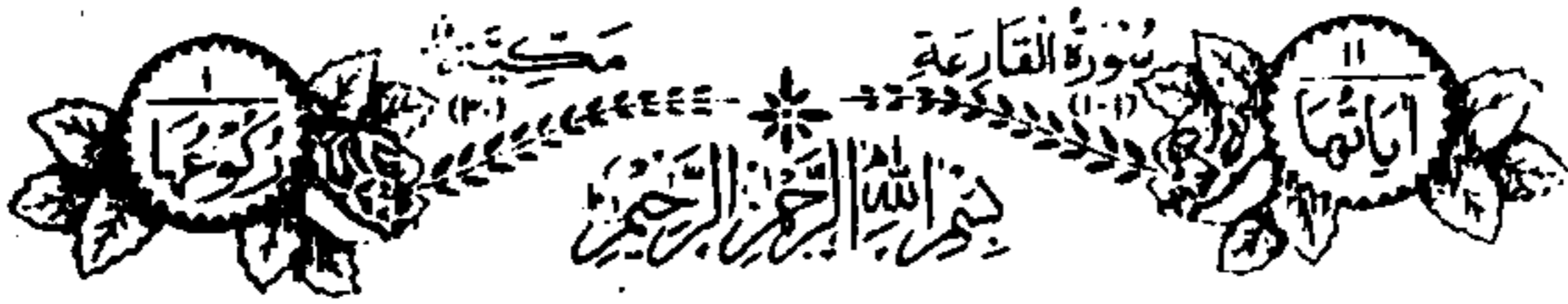
### **Period of Revelation**

There is no dispute about its being a Makkī Sūrah. Its contents show that this too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

### **Theme and Subject-Matter**

Its theme is Resurrection and the Hereafter. At the outset, the people have been aroused and alarmed,

saying: "The Great Disaster! What is the Great Disaster? And what do you know what the Great Disaster is?" Thus, after preparing the listeners for the news of a dreadful calamity, Resurrection has been depicted before them in two sentences, saying that on that Day people will be running about in confusion and bewilderment just like so many scattered moths around a light, and the mountains uprooted, will lose their cohesion and will fly about like carded wool. Then, it has been said that when Allah's Court is established in the Hereafter and the people are called upon to account for their deeds, the basis of judgement will be the weight of good deeds. The people whose good deeds are found to be heavier than their evil deeds, will be blessed with bliss and happiness, and the people whose good deeds are found to be lighter than their evil deeds, will be cast into the deep pit full of burning fire.



الْقَارِعَةُ ۗ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ ۗ وَمَا أَذْرُكَ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ ۗ أَيُّومَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ  
 كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوثِ ۗ وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ ۗ فَأَمَّا مَنْ  
 ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ ۗ فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ ۗ وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ ۗ  
 فَأُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ ۗ وَمَا أَذْرُكَ مَا هِيَ ۗ نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ ۗ

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## AL-QĀRI'AH القارعة

Verses : 11

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

The Great Disaster!<sup>1</sup> What is the Great Disaster? 1-11  
 And what do you know what the Great Disaster is?—the  
 Day when men shall be like scattered moths and the  
 mountains like carded wool of different colours.<sup>2</sup> Then,<sup>3</sup>  
 he whose scales are heavy, shall be in a state of bliss,  
 and he whose scales are light,<sup>4</sup> shall have the deep pit  
 for his dwelling.<sup>5</sup> And what do you know what it is?  
 A raging Fire!<sup>6</sup>

1. "Qāri'ah" literally means the "striking one". Qar' is to strike one thing upon another so severely as to produce a noise. In view of this literal meaning, the word qāri'ah is used for a dreadful disaster and a great calamity. At another place in the Qur'ān this word has been used for a great affliction befalling a nation. In Sūrah Ar-Ra'd : 31, it has been said : "As for the disbelievers, because of their misdeeds, one affliction or the other does not cease to visit them every now and then." But, here the word al-Qāri'ah has been used for the Resurrection and in Sūrah Al-Hāqqah too the Resur-

rection has been described by this very epithet (v. 4). One should remember that here the whole Hereafter; from the first stage of Resurrection to the last stage of judgement and meting out of rewards and punishments, is being depicted together.

2. This will be the first stage of Resurrection, when in consequence of the Great Disaster the whole of the present order of the world will be overthrown; the people then will be running about in confusion and bewilderment like so many scattered moths around a light; and the mountains will be flying about like carded wool of different colours. The mountains have been compared to wool of different colours because of the existence of a variety of colours in them.

3. From here begins description of the second stage of Resurrection when after having been resurrected men will appear in the Court of God.

4. The word *mawāzin* in the original can be plural of *mauzīn* as well as of *mīzān*. In the first case, *mawāzin* would imply the deeds which might have some weight in the sight of Allah and be, thus, worthy of appreciation; in the second case, *mawāzin* would imply scales of a balance. In the first case, the meaning of the *mawāzin*'s being heavier or lighter is that the good deeds will be heavy or light as against the evil deeds, for in the sight of Allah only good deeds have any weight and worth. In the second case, the meaning of the *mawāzin*'s being heavy is that the scale of the good deeds will be heavier than the scale of evil deeds, in Allah Almighty's Balance of Justice, and their being light means that the scale of good deeds will be lighter than the scale of evil deeds. Besides, in Arabic idiom the word *mīzān* is also used for weight (*wazan*); accordingly, the weight's being heavy or light implies the good deeds being heavy or light. In any case, whether *mawāzin* is taken in the meaning of *mauzīn* or of *mīzān*, or of *wazan*, the intention remains the same, which is that the basis of judgement in the Divine Court will be whether the provision of the deeds that a man has brought is weighty or weightless, or whether his good deeds are heavier than his evil deeds or lighter. This theme has occurred at several places in the Qur'ān, which explains the meaning fully well. In Sūrah Al-A'rāf it has been said: "On that Day the weight will be identical with the Truth: accordingly, those whose scales will be heavy will alone come out successful; and those whose scales are light will be the ones who will have incurred loss upon themselves." (vv. 8-9). In Sūrah



Al-Kahf, it was said : "O Prophet, say to them : Should we tell you who are the most un-successful people and miserable failures in regard to their deeds ? They are those all whose endeavours in the worldly life had gone astray from the Right Way, but they were under the delusion that everything they were doing, was rightly directed : these are the people who rejected the Revelations of their Lord and did not believe that they would ever go before Him. Therefore, all their deeds were lost, for We will assign no weight to them on the Day of Resurrection." (vv. 103-105). In Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' : "On the Day of Resurrection, We will set up just and accurate balances so that no one will be wronged in the least in any way; even if it be an act equal in weight to a grain of mustard seed, We will bring it forth (to be weighed) and We suffice for reckoning". (v. 47). These verses show that *kufr* and denial of the truth is by itself such a stupendous evil that it will certainly lower the scale of evils, and there will be no good act of the disbelievers, which may have any weight in the scale of good deeds so that its scale of goodness may become heavy. However, in the scales of the believer there will be the weight of Faith as well as the weight of the good deeds which he performed in the world. On the other hand, every evil done by him will be placed in the scale of evil deeds and then it will be seen whether his scale of the good deeds is heavier or his scale of the evil deeds.

5. The words in the original are : *ummu-hū ḥāwiyah* : "his mother will be *ḥāwiyah*." *Ḥāwiyah* is from *ḥawā*, which means to fall from a height to a depth, and *ḥāwiyah* is the deep pit into which something falls. Hell has been called *Ḥāwiyah* because it will be very deep and the culprits will be thrown into it from the height. As for the words, "his mother will be *Ḥāwiyah*", they mean : Just as the mother's lap is the child's abode, so Hell will be the culprits' only abode in the Hereafter.

6. That is, it will not merely be a deep pit but will also be full of raging fire.



CII

AT-TAKATHUR التكاثر



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

## CII

### AT-TAKĀTHUR التكاثر

#### INTRODUCTION

##### Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *at-takāthur* in the first verse.

##### Period of Revelation

Abū Ḥayyān and Shaukānī say that this Sūrah, according to all commentators, is Makkī, and this same is the well known view according to Imām Suyūṭī. However, there are some traditions, on the basis of which it is considered a Madanī Sūrah, and they are as follows :

Ibn-Abī Ḥātim has cited Abū Buraidah as saying that this Sūrah was sent down concerning the two tribes, Banī Ḥārithah and Banī al-Ḥarth, of the Anṣār. The

two tribes had first recounted the glories and illustrious deeds of their living men; then they had gone to the grave-yard and bragged of the glorious deeds of their dead. Thereupon the Divine Revelation *Alhākum at-takāthur* came down. But, if the practice of the Companions and their successors concerning the occasions of revelation, is kept in view, this tradition is no argument to prove that Sūrah At-Takāthur was sent down on that very occasion, but it shows that this Sūrah fully applied to the act of the two tribes.

Imām Bukhārī and Ibn Jarīr have cited this view of Ḥadīrat Ubayy bin Ka'b: "We took the Holy Prophet's saying: 'If the son of Adam had two valleys full of wealth, he would long for a third valley; the son of Adam's belly cannot be filled but by earth', to be from the Qur'ān until *Alhākum at-takāthur* was sent down." This *Ḥadīth* has been regarded as an argument for Sūrah At-Takāthur to be a Madani Sūrah on the ground that Ḥadīrat Ubayy had become a Muslim in Madīnah. But Ḥadīrat Ubayy's this statement does not indicate in what sense the Companions regarded this saying of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as belonging to the Qur'ān. If it means that they regarded it as a verse of the Qur'ān, it cannot be acceptable, for a great majority of the Companions consisted of the men who were well aware of each and every word of the Qur'ān; they could not have the misunderstanding that the *Ḥadīth* was a verse of the Qur'ān. And if its belonging to the Qur'ān is taken to mean its being derived from the Qur'ān, the tradition can also mean that when the Companions who entered Islam in Madīnah, heard this Sūrah for the first time from the Holy Prophet, they thought that it had been revealed just then, and then about the Holy Prophet's above saying they formed the idea that it was derived from this very Sūrah.

Ibn Jarir, Tirmidhi, Ibn al-Mundhir and other traditionists have related this view of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī: "We were in doubt about the torment of the grave until *Alhākum at-takāthur* was sent down." This view has been regarded as an argument for Sūrah At-Takāthur to be Madanī on the ground that the torment of the grave was first mentioned at Madinah; no mention of it was ever made at Makkah. But this is wrong. In the Makki Sūrahs of the Qur'ān, the torment of the grave has been mentioned at many places so clearly that there can be no room for any such doubt; for example, see Al-An'ām : 93, An-Nahl : 28, Al-Mu'minūn : 99-100, Al-Mu'min : 45-46, which are all Makki Sūrahs. Therefore, if anything is proved by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī's saying, it is that Sūrah At-Takāthur had been revealed before the revelation of the above-mentioned Makki Sūrahs, and its revelation had removed the Companions' doubt about the torment of the grave.

That is why, in spite of these traditions, a great majority of the commentators are agreed that this Sūrah is Makki. In our opinion this is not only a Makki Sūrah but in view of its contents and style it is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

### Theme and Subject-Matter

In it the people have been warned of the evil consequences of world-worship because of which they spend their lives in acquiring more and more of worldly wealth, material benefits and pleasures, and position and power, till death, and in vying with one another and bragging and boasting about their acquisitions. This one pursuit has so occupied them that they are left with no time or opportunity for pursuing the higher things in life. After warning the people of its evil end they have been told

as if to say: "These blessings which you are amassing and enjoying thoughtlessly, are not mere blessings but are also a means of your trial. For each one of these blessings and comforts you will surely be called to account in the Hereafter."





أَلْهَكُمُ التَّكَاثُرُ ۚ حَتَّىٰ دُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ ۗ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۗ ثُمَّ كَلَّا  
 سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۗ كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ ۗ لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ ۗ ثُمَّ  
 لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ ۗ ثُمَّ لَسْتُمْ لَهَا يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ ۗ

## CII

### AT-TAKĀTHUR التُّكَاثُرُ

Verses : 8

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

Your craze for more and more and mutual rivalry for worldly gains has made you heedless,<sup>1</sup> until (in the same craze) you reach the graves.<sup>2</sup> By no means! Soon you shall know!<sup>3</sup> Again (note it well) by no means! Soon you shall know. Nay! Had you known with certainty of knowledge (the end of this way of life, you would never have acted thus). You shall certainly see Hell. Again (note it well that) you shall most certainly see it. Then, on that Day, you shall certainly be called to account for the blessings and comforts of life.<sup>4</sup>

1. The words *alhākum at-takāthur* of the original are too vast in meaning to be fully explained in a passage.

*Alhākum* is from *lahv* which originally means heedlessness, but in Arabic this word is used for every occupation which engrosses man so completely that he becomes heedless of the more important things in life. When the word *alhākum* is made from this root, it will mean that man has become so obsessed with some occupation that he has lost sight of everything more important than it. He is pre-occupied with it, is wholly lost in pursuit of it and this obsession has rendered him heedless of everything else in life.

*Takāthur* is from *kathrat*, which has three meanings: (1) That man should strive to gain more and more of everything; (2) that the people should vie with one another for gaining more and more; and (3) that they should brag and boast of possessing greater abundance of things than others.

Therefore, *alhākum at-takāthur* would mean: "Takāthur (greed for more and more) has so occupied you that its pursuit has made you heedless of every higher thing in life." In this sentence it has not been indicated as to abundance of what is meant in *takāthur*, heedlessness of what is implied in *alhākum*, and who are the addressees of *alhākum*. In the absence of such an explanation, the words become applicable in their most general and extensive meaning. Thus, *takāthur* does not remain restricted in meaning and application but applies to all the gains and benefits, pleasures and comforts, the passion for acquiring more and more means of power and authority, vying with others in pursuit of these and bragging and boasting of their abundance. Likewise, the addressees of *alhākum* also do not remain limited but the people of all ages, in their individual as well as collective capacity, become its addressees. It gives the meaning that the passion for acquiring more and more of the worldly wealth, vying with others in pursuit of it and bragging and boasting of its possession has affected individuals as well as societies. Likewise, since in *alhākum at-takāthur* it has not been pointed out as to which people are engrossed in acquisitiveness and of what they are rendered heedless, it has also become very extensive in meaning. It means that the passion for piling up more and more has made the people heedless of everything more important than it. They have become heedless of God, of the Hereafter, of the moral bounds and moral responsibilities, of the rights of others and of their own obligations to render those rights. They are only after raising the standard of living and do not bother even if the standard of humanity be falling. They want to acquire more and more of wealth no matter how and by what means it is acquired. They desire to have more and more means of comfort and physical enjoyment and, overwhelmed by this greed, they have become wholly insensitive as to the ultimate end of this way of living. They are engaged in a race with others to acquire more and more of power, more and more of forces, more and more of weapons, and they have no idea that all this is a means of filling God's earth with tyranny and wickedness and of destroying humanity itself. In short, *takāthur* has many forms, which have engrossed

individuals as well as societies so completely that they have become heedless of everything beyond the world, its benefits and pleasures.

2. That is, "You expend your whole life in the same craze and endeavour, until the time comes when you must die and leave the world."

3. That is, "You are under the delusion that the abundance of the worldly goods and surpassing others in it, is real progress and success, whereas the opposite is the case. Soon you will know its evil end and you will realize that it was a stupendous error in which you remained involved throughout your life. "Soon" may mean the Hereafter, for, for the Being Whose sight comprehends all ages, from eternity to eternity, a few thousand years or a few hundred thousand years can only be a short span of the eternal time. But it can also mean death, for death is not very far away from any man, and soon after death man will come to know whether the occupations which engaged him throughout life were a means of good fortune and success for him, or of misfortune and failure.

4. "Then" in this sentence does not mean that accountability will be held after the culprits have been cast into Hell, but it means: "Then We give you the news that you will be questioned about these comforts of life," and obviously this questioning will be held at the time of accountability in the Divine Court. Its chief argument is that in several *Aḥādīth* it has been reported from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) that the believers and the disbelievers, both will have to account for the blessings granted by Allah. However, the people who did not show ingratitude but spent their lives as grateful servants of Allah, will come out successful from the accountability, and those who proved thankless to Allah for His blessings and committed ingratitude by word or by deed, or by both, will emerge as failures.

Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah says: "The Holy Prophet once visited us and we served him with fresh dates and gave him cool water to drink. Thereupon he said: "These are of the blessings about which you will be questioned." (Musnad Ahmad, Nasā'i, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid, Baihaqī in *Ash-Shu'ab*).

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah has reported that the Holy Prophet once asked Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar to accompany him to the place of Abul-Haitham bin at-Taiḥān Anṣārī. Thus, he took them

to the oasis of Ibn at-Taihān. The latter brought a bunch of dates and placed it before them. The Holy Prophet said: "Why didn't you pluck the dates yourself?" He said: "I thought you would yourselves select and eat dates of your choice." So, they ate the dates and drank cool water. At the end, the Holy Prophet said: "By Him in Whose hand is my life: this is of the blessings about which you will be questioned on the Resurrection Day: the cool shade, the cool dates, the cool water." (This tradition has been narrated in different ways by Muslim, Ibn Mājah, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi, Nasā'i, Ibn Jarīr, Abū Ya'lā and others, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, in some of which the name of the Anṣārī Companion has been mentioned and in some he has been referred to as a person from among the Anṣār. This incident has been related with several details by Ibn Abī Ḥātim from Ḥaḍrat 'Umar and by Imām Aḥmad from Abū 'Asīb, the Holy Prophet's freed slave. Ibn Hibbān and Ibn Mardūyah have related a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, which shows that an almost similar thing had happened in the house of Ḥaḍrat Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī).

These *Aḥādīth* make it explicit that not only the disbelievers but the righteous believers too will be questioned. As for the blessings which Allah has bestowed on man, they are unlimited and countless. There are many blessings of which man is not even conscious. The Qur'ān says: "If you try to count the blessings of Allah, you will not be able to calculate them." (Ibrāhīm : 34). Countless of them are the blessings which Allah has granted directly to man, and a large number of these are the blessings which man is granted through his own skill and endeavour. About the blessings that accrue to man in consequence of his own labour and skill, he will have to render an account as to how he acquired them and in what ways he expended them. In respect of the blessings directly bestowed by Allah, he will have to give an account as to how he used them. And in respect of all the blessings, on the whole, he will have to tell whether he had acknowledged that those blessings had been granted by Allah and whether he had expressed gratitude for them to Allah with his heart, and by word and deed, or whether he thought he had received all that accidentally, or as a gift from many gods, or whether he held the belief that although those were the blessings of One God, in their bestowal many other beings also had a part, and for that very reason he had taken them as his gods and worshipped and thanked them as such.

CIII

AL-'ASR العَصْر



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

## CIII

AL-'ASR <sup>العصر</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

#### Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *al-'asr* occurring in the first verse.

#### Period of Revelation

Although Mujāhid, Qatādah and Muqātil regard it as a Madani Sūrah, yet a great majority of the commentators opine that it is Makki; its subject-matter also testifies that it must have been sent down in the earliest stage at Makkah, when the message of Islam was being presented in brief but highly impressive sentences so that the listeners who heard them once could not forget them even if they wanted to, for they were automatically committed to memory.

**Theme and Subject-Matter**

This Sūrah is a matchless specimen of comprehensiveness and brevity. A whole world of meaning has been compressed into its few brief words, which is too vast in content to be fully expressed even in a book. In it, in a clear and plain way it has been stated what is the way to true success for man and what is the way to ruin and destruction for him. Imām Shāfe'ī has very rightly said that if the people only considered this Sūrah well, it alone would suffice them for their guidance. How important this Sūrah was in the sight of the Companions can be judged from the tradition cited from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Ḥiṣn ad-Dārimī Abū Madīnah, according to which whenever any two of them met they would not part company until they had recited Sūrah Al-'Asr to each other. (Ṭabarānī)





وَالْعَصْرِ ۝ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ۝ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَ  
تَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ ۖ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ۝

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### CIII

## AL-‘ASR العَصْر

Verses : 3

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

By the Time! Man is surely in loss, except those who believed and did good works, and exhorted one another to Truth, and exhorted one another to patience.<sup>1</sup>

1-3

1. In this Sūrah an oath has been sworn by the Time to impress the point that man is in sheer loss and only those people are an exception from the loss who are characterised by four qualities : (1) Faith, (2) righteous deeds, (3) exhorting one another to Truth, and (4) exhorting one another to patience. Let us consider each of these parts separately in order to understand the meaning fully.

As for the oath, we have explained several times above that Allah has not sworn an oath by any of the created objects on account of its glory or its excellence and wonderful qualities but for the reason that it testifies to the truth which is meant to be established. Therefore, the oath by Time signifies that Time is witness to the truth that man is in sheer loss except for the people who possess the four qualities. .

The word time is used for the past as well as for the passing time in which the present, in fact, does not signify any long stretch of time. Every moment, when it has passed, becomes past, and every moment of the future, when it is passing, becomes present, and when it has passed, becomes past. Here, since the oath has been sworn by

time absolute, both kinds of time are included in its meaning. The oath by the past time means that human history testifies that the people who were without these qualities eventually incurred loss, and in order to understand the significance of the oath by the passing time, one should understand that the time which is now passing is, in fact, the time which has been given to every single individual and every single nation to work in the world. Its example is of the time which is allotted to a candidate for answering his question-paper in the examination hall. The speed with which this time is passing can be estimated from the movement of the second-hand in the watch. Even a second is a considerable amount of time, for during this very second light travels 1,86,000 miles, and in the Kingdom of God there may as well be many things which move even faster than light, but are not yet known to man. However, if the speed of the passing time be regarded the same as of the movement of the second-hand, and we consider that whatever act, good or bad, we perform and whatever occupation we pursue, takes place [in the limited span of age that we have been given for work in the world, we feel that our real wealth is this very time, which is passing so quickly. Imām Rāzi has cited a scholar as saying: "I understood the meaning of Sūrah Al-'Asr from an ice-seller, who was calling aloud for the attention of the people repeatedly in the bazar, : 'Have mercy on the one whose wealth is melting away!' Hearing what he was crying I said to myself: this then is the meaning of *Wal-'asr-i innal-insāna la-fi khusr-in*. The age-limit that man has been allotted is passing quickly like the melting away of ice. If it is wasted, or expended in wrong pursuits, it will be sheer loss to man." Thus, swearing an oath by the Time what has been said in this Sūrah, means that the fast passing Time is witness that devoid of these four qualities in whatever occupation and work man is expending his limited span of life, he is engaged in bad bargains; only such people are engaged in good bargains, who work in the world, characterised by the four qualities. It would be just like calling attention of the candidate, who was expending the time allotted for solving the question paper in some other pursuit, to the wall clock in the examination hall, to tell him that the passing time bore witness that he was causing loss to himself; the candidate benefiting by the Time was he who was using every moment of the allotted time in solving the paper.

Though the word Man has been used in the singular, in the following sentences those people have been made an exception from it,

who are characterised by the four qualities. Therefore, one will have to admit that here the word Man has been used as a collective noun, denoting a class, and it applies equally to individuals, groups, nations, and entire mankind. Thus, the general statement that whoever is devoid of the above four qualities, is in loss, would be proved in any case whether it is a person who is devoid of these, or a nation, or all men of the world. It will be just like giving the verdict that poison is fatal for man; it will mean that poison is fatal in any case whether it is taken by an individual, or a nation, or all the people of the world. Poison's being fatal is an unchangeable truth; it does not make any difference whether one man has taken it, or a nation has decided to take it, or all the people of the world collectively have agreed to take poison. Precisely in the same way this truth by itself is unchangeable that man's being devoid of the above four qualities brings him loss. The general rule is not at all affected even if one man is devoid of these, or a nation, or all the people of the world agree that they would exhort one another to disbelief, immorality, falsehood and servitude to the self.

Now, let us see in what sense has the Qur'ān used the word *khusr* (loss). Lexically, *khusr* is an antonym of *nafa'* (profit); in trade this word is used in the case when loss results from one bargain as well as in the case when the whole business is running in loss, and also in the case when man loses all his capital and becomes bankrupt. The Qur'ān has made this word a special term of its own and uses it as an antonym of *salāh* (true success). And just as its concept of *salāh* is not merely synonymous with worldly prosperity but comprehends man's true success from the world till the Hereafter, so its concept of *khusr* (loss) also is not merely synonymous with worldly failure or distress but comprehends man's real failure and disappointment from the world till the Hereafter. We have explained the Qur'ānic concept of both *salāh* and *khusrān* at several places above which need not be repeated here. (For this please see E.N. 9 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 30 of Al-Anfāl, E.N. 23 of Yūnus, E.N. 102 of Banī Isrā'īl, E.N. 17 of Al-Hajj, E.N.'s 1, 2, 11, 50 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 4 of Luqmān, E.N. 34 of Az-Zumar). Besides, one should also understand that although according to the Qur'ān true success is man's success in the Hereafter and real loss his failure there, yet in this world too what the people describe as success is not, in fact, real success but its end in this world itself is failure, and what they regard as loss is not, in fact, loss but a means of true success even

in this world. This truth has been stated by the Qur'ān at several places and we have explained it everywhere accordingly. (Please see E.N. 99 of An-Nahl, E.N. 53 of Maryam, E.N. 105 of Tā Hā, E.N.'s 3-5 of Al-Lail). Thus, when the Qur'ān states conclusively and absolutely that Man is certainly in loss, it implies loss both in this world and in the Hereafter; and when it says that only such people are secure from this loss, who are characterised by the four qualities, it implies their being secure from loss and attaining to true success both here and in the Hereafter.

Now, let us consider the four qualities on the existence of which depends man's being secure from loss and failure.

Of these the first quality is *Imān* (Faith). Although this word at some places in the Qur'ān has been used in the meaning of only verbal affirmation of Faith (e.g. in An-Nisā' : 137, Al-Mā'idah : 54, Al-Anfāl : 20, 27, At-Taubah : 38, Aş-Şaff : 2) it has primarily been used in the meaning of believing sincerely and faithfully, and in the Arabic language also this word has this very meaning. Lexically, *āmanū lahū* means *şaddaqa-hū wa'tamada 'alai-hi* : "affirmed him and put faith in him", and *āmana bi-hi* means *aiqana bi-hi* : "had full faith in him." The Faith which the Qur'ān regards as true Faith has been explained in the following verses :

"In fact, true believers are those who believed in Allah and His Messenger, then entertained no doubt." (Al-Hujurāt : 15)

"Those who said : 'Allah is our Lord', and then stood steadfast by it." (Hā Mim As-Sajdah : 30)

"True believers are those whose hearts tremble with awe, whenever Allah is mentioned to them." (Al-Anfāl : 2)

"Those who have believed adore Allah most ardently." (Al-Baqarah : 165)

"Nay, (O Prophet), by your Lord, they can never become believers until they accept you as judge for the decision of the disputes between them, and then surrender to your decision with entire submission without the least resentment in their hearts." (An-Nisā' : 65)

The following verse is even more explicit as regards the distinction between verbal affirmation of Faith and true Faith; it says that what is actually desirable is true Faith and not mere verbal affirmation of the Faith :

"O you who profess to have believed, believe sincerely in Allah and His Messenger." (An-Nisā' : 136)

As for the question, what has one to believe in, in order to have true faith? this also has been answered and explained in the Qur'ān most explicitly. First, it implies that one has to believe in Allah, not merely in His Being but in the sense that He alone is God; no one else is an associate in His Godhead; He alone is worthy that man should worship, serve and obey Him; He alone can make or mar destinies; man should invoke Him alone and have trust in Him alone; He alone can enjoin things and forbid things; man is under obligation to obey Him and refrain from what He forbids; He sees everything and hears everything; not to speak of any act of man, even his motives and intentions with which he has done an act, are not hidden from Him. Secondly, one has to believe in the Messenger, in the sense that he is a guide and leader appointed by Allah: whatever he has taught, is from Allah, is based upon the truth and has to be acknowledged and accepted. This belief in Apostleship also includes faith in the angels, the Prophets, the Divine Books and in the Qur'ān itself, for this forms part of the teachings which the Messenger of Allah has given. Thirdly, one has to believe in the Hereafter, in the sense that man's present life is not his first and last life, but after death man has to be resurrected, to render an account to God of the deeds done in the present life, and has to be rewarded for the good deeds and punished for the evil deeds accordingly. This Faith provides a firm basis for morality and character, upon which can be built the edifice of a pure life, whereas the truth is that without such Faith, the life of man, however beautiful and pleasing outwardly, is like a ship without an anchor, which is at the mercy of the waves wherever they may take it.

After Faith the second quality required to save man from loss is to perform righteous deeds (*ṣāliḥāt*). *Ṣāliḥāt* comprehends all kinds of virtuous and good deeds. However, according to the Qur'ān, no act can be a good act unless it is based on Faith and it is performed in obedience to the guidance given by Allah and His Messenger. That is why in the Qur'ān exhortation to perform good deeds is preceded everywhere by Faith, and in this Sūrah too it has been mentioned after the Faith. Nowhere in the Qur'ān has a deed without Faith been called a good deed, nor any reward promised for a deed performed without Faith. On the contrary, this also is a fact that only that Faith is reliable and beneficial, the sincerity of which is proved by man's own act and deed, otherwise Faith without righteous deeds would be a false claim refuted by the man himself when in spite of

this claim he follows a way opposed to the way taught by Allah and His Messenger. The relationship between Faith and righteous deed is of the seed and the tree. Unless the seed is sown in the soil, no tree can grow out of it. But if the seed is in the soil and no tree is growing out of it, it would mean that the seed is lost in the soil. On this very basis whatever good news has been given in the Qur'an, has been given to the people who believe and do good deeds, and the same has been reiterated in this Sūrah. What man requires to do after the Faith in order to remain secure from loss is to perform righteous deeds. In other words, mere Faith without righteous deeds cannot save man from loss.

The above two qualities are such as must be possessed by every single individual. Then, the Sūrah mentions two further qualities, which a man must have in order to be saved from loss. They are that the people who believe and do good deeds must exhort one another to truth and to patience. This means that, in the first place, a believing and righteous people should not live as individuals but should create a believing and righteous society by their combination. Second, that every individual of this society must feel his responsibility not to let the society become degenerate. Thus, all its members are duty bound to exhort one another to truth and to patience.

Truth is the antonym of falsehood, and generally it is used in two meanings: (1) A correct and right thing which is in accordance with justice and truth, whether it relates to belief and faith or to mundane affairs; and (2) the right which is obligatory on man to render, whether it is the right of God, the right of man, or the right of one's own self. Thus, to exhort one another to truth means that the society of the believers should not be so insensitive that falsehood may thrive and things against justice and truth be done in it, and the people be watching everything indifferently. On the contrary, it should be a living, sensitive society so that whenever and wherever falsehood appears, the upholders of the Truth should rise up against it, and no member of the society should rest content with only himself adhering to truth, righteousness, justice and rendering the rights of others, but should exhort others also to adopt the same way of life. This is the spirit that can ensure security of society against moral degeneration and decay. If a society becomes devoid of this spirit, it cannot remain secure from loss, and eventually even those people also are affected by the loss, who might in their

own way be adhering to the truth, but were insensitive to violation of the truth in their society. The same has been stated in Al-Mā'idah, thus: "Those who adopted the way of disbelief among the children of Israel were cursed by the tongue of David and of Jesus, son of Mary, because they had grown rebellious and become transgressors: they would not forbid one another to do the wrong deeds they committed." (vv. 78-79), Then the same idea has been expressed in Al-A'raf, thus: "When the children of Israel totally forgot the teachings (of observing the Sabbath), We seized with a severe scourge all those who were transgressors, and We saved those who used to forbid evil" (v. 165); and in Sūrah Al-Anfāl, thus: "And guard against that mischief which will not bring punishment in particular to the mischief-makers alone from among you." (v. 25) That is why to enjoin what is good and to forbid what is evil, has been enjoined on the Muslim community as a duty (Āl-'Imrān : 104) and the community which performs this duty has been declared to be the best community (Āl-'Imrān : 110).

Besides exhorting to the truth, the other thing which has been declared as a necessary condition for keeping the believers and their society secure from loss is that the members of the society should enjoin patience upon one another. That is, they should enjoin upon one another to bear with fortitude and steadfastness the difficulties, hardships, trials, losses and deprivations which befall the one who adheres to the truth and supports it. Each one of them should encourage the other to bear up against adversity steadfastly. (For further explanation, see E.N. 16 of Ad-Dahr, E.N. 14 of Al-Balad).





CIV

AL-HUMAZAH <sup>الهمزة</sup>



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## CIV

AL-HUMAZAH <sup>الهمزه</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Name**

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *humazah* occurring in the first verse.

#### **Period of Revelation**

All commentators are agreed that it is a Makki Sūrah; a study of its subject-matter and style shows that this too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

#### **Theme and Subject-Matter**

In it some of the evils prevalent among the materialistic hoarders of wealth in the pre-Islamic days have been condemned. Every Arab knew that they actually

existed in their society; they regarded them as evils and nobody thought they were good. After calling attention to this kind of ugly character, the ultimate end in the Hereafter of the people having this kind of character has been stated. Both these things (i.e. the character and his fate in the Hereafter) have been depicted in a way which makes the listener automatically reach the conclusion that such a man fitly deserves to meet such an end. And since in the world, people of such character do not suffer any punishment, but seem to be thriving instead, the occurrence of the Hereafter becomes absolutely inevitable.

If this Sūrah is read in the sequence of the Sūrahs beginning with Az-Zilzāl, one can fully well understand how the fundamental beliefs of Islam and its teachings were impressed on the peoples' minds in the earliest stage in Makkah. In Sūrah Az-Zilzal, it was said that in the Hereafter man's full record will be placed before him and not an atom's weight of good or evil done by him in the world will have been left unrecorded. In Sūrah Al-'Adiyāt, attention was drawn to the plunder and loot, blood-shed and vandalism, prevailing in Arabia before Islam; then making the people realize that the way the powers given by God were being abused, was indeed an expression of sheer ingratitude to Him, they were told that the matter would not end up in the world, but in the second life after death not only their deeds but their intentions and motives too would be examined, and their Lord fully well knows which of them deserves what reward or punishment. In Sūrah Al-Qāri'ah after depicting Resurrection the people were warned that in the Hereafter a man's good or evil end will be dependent on whether the scale of his good deeds was heavier, or the scale of his evil deeds was heavier. In Sūrah At-Takāthur the people were taken to task for the material-

listic mentality because of which they remained occupied in seeking increase in worldly benefits, pleasures, comforts and position, and in vying with one another for abundance of everything until death overtook them. Then, warning them of the evil consequences of their heedlessness, they were told that the world was not an open table of food for them to pick and choose whatever they pleased, but for every single blessing that they were enjoying in the world, they would have to render an account to their Lord and Sustainer as to how they obtained it and how they used it. In Sūrah Al-'Aṣr it was declared that each member, each group and each community of mankind, even the entire world of humanity, was in manifest loss, if its members were devoid of Faith and righteous deeds and of the practice of exhorting others to truth and patience. Immediately after this comes Sūrah Al-Humazah in which after presenting a specimen of leadership of the pre-Islamic age of ignorance, the people have been asked the question: "What should such a character deserve if not loss and perdition?"

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وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ ۝۱ الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ ۝۲ يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ  
 أَخْلَدَهُ ۝۳ كَلَّا لَيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ ۝۴ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحُطَمَةُ ۝۵ نَارُ  
 اللَّهِ الْمَوْقَدَةُ ۝۶ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ ۝۷ إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِم مُّوَصَّدَةٌ ۝۸  
 فِي سَعِيدٍ مُّبَدَّدَةٍ ۝۹

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## CIV

### AL-HUMAZAH الهمزه

Verses : 9

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

Doomed (to ruin) is every such person who slanders  
 others (in their face) and backbites them habitually,<sup>1</sup>  
 who gathers wealth and counts it over and over again.<sup>2</sup>  
 He thinks that his wealth will remain with him for ever.<sup>3</sup>  
 Nay, never! He will be cast<sup>4</sup> into the crushing place.<sup>5</sup>  
 And what do you know what the crushing place is? It  
 is the Fire of Allah,<sup>6</sup> kindled brightly, which shall rise  
 up to the hearts.<sup>7</sup> It will be covered down on them<sup>8</sup>  
 (in a way that) they shall be (enclosed) by tall columns.<sup>9</sup>

1-9

1. The words used in the original are *humazat il-lumazah*. In Arabic *hamz* and *lamz* are so close in meaning that they are sometimes used as synonyms and sometimes with a little difference in the shade of meaning. But this difference is not definite and clear, for the meaning given to *lamz* by some Arabic speaking people themselves is given to *lamz* by other Arabic speaking people. On the contrary, the meaning given to *hamz* by some people is given to *hamz* by others. Here, since both the words appear together and the words *humazat*

*il-lumazat* have been used, they give the meaning that it has become a practice with the slanderer that he insults and holds others in contempt habitually. He raises his finger and winks at one man, finds fault with the lineage and person of another; taunts one in the face and backbites another; creates differences between friends and stirs up divisions between brothers; calls the people names and satirizes and defames them.

2. This second sentence after the first sentence by itself gives the meaning that he slanders others because of his pride of wealth. The words *jama'a mālan* for collecting money suggest the abundance of wealth; then the words "counting it over and over again" depict the person's miserliness and his selfish hoarding of wealth.

3. Another meaning also can be: "He thinks that his wealth will make him immortal." That is, he is so engrossed in amassing wealth and counting it over and over again that he has forgotten death and he never bothers to consider that a time will come when he will have to depart from the world empty-handed, leaving everything behind.

4. The word in the original is *la-yunbadhanna*. *Nabdh* in Arabic is used for throwing away a thing regarding it as worthless and mean. This by itself indicates that because of his wealth he thinks that he is a great man but on the Day of Resurrection he will be hurled into Hell as a mean and contemptible object.

5. The word *ḥuḥamah* in the original is from *ḥaḥm*, which means to smash, crush and break into pieces. Hell has been described by this epithet because it will crush and break to pieces whatever is thrown into it because of its depth and its fire.

6. Nowhere else in the Qur'ān has the fire of Hell been called the fire of Allah. Here, its ascription to Allah not only expresses its dreadfulness but it also shows how the wrath and contempt of Allah envelops those who become proud and arrogant with the worldly wealth. That is why Allah has described that fire as His own Fire into which they will be hurled.

7. *Taffall'u* is from *iffala'*, which means to climb and mount to the top, and also to be aware and informed. *Af'idah* is plural of *fuwad*, which means the heart. But this word is not used for the organ which throbs in the breast, but for the seat of man's understanding and consciousness, his feelings and desires, beliefs and thoughts, motives and intentions. Thus, one meaning of the rising



of the fire to the hearts is that this fire will reach the place which is the centre of man's evil thoughts, false beliefs, impure desires and feelings, and wicked motives and intentions. The second meaning is that the Fire of Allah will not be blind like the fire of the world, which burns up the deserving and the non-deserving alike, but it will reach the heart of every culprit and discover the nature of his crime and then punish him according to his guilt.

8. That is, after the culprits have been thrown into it, Hell will be closed in upon them without leaving any slit or opening anywhere, in order to choke and suffocate them.

9. *Fi 'amad-im-mumaddadah* can have several meanings: (1) That the gates of Hell will be closed and tall columns will be erected on them; (2) that the culprits will be tied to the tall columns; (3) according to Ibn 'Abbās, the flames of the fire shall be rising high like tall columns.



CV

AL-FĪL الفيل



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

CV

AL-FĪL الفيل

## INTRODUCTION

### **Name**

The Sūrah derives its name from the word *aṣḥāb al-fīl* in the very first verse.

### **Period of Revelation**

This is unanimously a Makki Sūrah; and if it is studied against its historical background it appears that it must have been sent down in the very earliest stage at Makkah.

**Historical Background**

As we have explained in E.N. 4 of *Sūrah Al-Burūj* above, in retaliation for the persecution of the followers of the Prophet Jesus Christ (peace be on him) in Najrān by the Jewish ruler Dhū-Nuwās of Yaman, the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia invaded Yaman and put an end to the Himyarite rule there, and in 525 A.D. this whole land passed under Abyssinian control. This happened, in fact, through collaboration between the Byzantine empire of Constantinople and the Abyssinian kingdom, for the Abyssinians at that time had no naval fleet. The fleet was provided by Byzantium and Abyssinia sent 70,000 of its troops by it across the Red Sea to Yaman. At the outset one should understand that all this did not happen under the religious zeal but there were economic and political factors also working behind it, and probably these were the real motive, and retaliation for the Christian blood was just an excuse. Since the time the Byzantine empire had occupied Egypt and Syria, it had been trying to gain control over the trade going on between East Africa, India, Indonesia, etc., and the Byzantine dominions, from the Arabs, who had been controlling it for centuries, so as to earn maximum profits by eliminating the intermediary Arab merchants. For this purpose, in 24 or 25 B.C., Caesar Augustus sent a large army under the Roman general, Aelius Gallus, which landed on the western coast of Arabia, in order to intercept and occupy the sea route between southern Arabia and Syria. (See map of this trade route on p. 111 of *The Meaning of the Qur'ān*, vol. iv). But the campaign failed to achieve its objective on account of the extreme geographical conditions of Arabia. After this, the Byzantines brought their fleet into the Red Sea and put an end to the Arab trade which they carried

out by sea, with the result that they were left only with the land route. To capture this very land route they conspired with the Abyssinian Christians and aiding them with their fleet helped them to occupy Yaman.

The Arab historians' statements about the Abyssinian army that invaded Yaman are different. Hāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr says that it was led by two commanders, Aryāt and Abrahah, and according to Muḥammad bin Ishāq, its commander was Aryāt, and Abrahah was included in it. Then both are agreed that Aryāt and Abrahah fell out, Aryāt was killed in the encounter, and Abrahah took possession of the country; then somehow he persuaded the Abyssinian king to appoint him his viceroy over Yaman. On the contrary, the Greek and Syriac historians state that when after the conquest of Yaman, the Abyssinians started putting to death the Yamanite chiefs, who had put up resistance, one of the chiefs, named As-Sumayfi' Ashwa' (whom the Greek historians call Esymphaeus) yielded to the Abyssinians and promising to pay tribute obtained the Abyssinian king's warrant to be governor over Yaman. But the Abyssinian army revolted against him and made Abrahah governor in his place. This man was the slave of a Greek merchant of the Abyssinian seaport of Adolis, who by clever diplomacy had come to wield great influence in the Abyssinian army occupying Yaman. The troops sent by the Negus to punish him either joined him or were defeated by him. Subsequently, after the death of the king, his successor was reconciled to accept him as his viceregent of Yaman. (The Greek historians write him as Abrames and the Syriac historians as Abraham. Abrahah perhaps is an Abyssinian variant of Abraham, for its Arabic version is Ibrāhīm).

This man through passage of time became an independent ruler of Yaman. He acknowledged the sove-

reignty of the Negus only in name and described himself as his deputy. The influence he wielded can be judged from the fact that after the restoration of the dam of Mā'rib in 543 A.D., he celebrated the event by holding a grand feast, which was attended by the ambassadors of the Byzantine emperor, king of Iran, king of Ḥīrah and king of Ghassān. Its full details are given in the inscription that Abrahah installed on the dam. This inscription is extant and Glaser has published it. (For further details, see E.N. 37 of the commentary of Sūrah Sabā).

After stabilizing his rule in Yaman Abrahah turned his attention to the objective which from the very beginning of this campaign had been before the Byzantine empire and its allies, the Abyssinian Christians, i.e. to spread Christianity in Arabia, on the one hand, and to capture the trade that was carried out through the Arabs between the eastern lands and the Byzantine dominions, on the other. The need for this increased because the Byzantine struggle for power against the Sasanian empire of Iran had blocked all the routes of the Byzantine trade with the East.

To achieve this objective, Abrahah built in Ṣan'ā', the capital of Yaman, a magnificent cathedral, called by the Arabian historians al-Qalīs, al-Qullais, or al-Qulais, this word being an Arabic version of the Greek word Ekklesia, church. According to Maḥammad bin Ishāq, after having completed the building, he wrote to the Negus, saying: "I shall not rest until I have diverted the Arabs' pilgrimage to it."<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathīr writes that he

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1. After seizing political power in Yaman, the Christians persistently tried to establish a rival Ka'bah and divert pilgrimage from the Ka'bah at Makkah to it. So they built a cathedral in Najrān, as we have mentioned in E.N. 4 of the commentary of Sūrah Al-Burūj above.



openly declared his intention in Yaman and got it publicly announced. He, in fact, wanted to provoke the Arabs into doing something which should provide him with an excuse to attack Makkah and destroy the Ka'bah. Muḥammad bin Ishāq says that an Arab, enraged at this public proclamation, somehow went into the cathedral and defiled it. Ibn Kathīr says this was done by a Quraishite, and according to Muqātil bin Sulemān, some young men of the Quraish had set fire to the cathedral. Either might have happened, for Abrahah's proclamation was certainly provocative and in the ancient pre-Islamic age it cannot be impossible that an Arab, or a Quraishite youth, might have been enraged and might have defiled the cathedral, or set fire to it. But it may well also be that Abrahah himself got this done secretly by his own agent so as to have an excuse for invading Makkah and thus achieving both his objectives by destroying the Quraish and intimidating the Arabs. In any case, whatever happened, when the report reached Abrahah that the devotees of the Ka'bah had thus defiled his cathedral, he swore that he would not rest until he had destroyed the Ka'bah.

So, in 570 or 571 A.D., he took 60,000 troops and 13 elephants (according to another tradition, 9 elephants) and set off for Makkah. On the way, first a Yamanite chief, Dhū Nafr by name, mustering an army of the Arabs, resisted him but was defeated and taken prisoner. Then in the country of Khath'am he was opposed by Nufail bin Ḥabīb al-Khath'amī, with his tribe, but he too was defeated and taken prisoner, and in order to save his life he accepted to serve him as guide in the Arab country. When he reached near Ṭā'if, Banī Thaqif felt that they would not be able to resist such a big force and feeling the danger lest he should destroy the temple of their deity Lāt, too, their chief, Mas'ūd, came out to

Abraham with his men, and he told him that their temple was not the temple he had come to destroy. The temple he sought was in Makkah, and they would send with him a man to guide him there. Abraham accepted the offer, and Bani Thaqif sent Abū Righāl as guide with him. When they reached al-Mughammas. (or al-Mughammis), a place about 3 miles short of Makkah, Abū Righāl died, and the Arabs stoned his grave and the practice survives to this day. They cursed the Bani Thaqif too, for in order to save the temple of Lāt they had cooperated with the invaders of the House of Allah.

According to Muḥammad bin Ishāq, from al-Mughammas Abraham sent forward his vanguard and they brought him the plunder of the people of Tihāmah and Quraish, which included two hundred camels of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, the grandfather of the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be His peace). Then, he sent an envoy of his to Makkah with the message that he had not come to fight the people of Makkah but only to destroy the House (i.e. the Ka'bah). If they offered no resistance, there would be no cause for bloodshed. Abraham also instructed his envoy that if the people of Makkah wanted to negotiate, he should return with their leading chief to him. The leading chief of Makkah at that time was 'Abdul Muṭṭalib. The envoy went to him and delivered Abraham's message. 'Abdul Muṭṭalib replied: "We have no power to fight Abraham. This is Allah's House. If He wills He will save His House." The envoy asked him to go with him to Abraham. He agreed and accompanied him to the king. Now 'Abdul Muṭṭalib was such a dignified and handsome man that when Abraham saw him he was much impressed; he got off his throne and sat beside him on the carpet. Then he asked him what

he wanted. 'Abdul Muṭṭalib replied that he wanted the king to return his camels which he had taken. Abrahah said: "I was much impressed when I saw you but your reply has brought you down in my eyes: you only demand your camels but you say nothing about this House which is your sanctuary and the sanctuary of your forefathers." He replied: "I am the owner of my camels and am requesting you to return them. As for the House, it has its own Owner: He will defend it." When Abrahah said that He would not be able to defend it against him, 'Abdul Muṭṭalib said that that rested between Him and him. With this 'Abdul Muṭṭalib left Abrahah and he restored to him his camels.

Ibn 'Abbās's tradition is different. It does not mention the demand for the camels at all. According to the traditions related from him by 'Abd bin Ḥumaid, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Ḥākim, Abū Nu'aim and Baihaqī, he states that when Abrahah reached Aṣ-Ṣifāḥ (a place situated between 'Arafāt and Ṭā'if in the mountains near the sacred bounds of Makkah), 'Abdul Muṭṭalib went to him and said: "There was no need for you to come so far. You should have ordered us and we would have brought before you whatever you needed." He said: 'I hear that this House is the House of peace: I have come to destroy its peace.' Thereupon, 'Abdul Muṭṭalib said: 'This is Allah's House. He has not allowed anyone so far to dominate it.' Abrahah replied: 'We will not return until we have destroyed it.' 'Abdul Muṭṭalib said; 'You may take whatever you like from us and return.' Abrahah refused to budge and ordered his troops to advance, leaving 'Abdul Muṭṭalib behind.

Leaving the two traditions as they are, one thing which becomes evident is that the tribes living in and around Makkah did not have the power to fight such a

big force and save the Ka'bah. Therefore, obviously, the Quraish did not try to put up any resistance. The Quraish on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench (Aḥzāb) had hardly been able to muster a strength numbering ten to twelve thousand men in spite of the alliance with the pagan and Jewish tribes; they could not have resisted an army 60,000 strong.

Muḥammad bin Ishāq says that after returning from the camp of Abrahah 'Abdul Muṭṭalib ordered the Quraish to withdraw from the city and go to the mountains along with their families for fear of a general massacre. Then he went to the Ka'bah along with some chiefs of the Quraish and taking hold of the iron-ring of the door, prayed to Allah Almighty to protect His House and its keepers. There were at that time 360 idols in and around the Ka'bah, but on that critical moment they forgot them and implored only Allah for help. Their supplications which have been reported in the books of history do not contain any name but of Allah, the One. Ibn Hishām in his *Life of the Prophet* has cited some verses of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, which are to the following effect:

“O God, a man protects his house, so protect Your House; Let not their cross and their craft tomorrow overcome Your craft.

If You will to leave them and our *qiblah* to themselves, You may do as You please.”

Suhaili in *Raud al-Unuf* has cited this verse also in this connection:

“Help today Your devotees against the devotees of the cross and its worshippers.”

Ibn Jarir has cited 'Abdul Muṭṭalib's these verses also, which he had recited in his supplication;

**“O my Lord, I do not cherish any hope from anyone against them except You.**

**O my Lord, protect Your House from them.**

**The enemy of this House is Your enemy.**

**Stop them from destroying Your settlement.”**

After making these supplications ‘Abdul Muṭṭalib and his companions also went off to the mountains. Next morning Abrahah prepared to enter Makkah, but his special elephant, Maḥmūd, which was in the forefront, knelt down. It was beaten with iron bars, goaded, even scarified, but it would not get up. When they made it face south, north, or east, it would immediately start off, but as soon as they directed it towards Makkah, it knelt down. In the meantime swarms of birds appeared carrying stones in their beaks and claws and showered these on the troops. Whoever was hit would start disintegrating. According to Muḥammad bin Ishāq and ‘Ikrimah, this was smallpox, which was seen in Arabia for the first time in that year. Ibn ‘Abbās says that whoever was struck by a pebble, would start scratching his body resulting in breaking of the skin and falling off of the flesh. In another tradition Ibn ‘Abbās says that the flesh and blood flowed like water and bones in the body became visible. The same thing happened with Abrahah too. His flesh fell in pieces and there arose sores on his body emitting pus and blood. In confusion they withdrew and fled towards Yaman. Nufail bin Ḥabīb, whom they had brought as guide from the country of Khath‘am, was searched out and asked to guide them back to Yaman, but he refused and said:

**“Now where can one flee when God pursues?**

**The split-nose (Abrahah) is the conquered, not the conqueror.”**

As they withdrew they were continually falling by the way and dying. 'Aṭā' bin Yasār says that all the troops did not perish at the spot; some perished there and others perished by the wayside as they withdrew. Abrahah died in the country of Khath'am.<sup>1</sup>

This event took place at Muḥassir by the Muḥaṣṣab valley, between Muzdalifah and Minā. According to the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim and Abū Da'ūd, in the description of the Holy Prophet's farewell pilgrimage that Imām Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq has related from his father, Imām Muḥammad Bāqir, and he from Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, he says that when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) proceeded from Muzdalifah to Minā, he increased his speed in the valley of Muḥassir. Imām Nawawī has explained it saying that the incident of the people of the elephant had occurred there; therefore, the pilgrims have been enjoined to pass by quickly, for Muḥassir is a tormented place. Imām Mālik in *Mu'aṭṭā'* has related that the Holy Prophet said that the whole of Muzdalifah is a fit place for staying but one should not stay in the valley of Muḥassir. In the verses of Nufail bin Ḥabīb, which Ibn Ishāq has cited, he describes this event as an eye-witness:

“Would that you had seen, O Rudaina, but you would not see, What we saw by the valley of Muḥaṣṣab.

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1. Allah did not only give this punishment to the Abyssinians but brought the Abyssinian rule to an end in Yaman within three or four years for ever. History shows that after the Event of the Elephant their power in Yaman broke down, and the Yamanite chief, Saif bin dhī-Yazan, asked for military help from Iran, and only one thousand Iranian troops who came with six ships, were enough to put an end to the Abyssinian rule in Yaman. This happened in 575 A.D.

I praised God when I saw the birds,  
 And I feared lest the stones should fall upon us.  
 Everyone was asking for Nufail  
 As though I owned the Abyssinians a debt."

This was such a momentous event that it soon spread throughout Arabia and many poets made it the subject of their laudatory poems. In these poems one thing is quite evident that everyone regarded it as a manifestation of Allah Almighty's miraculous power, and no one, even by allusion, said that the idols which were worshipped in the Ka'bah, had anything to do with it. For example, 'Abdullah ibn Az-Ziba'rā says:

"The sixty thousand returned not home,  
 Nor did their sick man (Abrahah) survive on return.  
 'Ad and Jurham were there before them,  
 And there is Allah, above the servants, Who sustains it."

Abū Qais bin Aslat says:

"Rise and worship your Lord and annoint  
 The corners of the House of Allah between the  
 mountains of Makkah and Minā.  
 When the help of the Owner of the Throne reached  
 you,  
 His armies repulsed them, so that they were lying  
 in dust, pelted with stones."

Not only this, but according to Ḥaḍrat Umm Hāni and Ḥaḍrat Zubair bin al-Awwām, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "The Quraish did not worship anyone but Allah, the Only and One, for ten years (and according to others, for seven years). Umm Hāni's tradition has been related by Imām Bukhārī in his History and by Ṭabarāni, Ḥākim, Ibn Mardūyah and Baihaqi in their collections of *Aḥādīth*. Ḥaḍrat

Zubair's statement has been related by Ṭabarāni, Ibn Mardūyah and Ibn 'Asākir, and this is further confirmed by the *mursal* tradition of Ḥaḍrat Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab, which Khaṭīb Baghdādī has recorded in his History.

The Arabs describe the year in which this event took place as '*Ām al-Fīl* (the year of the elephants), and in the same year the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be His peace) was born. The traditionists and historians almost unanimously state that the event of the people of the elephant had occurred in Muḥarram and the Holy Prophet was born in Rabī' al-Awwal. A majority of them states that he took birth 50 days after the event of the elephant.

### **Theme and Substance**

If Sūrah al-Fīl is studied in the light of the historical details as given above, one can fully well understand why in this Sūrah only Allah's inflicting His punishment on the people of the elephant has been referred and described so briefly. It was an event of recent occurrence, and everyone in Makkah and Arabia was fully aware of it. The Arabs believed that the Ka'bah had been protected in this invasion not by any god or goddess but by Allah Almighty Himself. Then Allah alone had been invoked by the Quraish chiefs for help, and for quite a few years the people of Quraish having been impressed by this event, had worshipped none but Allah. Therefore, there was no need to mention the details in Sūrah al-Fīl, but only a reference to it was enough so that the people of Quraish, in particular, and the people of Arabia, in general, should consider well in their hearts the message that the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) was giving. For the only message that he gave was that

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they should worship and serve none but Allah, the Only and One. Then, they should also consider that if they used force to suppress this invitation to the truth, they would only be inviting the wrath of God, Who had so completely routed and destroyed the people of the elephants.





أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ ۗ أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ ۗ وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ ۗ تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ ۗ فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّا كُوِّلَ ۗ

CV

AL-FIL الفيل

Verses : 5

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

Have you not seen<sup>1</sup> how your Lord dealt with the people of the elephant?<sup>2</sup> Did He not cause their plan<sup>3</sup> to end in vain?<sup>4</sup> and sent down on them swarms of birds,<sup>5</sup> which pelted them with stones of baked clay<sup>6</sup> Then He rendered them like straw eaten up by cattle.<sup>7</sup>

1-5

1. Though the address, apparently is directed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), its real addressees are not only the Quraish but all the people of Arabia, who were well aware of the event. At many places in the Qur'an the words *alam tara* (have you not seen?) have been used, and they are meant not to address the Holy Prophet but the people in general! (For example, see Ibrahīm : 19, Al-Hajj : 18, 65, An-Nūr : 43, Luqmān : 29, 31, Fāṭir : 27, Az-Zumar : 21). Then, the word 'seeing' has been used here to signify that in and around Makkah and in the vast country of Arabia, from Makkah to Yaman, there were many such people still living, who had witnessed with their own eyes the event of the destruction of the people of the elephant!, for it had occurred only about forty to forty-five years earlier, and the people of Arabia had continually heard it described by the eye witnesses themselves so that they had become so certain of it as though they had seen it with their own eyes.

2. Here, Allah has not given any detail as to who were the people of the elephant, wherefrom they had come and what was the object of their march, for all these things were well known among the people.

3. The word *kayd* is used for a secret plan meant to harm somebody. The question is, what was secret in this case? Sixty thousand troops together with several elephants had openly come from Yaman to Makkah, and they had kept no secret that they had come to destroy the Ka'bah. Therefore, there was nothing secret about this plan. However, what was secret was the motive of the Abyssinians. They by destroying the Ka'bah, crushing down the Quraish and intimidating the Arabians, wanted to take control of the trade route that led from south Arabia to Syria and Egypt. This motive they kept hidden, and instead proclaimed their intent that they wanted to destroy the Ka'bah, the principal House of Arab worship, in retaliation for the pollution of their cathedral by the Arabs.

4. Literally, *fi tadlil* means: "led their plan astray", but idiomatically leading a plan astray means bringing it to nought and rendering it fruitless. At one place in the Qur'ān, it has been said: "But the disbelievers' plot (*kayd*) ended in vain." (Al-Mu'min : 25). At another: "And that Allah does not lead to success the plan (*kayd*) of deceivers." (Yūsuf : 52). The Arabians described Imra' ul-Qais by the epithet of "*al-malik ad dālil*" (the king who lost and wasted), for he had lost the kingdom left by his father.

5. *Abābil* means many separate and scattered groups whether of men or other creatures, which come from different sides successively. 'Ikrimah and Qatādah say that these swarms of birds had come from the Red Sea side. Sa'id bin Jubair and 'Ikrimah say that such birds had neither been seen before nor ever after; these were neither birds of Najd, nor of Hijāz, nor of Tihāmah (the land between Hijāz and the Red Sea). Ibn 'Abbās says that their beaks were like those of birds and claws like the dog's paw. 'Ikrimah has stated that their heads were like the heads of the birds of prey, and almost all the reporters are agreed that each bird carried a stone in its beak and two stones in its claws. Some people of Makkah had these stones preserved with them for a long time. Thus, Abū Nu'aim has related a statement of Naufal bin Abī Mu'āwiyah, saying that he had seen the stones which had been thrown on the people of the

elephant; they equalled a small pea seed in size and were dark red in colour. According to Ibn 'Abbās's tradition that Abū Nu'aim has related, they were equal to a pine kernel, and according to Ibn Mardūyah, equal to a goat's dropping. Obviously, all the stones might not be equal but differing in size to some extent.

6. Literally, *bi hijārat-im-min sijjil* means "stones of *sijjil* type." Ibn 'Abbās says that *sijjil* is the Arabic version of the Persian *sang* and *gil*, and it implies the stones made from clay and become hard when baked. The Qur'ān also confirms the same. In Sūrah Hūd : 82 and Al-Hijr : 74, it has been said that stones of baked clay (*sijjil*) were rained on the people of Lot, and about the same stones in Adh-Dhāriyāt : 33, it has been said that they were the stones made from clay (*hijārat-im-min ḥin*).

Maulā: ā Hamīd-ad-Dīn Farāhī, who in the present age has done valuable work on the research and determination of the meaning and content of the Qur'ān, regards the people of Makkah and other Arabians as the subject of *tarmihim* in this verse, who are the addressees of *alam tara*. About the birds he says that they were not casting stones but had come to eat the dead bodies of the people of the elephant. A resume of the arguments he has given for this interpretation is that it is not credible that 'Abdul Muṭṭalib should have gone before Abrahah and demanded his camels instead of pleading for the Ka'bah, and this also is not credible that the people of Quraish and the other Arabs who had come for Hajj, did not resist the invaders and leaving the Ka'bah at their mercy had gone off to the mountains. Therefore, what actually happened was that the Arabs pelted the army of Abrahah with stones, and Allah by sending a stormy wind charged with stones, destroyed it completely; then the birds were sent to eat the dead bodies of the soldiers. But, as we have already explained in the Introduction, the tradition does not only say that 'Abdul Muṭṭalib had gone to demand his camels but it also says that he did not demand the camels at all but tried to dissuade Abrahah from attacking the Ka'bah. We have already explained that according to all reliable traditions, Abrahah's army had come in Muḥarram when the pilgrims had gone back and also it was beyond the power of Quraish and other Arab tribes living in the surrounding areas to resist and fight an army 60,000 strong. They had hardly been able to muster a force ten to twelve thousand strong on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench (*Aḥzāb*) with the help of the Arab pagans and Jewish tribes; then how could they have

mustered courage to encounter an army, 60,000 strong? However, even if all these arguments are rejected and the sequence of the verses of Sūrah Al-Fil only is kept in view, this interpretation is seen to go against it. If it were so that the stones were cast by the Arabs and the people of the elephant were rendered as chaff, and then the birds came to eat their dead bodies, the order would be this: "You were pelting them with stones of baked clay, then Allah rendered them as chaff eaten up, and then Allah sent upon them swarms of birds." But here we see that first Allah has made mention of sending swarms of birds; this is immediately followed by *tarmithim bi-hijarat-immīn-sijjil* (which were pelting them with stones of baked clay); and then at the end it is said that Allah made them as straw eaten up.

7. The word 'aṣf as used in the original has already occurred in verse 12 of Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān above: *dhul-'aṣf war-raihān*: "and corn with husk as well as grain". This shows that 'aṣf means the outer covering of seeds, which the farmer throws away after the grain has been separated from it. Then the animals eat it, and some of it falls down in the chewing and some is trampled under the hoofs.

CVI

QURAISH قريش





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

CVI

QURAISH قُرَيْشٌ

### INTRODUCTION

#### Name

The Sūrah has been so entitled after the word *Quraish* in the very first verse.

#### Period of Revelation

Although Daḥḥāk and Kalbī regard it as a Madanī Sūrah, yet a great majority of the commentators are agreed that it is Makkī, and a manifest evidence of this are the words *Rabba hādh-al-Bait* (Lord of this House) of this Sūrah itself. Had it been revealed at Madīnah, the words "this House" for the Ka'bah could not be

relevant. Moreover, its subject matter so closely relates to that of Sūrah Al-Fil that probably it was revealed immediately after it, without any other Sūrah intervening between them. On the basis of this very relevance, some of the earliest scholars regard the two Sūrahs as one entity. This view is strengthened by the traditions which say that in the Qur'ān-copy belonging to Ḥaḍrat Ubayy bin Ka'b these two were written as one Sūrah, i.e. without the insertion of the *Bismillāh* between them. Furthermore, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar had once recited the two Sūrahs as one in the Prayer. But this view is not acceptable because in the Qur'ān-copies which Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (may Allah bless him) had got written down officially by the cooperation of a large number of the Companions and sent to the centres of Islamic lands, the *Bismillāh* was written between these two Sūrahs, and since then these two have been written as separate Sūrahs in all the copies of the Qur'ān everywhere in the world. Moreover, the style of the two Sūrahs is so different that they manifestly appear as two separate Sūrahs.

### **Historical Background**

To understand the Sūrah well it is essential that one should keep the historical background relevant to the contents of this Sūrah and of Sūrah Al-Fil in view.

The tribe of Quraish was scattered throughout Ḥijāz until the time of Quṣayy bin Kilāb, the ancestor of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace). First of all, Quṣayy gathered it in Makkah and this tribe was able to gain authority over the Ka'bah. On that very basis Quṣayy was called *mu'jammi'* (uniter, assembler) by his people. This man by his sagacity and wisdom founded a city-state in Makkah and made excellent arrangements for the welfare of the pilgrims coming from all over Arabia, with the result that the Quraish

were able to gain great influence among the Arabian tribes and lands. After Quşayy the offices of the state of Makkah were divided between his sons, 'Abdi Manāf and 'Abd ad-Dār, but of the two 'Abdi Manāf gained greater fame even during his father's lifetime and was held in high esteem throughout Arabia. 'Abdi Manāf had four sons: Hāshim, 'Abdi Shams, Al-Muṭṭalib, and Naufal. Of these Hāshim, father of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib and grandfather of the Holy Prophet, first conceived the idea to take part in the trade that passed between the eastern countries and Syria and Egypt through Arabia, and also to purchase the necessities of life for the Arabians so that the tribes living by the trade route bought these from them and the merchants living in the interior of the country were attracted to the market of Makkah. This was the time when the Sasanian kingdom of Iran had captured the international trade that was carried out between the northern lands and the eastern countries and Byzantine empire through the Persian Gulf. This had boosted up the trade activity on the trade route leading from southern Arabia to Syria and Egypt along the Red Sea coast. As against the other Arabian caravans, the Quraish had the advantage that the tribes on the route held them in high esteem on account of their being keepers of the Ka'bah. They stood indebted to them for the great generosity with which the Quraish treated them in the Hajj season. That is why the Quraish felt no danger that their caravans would be robbed or harmed anywhere on the way. The tribes on the way did not even charge them the heavy transit taxes that they demanded from the other caravans. Hāshim taking advantage of this prepared the trade scheme and made his three brothers partners in it. Thus, Hāshim obtained trade privileges from the Ghassanide king of Syria, 'Abdi Shams from the Negus,

Al-Muṭṭalib from the Yamanite nobles and Naufal from the governments of 'Irāq and Irān, and their trade began to flourish. That is how the four brothers became famous as traders and began to be called *aṣḥāb al-īlāf* (generators of love and affection) on account of their friendly relations with the tribes and states of the surrounding lands.

Because of their business relations with Syria, Egypt, 'Irāq, Irān, Yaman and Abyssinia, the Quraish came across such opportunities and their direct contact with the culture and civilization of different countries so enhanced the level of their knowledge and wisdom that no tribe in Arabia could match and equal them. As regards wealth and worldly goods they became the most affluent tribe, and Makkah became the most important commercial centre of the Arabian peninsula. Another great advantage that accrued from these international relations was that they brought from 'Irāq the script which later was used for writing down the Qur'ān. No other Arabian tribe could boast of so many literate people as Quraish. For these very reasons the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Quraish are the leaders of men." (Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ*). And according to a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'All in Baihaqi, the Holy Prophet said: "First the leadership of the Arabians was in the hands of the people of Ḥimyar, then Allah withdrew it from them and gave it to Quraish."

The Quraish were thus prospering and flourishing when the event of Abrahah's invasion of Makkah took place. Had Abrahah at that time succeeded in taking this holy City and destroying the Ka'bah, the glory and renown of not only the Quraish but of the Ka'bah itself, would have faded away, the belief of the pre-Islamic Arabia that the House indeed was Allah's House would

have been shattered, and the high esteem in which Quraish were held for being keepers of the House throughout the country would have been tarnished. Then, after the Abyssinian advance to Makkah, the Byzantium also would have taken the initiative to gain control over the trade route between Syria and Makkah; and the Quraish would have been reduced to a plight worse than that in which they were involved before Quṣayy bin Kilāb. But when Allah showed this manifestation of His power that the swarms of birds destroyed 60,000 Abyssinian troops brought by Abrahah by pelting them with stones, and from Makkah to Yaman they went on falling and dying by the wayside, the faith of the Arabs that the Ka'bah indeed was Allah's House increased manifold, and the glory and renown of Quraish too was enhanced considerably throughout the country. Now the Arabs were convinced that they were under Allah's special favour; therefore, they visited every part of Arabia fearlessly and passed through every land with their trade caravans unharmed. No one could dare touch them with an evil intention. Not to speak of touching them, even if they had a non-Quraishite under their protection, he too was allowed to pass unharmed.

### **Theme and Substance**

As all this was well known in the time of the Holy Prophet's appointment to Prophethood, there was no need to mention them. That is why in the four brief sentences of this Sūrah, Quraish were simply asked to consider: "When you yourselves acknowledge this House (i.e. the Ka'bah) to be Allah's House, and not of the idols, and when you fully well know that it is Allah alone Who has granted you peace by virtue of this House, made your trade and commerce flourish and saving you from destitution favoured you with prosperity, you should then worship and serve Him alone,"

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لَا يَلْفُ قُرَيْشٌ ۝۱ إِيَّاهُ ۝۲ فِيهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الْشِتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ ۝۳ فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا  
الْبَيْتِ ۝۴ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ ۝۵ وَأَمَّنَّهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ ۝۶

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CVI

قُرَيْشٍ QURAIISH

Verses : 4

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

As the Quraish became accustomed,<sup>1</sup> (that is,) accustomed to their journeys in the winter and the summer,<sup>2</sup> so they should worship the Lord of this House,<sup>3</sup> Who has fed them against hunger<sup>4</sup> and made them secure against fear.<sup>5</sup>

1-4

1. The word *ilāf*, as used in the original, is from *alf*, which means to be habituated and accustomed, to be reunited after breaking up, and to adopt something as a habit. About the *lām* that is prefixed to *ilāf*, some Arabists have expressed the opinion that it is to express surprise and wonder. Thus, *Li-ilāf-i Quraish-in* means: "How surprising is the conduct of Quraish! It is only by virtue of Allah's bounty that they are reunited after their dispersion and have become accustomed to the trade journeys which have brought them their prosperity, and yet from Allah's worship and service they are turning away." This is the opinion of Akhfash, Kisā'i and Farrā', and holding this opinion as preferable Ibn Jarīr writes: "When the Arabs mention something after this *lām*, the same thing itself is regarded as sufficient to show that the attitude and conduct a person has adopted in spite of it, is surprising and amazing". On the contrary, Khalil bin Ahmad, Sibawaih and Zamakhsharī say that this is the *lām* of *ta'līl* and it relates to the following sentence: *Fal-ya'budū Rabba hādih al-Bait*, which means: "Allah's blessings on the Quraish

are countless. But, if for no other blessing, they should worship Allah at least for this blessing that by His bounty they became accustomed to the trade journeys, for this by itself is indeed a great favour of Allah to them."

2. That is, the trade journeys. In summer the Quraish travelled northward to Syria and Palestine, for they are cool lands, and in winter southward to Yaman, etc. for they are warm.

3. "This House" : the Holy Ka'bah. The sentence means that the Quraish have attained to this blessing only by virtue of the House of Allah. They themselves acknowledge that the 360 idols, which they worship, are not its lord, but Allah alone is its Lord. He alone saved them from the invasion of the army of elephants. Him alone they had invoked for help against Abrahah's army. It was His House the keeping of which enhanced their rank and position in Arabia, for before that they were dispersed and commanded no position whatever. Like the common Arab tribes they too were scattered factions of a race. But when they rallied round this House in Makkah and began to serve it, they became honourable throughout Arabia, and their trade caravans began to visit every part of the country fearlessly. Therefore, whatever they have achieved, it has been possible only by the help of the Lord of this House; therefore, they should worship Him alone.

4. The allusion implies that before the Quraish came to Makkah, they were a scattered people in Arabia and living miserable lives. After their gathering together in Makkah they began to prosper, and the Prophet Abraham's prayer for them was literally fulfilled when he had prayed : "Lord, I have settled some of my descendents in a barren valley near Thy sacred House. Lord, I have done this in the hope that they will establish *ṣalāt* there. So turn the hearts of the people towards them, and provide fruits for their food." (Ibrāhīm : 37)

5. "Secure against fear" : secure from the fear from which no one anywhere in Arabia was safe. There was no settlement anywhere in the country the people of which could sleep peacefully at night, for they feared an attack any time from any quarter by some unknown enemy. No one could step out of the bounds of his tribe for fear of life or of being taken prisoner and made a slave. No caravan could travel safely from fear of attack, or without bribing influential chiefs

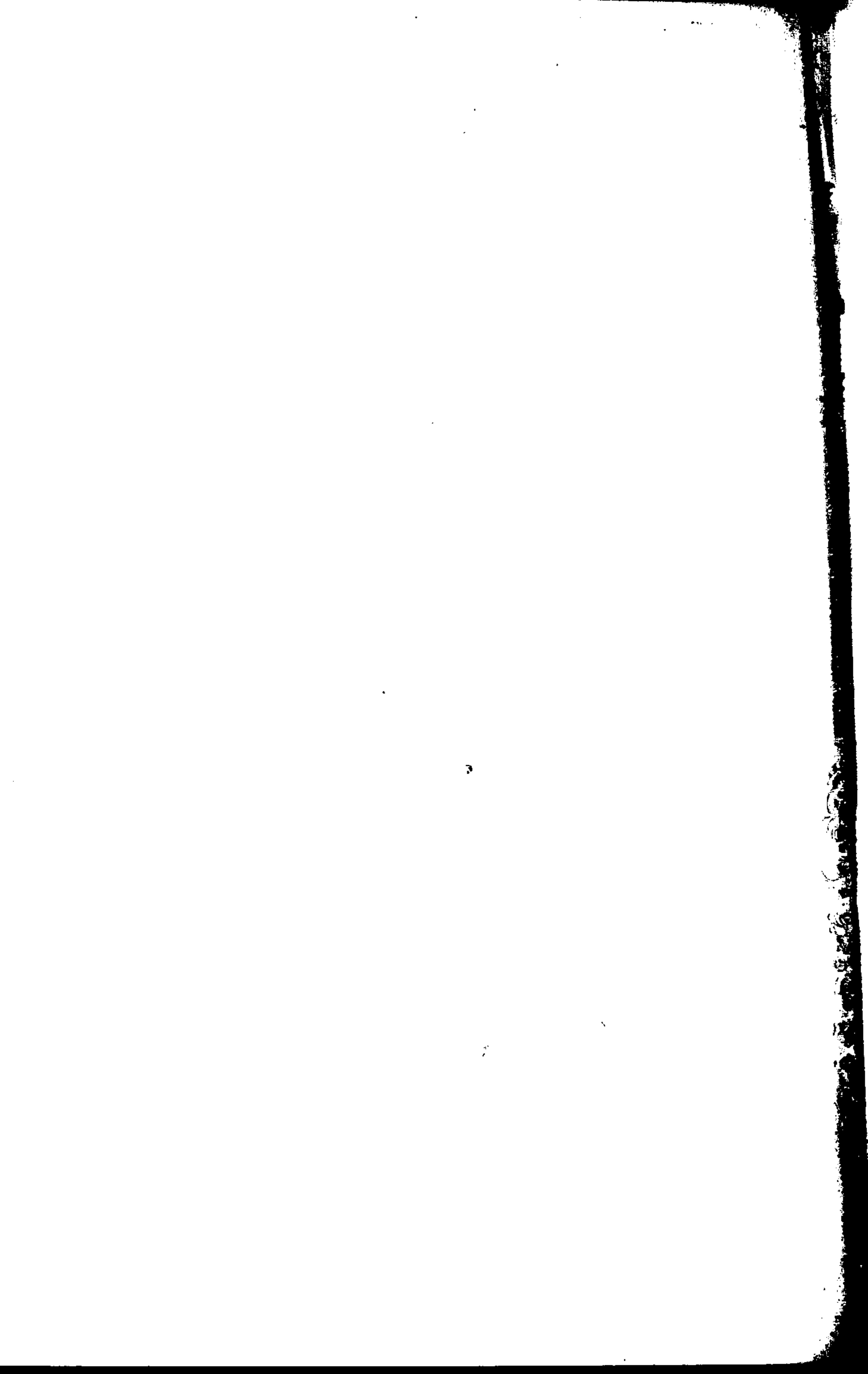


of the tribes on the way for safe conduct. But the Quraish were immune from every danger; they had no fear of an attack from an enemy. Their caravans, small or big, freely passed on the trade routes everywhere in the country. As soon as it became known about a certain caravan that it belonged to the keepers of the Ka'bah, no one could dare touch it with an evil intention, so much so that even if a single Quraishite was passing on the way, he was allowed to pass unharmed and un-touched as soon as the word "*ḥaramī*" or "*anā min ḥaramillāh*" was heard from him.



CVII

AL-MĀ'ŪN المَاعُون



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

CVII

AL-MĀ'ŪN المَاعُون

### INTRODUCTION

#### Name

The Sūrah has been so designated after the word *al-mā'ūn* occurring at the end of the last verse.

#### Period of Revelation

Ibn Mardūyah has cited Ibn 'Abbās (may Allah bless them both) as saying that this Sūrah is Makkī, and the same also is the view of 'Aṭā' and Jābir. But Abū Ḥayyān in *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* has cited Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Ḍahḥāk as saying that this Sūrah was revealed at Madīnah. In our opinion there is an internal evidence in the Sūrah itself which points to its being a Madani Revelation. It holds out a threat of destruction to those praying ones who are unmindful of their Prayers and who pray only to be seen. This kind of the

hypocrites were found only at Madīnah, for it was there that Islam and the Muslims gained such strength that many people were compelled to believe from expedience, had to visit the Mosque, join the congregational Prayer and prayed only to be seen of others, so as to be counted among Muslims. Contrary to this, at Makkah conditions were altogether different. No one had to pray to be seen. There it was difficult even for the believers to pray in congregation; they prayed secretly and if a person prayed openly he did so only at the risk of life. The kind of the hypocrites found at Makkah did not comprise those who believed and prayed to be seen but those who in their hearts had known and acknowledged the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace) to be on the truth, but were avoiding to accept Islam in order to maintain their position of leadership and authority, or were not prepared to take the risk of being afflicted with the kind of hardships with which they found the believers afflicted in the society around them. This condition of the hypocrites at Makkah has been described in vv. 10-11 of Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt. (For explanation, see E.N.'s 13 to 16 of Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt).

### **Theme and Subject-Matter**

Its theme is to point out what kind of morals a man develops when he refuses to believe in the Hereafter. In vv. 2-3 the condition of the disbelievers who openly belie the Hereafter has been described, and in the last four verses the state of those hypocrites who apparently are Muslims but have no idea of the Hereafter, its judgement, and the meting out of rewards and punishments accordingly, has been described. On the whole, the object of depicting the attitude and conduct of the two kinds of the people is to impress the point that man cannot develop a strong, stable and pure character in himself unless he believes in the Hereafter,



أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالدِّينِ ۗ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ ۗ وَلَا يَحْطُ  
 عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ ۗ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ ۗ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ  
 سَاهُونَ ۗ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ ۗ وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ ۗ

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## AL-MĀ'ŪN المَاعُون

Verses : 7

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

Have you seen him<sup>1</sup> who belies the rewards and punishments<sup>2</sup> of the Hereafter?<sup>3</sup> He it is<sup>4</sup> who drives away the orphan<sup>5</sup> and does not urge<sup>6</sup> giving away the food of the poor.<sup>7</sup> Then woe to the praying ones,<sup>8</sup> who are careless of their Prayer,<sup>9</sup> who do good to be seen,<sup>10</sup> and withhold small kindnesses<sup>11</sup> (from the people).

1-7

1. The words "have you seen", apparently, are directed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), but the Qur'ānic style is that on such occasions it generally addresses every intelligent and thinking person. And "seeing" means seeing with the eyes, for what has been described in the succeeding verses can be seen by every seer with his eyes, as well as knowing, understanding and considering something deeply. If the word *ara'aita* is taken in the second meaning, the verse would mean: "Do you know the kind of man who belies the rewards and punishments." Or: "Have you considered the state of the person who belies the Judgement?"

2. The word *ad-dīn* as a Qur'ānic term is used for the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter as well as for the religion of Islam. But the theme that follows is more relevant to the first meaning, although the second meaning also is not out of the context. Ibn

'Abbās has preferred the second meaning, while a majority of the commentators have preferred the first. In case the first meaning is taken, the theme of the Sūrah would mean that denial of the Hereafter produces such and such a character in man; in case the second meaning is taken, the object of the Sūrah would be to highlight the moral importance of Islam, to stress that Islam aims at producing an altogether different character in its adherents from that found in its deniers.

3. The style shows that the object of asking this question at the outset is not to ask whether he has seen the person or not, but to invite the listener to consider as to what kind of character is produced in man when he denies the judgement of the Hereafter, and to urge him to know the kind of the people who belie this creed so that he tries to understand the moral significance of belief in the Hereafter.

4. The letter *fa* in the sentence *fa-dhālik-alladhī* expresses the meaning of a whole sentence, which is to this effect: "If you do not know, then know that it is indeed he who..." Or, it gives the meaning: "Because of his this very denial of the Hereafter he is the kind of man who..."

5. The sentence *yadu'ul-yatīma* as used in the original has several meanings: (1) That he deprives the orphan of his rights and evicting him from his father's heritage thrusts him away; (2) that if an orphan comes to ask him for help, he repulses him instead of showing him any compassion, and if he still persists in his entreaties in the hope for mercy, he drives him away and out of sight; (3) that he ill-treats the orphan. For example, if in his own house there is a closely related orphan, it is the orphan's lot to serve the whole house, to receive rebuffs and suffer humiliation for trivial things. Besides, this sentence also contains the meaning that the person does not behave unjustly and tyrannically only occasionally but this is his habit and settled practice. He does not have the feeling that it is an evil which he must give up, but he persists in it with full satisfaction, thinking that the orphan is a helpless, powerless creature; therefore, there is no harm if his rights are taken away wrongfully, or he is made the target of tyranny and injustice, or he is repulsed and driven away whenever he asks for help.

In this connection, Qāḍī Abul-Ḥasan al-Māwardī has related a strange incident in his *A'lām an-Nubuwwat*. Abū Jahl was the testator of an orphan. The child one day came to him in the condition that he had no shred of a garment on his body and he implored him to



be given something out of his father's heritage. But the cruel man paid no attention to him and the poor child had to go back disappointed. The Quraish chiefs said to him out of fun: "Go to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and put your complaint before him. He will recommend your case before Abū Jahl and get you your property." The child not knowing any background of the nature of relationship between Abū Jahl and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and not understanding the motive of the mischief-mongers, went straight to the Holy Prophet and apprised him of his misfortune. The Holy Prophet immediately arose and accompanied the child to the house of Abū Jahl, his bitterest enemy. Abū Jahl received him well and when the latter told him to restore to the child his right, he yielded and brought out whatever he owed to him. The Quraish chiefs were watching all this earnestly in the hope that an interesting altercation would take place between them. But when they saw what actually happened they were astounded and went to Abū Jahl and taunted him saying that he too perhaps had abandoned his religion. He said: "By God, I have not abandoned my religion, but I so felt that on the right and left of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) there was a spear which would enter my body if I acted against what he desired." This incident not only shows what was the attitude and conduct of the principal chiefs of the most civilized and noble tribe of Arabia towards the orphans and other helpless people in those days but it also shows what sublime character the Holy Prophet possessed and what impact it had even on his bitterest enemies. A similar incident we have already related in E.N. 5 of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' above, which points to the great moral superiority of the Holy Prophet because of which the disbelieving Quraish branded him as a sorcerer.

6. *Lā yahuddu* means that the person neither persuades his own self, nor tells the people of his household, to provide the poor man with his food, nor does he urge others to recognize the rights of the poor and needy people of society who are starving and do something to satisfy their hunger.

Here, by giving only two conspicuous examples, Allah has pointed out what kind of evils are produced in the people who deny the Hereafter. The real object is not to point out only these two evils—that the people drive away the orphans and do not urge giving away the food of the poor as a result of the denial of the Hereafter. But of the countless evils which are thus produced, two evils have been presented as an example, which every noble and sound-natured person will regard as hateful. Besides, another thing meant to be

impressed is that if this very man had believed that he would have to go before God to render an account of his deeds, he would not have committed such evils as to deprive the orphan of his rights, tyrannize him, repulse him, neither feed the poor man himself, nor urge others to give him his food. The characteristics of the believers in the Hereafter which have been described in Sūrah Al-'Aṣr and Sūrah Al-Balad are that they exhort one another to mercy, and they exhort one another to the truth and to render the rights of others.

7. The words used are *ṭa'ām-il-miskīn* and not *if'ām-il-miskīn*. If *if'ām-il-miskīn* were the words, the meaning would be that he does not urge (others) to feed the poor. But *ṭa'ām-il-miskīn* means that he does not urge (others) to give away the food of the poor. In other words, the food that is given to the poor man is not the food of the giver but of the poor man himself; it is his right which is enjoined on the giver, and the giver is not doing him any favour but rendering him his right. This same thing had been said in Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt above: "And in their possessions is a due share of him who asks and of him who is needy." (v. 19).

8. The *fa* in *fa-wail-ul-lil-muṣallīn* signifies that such was the condition of the open deniers of the Hereafter. One may then consider the condition of the hypocrites who are included among the praying ones (i.e. Muslims). Since, despite being Muslims they regard the Hereafter as a falsehood, one may note what path of ruin they are following.

Though "*musallīn*" means "the praying ones", in view of the context in which this word has been used and the characteristics of these people that follow, this word, in fact, does not have the meaning of "the praying ones" but of "the people of *salāt*", i.e. of those included among Muslims.

9. The words used are '*an-salāt-i-him sāhūn* and not *fi salāt-i-him sāhūn*. In case the words *fi salāt-i-him* had been used, the meaning would be that they forget in the course of their Prayer. But forgetting in the course of the Prayer is no sin in the eyes of the *Shari'ah*, nothing to say of its being hypocrisy, nor is it a fault or anything blameworthy. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself sometimes forgot in the Prayer and to compensate for it he prescribed the method of *sajdah sahv*. On the contrary, '*an salāt-i-him sāhūn* means that they are neglectful of their Prayer. Whether they perform the Prayer, or do not perform it, it is of little importance to them. They are not regular at the Prayers. When they per-

form it, they do not observe the prescribed times, but offer it carelessly at the eleventh hour. Or, when they rise up for the Prayer, they rise up soul-lessly and perform it with an unwilling heart, as if it were a calamity imposed on them. They play with their garments, yawn and betray absence of every trace of Allah's remembrance in their hearts. Throughout the Prayer they show no feeling at all that they are performing the Prayer, nor of what they are reciting; their minds wander and they perform articles of the Prayer without due attention; they somehow perform a semblance of the Prayer and try to be rid of it as soon as possible. And there are many people who would perform the Prayer only when they must, otherwise the Prayer has no place in their lives. The Prayer time comes but they show no concern that it is the Prayer time; they hear the call to the Prayer but do not understand what the caller is calling to, whom he is calling and for what purpose. These in fact are the signs of absence of faith in the Hereafter. The claimants to Islam behave thus only because they do not believe that they would be rewarded for performing the Prayer, nor have the faith that they would be punished for not performing it. On this very basis, Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik and 'Aḷā' bin Dinār say: "Thanks to God that He said '*an salāt-i-him* and not *fī salāt-i-him*. That is, we do forget in the course of the Prayer but we are not forgetful and neglectful of it; therefore, we shall not be counted among the hypocrites."

The Qur'ān at another place has described this state of the hypocrites, thus: "They come to offer their Prayer but reluctantly, and they expend in the way of Allah with unwilling hearts." (At-Taubah : 54). The Holy Messenger of Allah has said: "This is the Prayer of the hypocrite; this is the Prayer of the hypocrite; this is the Prayer of the hypocrite! He watches the sun at the 'Aṣr time until when it reaches between the two horns of Satan (i.e. when the time of sunset approaches), he gets up and performs the Prayer carelessly, in which he remembers Allah but little." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad). Mus'ab bin Sa'd has related from his father, Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās: "When I asked the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) about the people who are neglectful of their Prayer, he said: "These are the people who perform their Prayers when the prescribed time for it has passed." (Ibn Jarīr, Abū Ya'lā, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥāṭim, Ṭabarānī in *Ausaḷ*, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqi in *As-Sunan*. This tradition has been related as a statement of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd himself also as a *mauqūf ḥadīth* and its *sanad* is stronger. Its being a *marfū'* narration of the saying

of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been regarded as weak by Baihaqī and Iḥākim). Another tradition from Ḥaḍrat Mus'ab is that he asked his father: "Have you considered this verse? Does it mean giving up the Prayer, or wandering of one's attention in the course of the Prayer?—Who among us has not his attention divided? He replied: No, it implies wasting the prescribed time of the Prayer and performing it when its time has elapsed." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Abū Ya'lā, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī in *As-Sunan*).

Here, one should understand that coming of other thoughts in the mind in the course of the Prayer is one thing and being unmindful of the Prayer and thinking other things during it quite another. The first state is a natural human weakness. Other thoughts do interfere without intention, and as soon as a believer feels that his attention is wandering from the Prayer, he gathers it and brings it back to the Prayer. The other state is of being neglectful of the Prayer, for in it man only goes through an exercise of the Prayer mechanically, he has no intention of the remembrance of God in his heart. From the commencement of the Prayer till its completion his heart is not turned towards God even for a moment, and he remains engrossed in the thoughts with which he entered the Prayer.

10. This can be an independent sentence as well as one relating to the preceding sentence. In the first case, it would mean that they do not perform any act of goodness with a pure intention for the sake of God, but whatever they do, they do to be seen of others so that they are praised, are considered righteous, their good act is publicised and its advantage and benefit accrues to them here in the world. In the second case, the meaning would be that they pray to be seen. The commentators generally have preferred the second meaning, for at first sight it appears that it relates to the preceding sentence. Ibn 'Abbās says: "It implies the hypocrites who prayed to be seen. They performed the Prayer if there was somebody to see them, but did not perform it if there was nobody to see them." In another tradition his words are to the effect: "If they were alone they did not pray; but if there were others, they prayed." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥāṭim, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī in *Ash-Shu'ab*). In the Qur'ān too the hypocrites have been described thus: "When they rise up for the *ṣalāt*, they go reluctantly to it, merely to be seen of people and they remember Allah but little." (An-Nisā' : 142).

11. The word used is *mā'ūn*. The view held by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī,

Ibn 'Umar, Sa'id bin Jubair, Qatādah, Ḥasan Baṣri, Muḥammad bin Ḥanafīyah, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibn Zaid, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, 'Aṭā' and Zuhri (may Allah show them mercy) is that it implies the *zakāt* while Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibrāhim Nakha'i, Abū Mālik and many other scholars have expressed the opinion that it implies items of common use; for example, cooking-pot, bucket, hatchet, balance, salt, water, fire, flint (now its successor, the match-stick), etc. which the people generally borrow from each other. A statement of Sa'id bin Jubair and Mujāhid also supports it. Another view of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī also is that it implies the *zakāt* as well as the little courtesies and kindnesses of daily life. Ibn Abī Ḥātim has related from 'Ikrimah that *mā'ūn* of the highest form is *zakāt* and of the lowest lending of a sieve, bucket, or needle to a borrower. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd says: "We, the Companions of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), used to say (and according to other traditions, in the time of the Holy Prophet, used to say) that *mā'ūn* implies lending of the cooking-pot, hatchet, bucket, balance, and such other things." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i, Bazzār, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ṭabarānī in *Al-Ausat*, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī in *As-Sunan*). Sa'id bin 'Iyāḍ without specifying any names has related almost the same view from the Companions of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), which shows that he had heard this from several Companions. (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah). Dailamī, Ibn 'Asākir, and Abū Nu'aim have related a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah in which he says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself explained this verse saying that it implies the hatchet, bucket and other such things. If this tradition is genuine it probably did not come to the notice of other scholars; otherwise it was not possible that other people should have given any other commentary of this verse.

*Mā'ūn* in fact is a small, little thing useful to the people. Accordingly, *zakāt* also is *mā'ūn*, for it is a little amount out of much wealth, which one has to give away in order to help the poor, and the other small items of common use also are *mā'ūn* as mentioned by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd and the scholars who share his viewpoint. The majority of the commentators say that *mā'ūn* applies to all those small things which the neighbours usually ask each other for, and asking for these is not in any way blameworthy, for the rich and the poor, all stand in need of these at one time or another. However, to show stinginess in lending these is regarded as mean

behaviour morally. Generally these things by themselves last and the neighbour returns them in the original form after he has used them. It would also be *mā'ūn* if a neighbour asks the other for a bed or bedding items on the arrival of guests, or asks the neighbour's permission to have loaves baked in his oven, or wants to leave some valuables in the neighbour's custody when going out of his house for some days. Thus, the verse means to impress that denial of the Hereafter renders a man so narrow-minded and niggardly that he is not even prepared to make a most minor sacrifice for the sake of others.

CVIII

AL-KAUTHAR الكوثر





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## CVIII

AL-KAUTHAR الكوثر

### INTRODUCTION

#### Name

The Sūrah has been so designated after the word *al-kauthar* occurring in the first verse.

#### Period of Revelation

Ibn Mardūyah has cited Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbās, Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullah bin az-Zubair and Ḥaḍrat ‘A’ishah as saying that this Sūrah is Makkī. Kalbī and Muqātil also regard it as Makkī, and the same is the view held by the majority of commentators. But Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī, ‘Ikrimah, Mujāhid and Qatādah regard it as Madani. Imām Suyūṭī in *Al-Itqān* has confirmed this same view, and Imām Nawawī in his commentary of the *Sahih* of Muslim has also preferred the same. The

reason for this assumption is the tradition which traditionists of the rank of Imām Aḥmad, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī and others have related from Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik, saying: "The Holy Prophet was among us. In the meantime he dozed; then he raised his head, smiling—according to some traditions, the people asked what for he was smiling, according to others, he himself told them that a Sūrah had just been revealed to him. Then, with *Bismillāh ir-Rahmān ir-Rahīm*, he recited Sūrah Al-Kauthar; then, he asked the people whether they knew what Kauthar was. When they said that Allah and his Messenger had the best knowledge, he said; It is a river which my Lord has granted me in Paradise." (The details follow under "*Kauthar*"). The basis of the reasoning from this tradition for this Sūrah's being Madanī is that Ḥaḍrat Anas belonged to Madīnah, and his saying that this Sūrah was revealed in his presence is a proof that it was Madanī.

But, in the first place, from this same Ḥaḍrat Anas, Imām Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi and Ibn Jarīr have related the traditions which say that this river of Paradise (*Al-Kauthar*) had been shown to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) on the occasion of the *mi'rāj* (ascension) and everyone knows that *mi'raj* had taken place at Makkah before the *hijrah*. Secondly, when during the *mi'rāj* the Holy Prophet had not only been informed of this gift of Allah Almighty but also shown it, there was no reason why Sūrah Al-Kauthar should have been revealed at Madīnah to give him the good news of it. Thirdly, if in an assembly of the Companions the Holy Prophet himself had given the news of the revelation of Sūrah Al-Kauthar which Ḥaḍrat Anas has mentioned in his tradition, and it meant that that Sūrah had been revealed for the first time then, it was

not possible that well-informed Companions like Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair should have declared this Sūrah to be a Makki revelation and most of the commentators also should have regarded it as Makki. If the matter is considered carefully, there appears to be a flaw in the tradition from Ḥaḍrat Anas in that it does not say what was the subject under discussion in the assembly in which the Holy Prophet gave the news about Sūrah Al-Kauthar. It is possible that at that time the Holy Prophet was explaining something. In the meantime he was informed by revelation that that point was further explained by Sūrah Al-Kauthar, and he mentioned the same thing, saying that that Sūrah was revealed to him just then. Such incidents did take place on several occasions, on the basis of which the commentators have opined about certain verses that they were revealed twice. This second revelation, in fact, meant that the verse had been revealed earlier, but on some later occasion the Holy Prophet's attention was invited to it by revelation for the second time. In such traditions, the mention of the revelation of a certain verse is not enough to decide whether it was revealed at Makkah or Madinah, and when precisely it was revealed.

Had this tradition of Ḥaḍrat Anas not been there to cause doubt, the whole content of the Sūrah Al-Kauthar by itself bears evidence that it was revealed at Makkah, and in the period when the Holy Prophet was passing through extremely discouraging conditions.

### Historical Background

Before this in Sūrahs Ad-Ḍuḥā and Alam Nashrah we have seen that when in the earliest phase of Prophethood the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was passing through the most trying conditions—when the

whole nation had turned hostile, there was resistance and opposition on every side, and the Holy Prophet and a handful of his Companions did not see any remote chance of success—Allah in order to console and encourage him at that time had sent down several verses. In Sūrah Aḍ-Duḥā it was said; “And surely the later period (i.e. every later period) is better for you than the former period, and soon your Lord shall give you so much that you shall be well pleased, and in Sūrah Alam Nashrah: “And We exalted your renown for you.” That is, “Though the enemies are trying to defame you throughout the country, We, on the contrary, have arranged to exalt your name and fame.” And; “The fact is that along with every hardship there is also ease. Indeed, with every hardship there is also ease.” That is, “You should not be disheartened by the severity of conditions at this time; this period of hardships will soon pass, and the period of success and victory will follow.”

Such were the conditions in which Allah by sending down Sūrah Al-Kauthar consoled the Holy Prophet as well as foretold the destruction of his opponents. The disbelieving Quraish said: “Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is cut off from his community and reduced to a powerless and helpless individual. According to 'Ikrimah when the Holy Prophet was appointed a Prophet, and he began to call the people to Islam, the Quraish said: “Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is cut off from his people as a tree is cut off from its root, which might fall to the ground any moment.” (Ibn Jarīr). Muḥammad bin Ishāq says: “Whenever the Prophet (upon whom be peace) was mentioned before 'Aṣ bin Wā'il as-Sehmī, the chief of Makkah, he used to say: Let him alone for he is only a childless man (abtar) with no male offspring. When he

dies, there will be no one to remember him." Shamir bin 'Aṭiyyah says that 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'ait̃ also used to say similar things about the Holy Prophet, (Ibn Jarīr). According to Ibn 'Abbās, once Ka'b bin Ashraf (the Jewish chief of Madīnah) came to Makkah and the Quraish chiefs said to him: "Just see this boy, who is cut off from his people; he thinks he is superior to us, whereas we manage the Hajj, look after the Ka'bah and water the pilgrims." (Bazzār). Concerning this very incident 'Ikrimah reports that the Quraish had used the words *aṣ-ṣunbūr al-munbatir min qaumi-hī* (a weak, helpless and childless man who is cut off from his people) for the Holy Prophet. (Ibn Jarīr) Ibn Sa'd and Ibn 'Asākir have related that Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās said: "The eldest son of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was Qāsim; next to him was Zainab, next to her Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah and next to him three daughters, viz. Umm Kulthūm, Fāṭimah and Ruqayyah. . Of them first Ḥaḍrat Qāsim died and then Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah. Thereupon 'Aṣ bin Wā'il said: "His line has come to an end; now he is *abtar* (i.e. cut off from root)." Some traditions add that 'Aṣ said: "Muḥammad is *abtar*: he has no son to succeed him. When he dies, his memory will perish and you will be rid of him." The tradition from Ibn 'Abbās, which 'Abd bin Ḥumaid has related, shows that Abū Jahl also had said similar words on the death of the Holy Prophet's son, 'Abdullah. Ibn Abī Ḥātim has related on the authority of Shamir bin 'Aṭiyyah that the same kind of meanness was shown by 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'ait̃ by rejoicing at this bereavement of the Holy Prophet. 'Atā' says that when the second son of the Holy Prophet died, his own uncle, Abū Lahab (whose house was next to his) hastened to the pagans and gave them the "good news": *Batira Muḥammad-un al-lail*: "Muḥammad has become childless this night, or he is cut off from root."

Such were the disturbing conditions under which Sūrah Al-Kauthar was sent down. The Quraish were angry with him because he worshipped and served only Allah and repudiated their idolatry publicly. For this very reason he was deprived of the rank, esteem and honour that he enjoyed among his people before Prophethood and was now as cut off from his community. The handful of his Companions also were helpless, poor people who were being persecuted and tyrannized. Futhermore, he was bereaved by the death of two sons, one after the other, whereat the near relatives and the people of the clan, brotherhood and neighbourhood were rejoicing and uttering such words as were disheartening and disturbing for a noble person who had treated even his enemies most kindly. At this Allah just in one sentence of this brief Sūrah gave him the good news, better news than which has never been given to any man in the world, besides the decision that it will be his opponents who will be cut off from their root and not he.



إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ۚ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ ۚ إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ ۝

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CVIII

AL-KAUTHAR الكوثر

Verses : 3

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

(O Prophet,) We have granted you the *Kauthar*<sup>1</sup>. So pray only for your Lord and sacrifice.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, your enemy<sup>3</sup> alone is cut off from the root.<sup>4</sup> 1-3

1. The full meaning of the word *kauthar*, as used here, cannot perhaps be expressed in one word in any language of the world. This is an intensive form of the noun *kathrat* which literally means abundance, but the context in which it has been used does not give the meaning of mere abundance but abundance of good, of spiritual benefits and blessings, and of such abundance which is unbounded and limitless, and it does not imply any one good or benefit or blessing but abundance of countless benefits and blessings. Have a look again at the background of this Sūrah given in the Introduction. The enemies thought that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) had been completely ruined: he was cut off from the community and had become utterly helpless and powerless; his trade was ruined; his male children who could perpetuate his name were dead; the message that he presented was such that except for a handful of the people no one in entire Arabia, not to speak of Makkah, was prepared to listen to it; therefore, failure and disappointment would be his lot as long as he lived and there would be no one in posterity to remember him when he died. Under such conditions when Allah said: "We have granted you the *Kauthar*," it by itself gave the meaning: "Your foolish opponents think that you are ruined and deprived of the good things that you enjoyed before Prophethood, but the fact is

that We have favoured you with unbounded good and countless blessings " This included the matchless moral qualities which the Holy Prophet was blessed with; this included the great blessings of Prophethood and the Qur'ān, the knowledge and wisdom that were granted to him; this included the blessing of *Tauhid* and also of such a system of life, whose simple and intelligible, rational and natural, and comprehensive principles had the potential to spread throughout the world and of continuing to spread for ever afterwards. This also included the blessing of the exaltation of renown because of which the Holy Prophet's blessed name continues to be exalted throughout the world since 1400 years and will continue to be so exalted till Resurrection. This also included the blessing that by his preaching eventually such a world-wide community came into being, which became the standard-bearer of Truth in the world for ever, which can claim to have produced the greatest number of the pious, virtuous and noble charactered men in any one nation, and which even when corrupted and deprived has the highest good in it as against every other nation of the world. This also included the blessing that the Holy Prophet during his very lifetime witnessed his invitation and message attaining to the highest success and the preparation of a community which had the power to dominate the world. This also included the blessing that although on his being deprived of the male offspring the enemies thought he would be lost to posterity, yet Allah not only blessed him with the spiritual offspring in the form of Muslims, who will continue to exalt his name in the world till Resurrection, only but also granted him from his one daughter, Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah, the natural progeny, who have spread throughout the world and whose only mark of distinction and pride is that they trace their descent from him.

These are the blessings which the people have seen and witnessed as to how abundantly Allah has blessed His Holy Prophet with in the world. In addition, *Kauthar* also implies two other great blessings which Allah will bestow on him in the Hereafter. We had no means of knowing these; therefore the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself gave us news of them, and told us that *Kauthar* also implied them. First, the Fountain of *Kauthar*, which he will be granted on the Resurrection Day in the Plain of Assembly; second, the River *Kauthar*, which he will be granted in Paradise. About both such a large number of the *Aḥādīth* have been reported from him through such a large number of the reporters that there remains no doubt about their authenticity.



What the Holy Prophet said about the Fountain of *Kauthar* is as follows:

(1) This Fountain will be granted to him on the Resurrection Day when there will be the cry of *al-'atash, al-'atash* (thirst, thirst!) on every side. The Holy Prophet's community will gather together before him at it and will be watered thereby. He himself will be the first to arrive at it and will be occupying the central position. He has said: "This is a Fountain at which my *Ummah* will assemble on the Resurrection Day." (Muslim: *Kitāb aṣ-Ṣalāt*; Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb as-Sunnah*). "I shall have arrived at the Fountain before you." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb ar-Riqāq* and *Kitāb al-Fitan*; Muslim: *Kitāb al-Fadā'il* and *Kitāb aṭ-Ṭahārah*; Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Manāsik* and *Kitāb az-Zuhd*; Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyyāt 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd*, 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Abū Hurairah). "I shall be there before you and shall bear witness on you, and by God, I am seeing my Fountain even at this time." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Janā'iz*, *Kitāb al-Maghāzi*, *Kitāb ar-Riqāq*). Addressing an Assembly of the Anṣār, the Holy Prophet once said: "After me you will meet with selfishness and nepotism, endure it patiently until you meet me at the Fountain." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb Manāqib al-Ansār* and *Kitāb al-Maghāzi*; Muslim: *Kitāb al-Imārah*; Tirmidhi: *Kitāb al-Fitan*). "I shall be near the middle of the Fountain on the Resurrection Day." (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Fadā'il*). Ḥaḍrat Abū Barzah Aslamī was asked: "Have you heard something about the Fountain from the Holy Prophet? He replied: Not once, or twice, or thrice, or four or five times, but over and over again. May Allah deprive of its water the one who belies it." (Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb as-Sunnah*). 'Ubaidullah bin Ziyād thought that the traditions about the Fountain were false; so much so that he belied all the traditions reported by Ḥaḍrat Abū Barzah Aslamī, Barā' bin 'Āzib and 'Ā'idh bin 'Amr. At last, Abū Sabrah brought out a writing which he had written down after hearing it from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ and it contained this saying of the Holy Prophet: "Beware! your place of meeting me will be my Fountain." (Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyyāt 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ*).

(2) Different dimensions of the Fountain have been given in different traditions, but according to a large number of the traditions it will extend from Aylah (the present Israeli seaport of Ilāt) to Ṣana'ā of Yaman, or from Aylah to 'Adan, or from 'Ammān to 'Adan in length, and from Aylah to Juhfah (a place between Jeddah and Rābigh) in breadth. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb ar-Riqāq*; Abū Da'ūd at-Tayālisi: Ḥadīth No. 995; Musnad Ahmad; *Marwiyyāt Abū Bakr*

Ṣiddiq and 'Abdullah bin 'Umar; Muslim : *Kitāb al-Ṭahārah* and *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il*; Tirmidhi : *Abwāb Ṣifāt al-Qiyāmah*; Ibn Mājah : *Kitāb az-Zuhd*). From this it appears that on the Resurrection Day the present Red Sea itself will be turned into the Fountain of *Kauthar*. And the correct knowledge is only with Allah!

(3) About this Fountain the Holy Prophet has told us that water will be supplied to it from the River *Kauthar* of Paradise (which is being mentioned below). "Two channels from Paradise will flow into it and supply water to it." (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il*). According to another tradition: "A canal from the River *Kauthar* of Paradise will be opened towards this Fountain." (Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyyāt 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd*).

(4) According to the description of it given by the Holy Prophet its water will be whiter than milk (according to other traditions whiter than silver, and according to still others, whiter than snow), cooler than snow, sweeter than honey; the earth of its bed will be more fragrant than musk; the water jugs set at it will be as numerous as the stars in the sky; the one who drinks from it would never thirst; and the one who is deprived of it will never have his thirst satisfied. These things with a little variation in wording have been reported in numerous *Aḥādith*. (Bukhārī : *Kitāb ar-Riqāq*; Muslim : *Kitāb al-Ṭahārah* and *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il*; Musnad Aḥmad : *Marwiyyāt Ibn Mas'ūd*, Ibn 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ; Tirmidhi: *Abwāb Ṣifāt al-Qiyāmah*; Ibn Mājah : *Kitāb az-Zuhd*; Abū Da'ūd : *Ṭayālīsī*, *Aḥādith* No. 995, 2135).

(5) Concerning it the Holy Prophet warned the people of his time again and again, saying: "After me those from among you who would effect changes in my Way, will be removed from the Fountain and will be disallowed to approach it. I shall say: they are my companions, but it will be said: "Don't you know what they did after you? Then I too shall discard them and tell them to keep away." This subject too has been expressed in many traditions. (Bukhārī : *Kitāb ar-Riqāq*, *Kitāb al-Fitan*; Muslim : *Kitāb al-Ṭahārah* and *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il*; Musnad Aḥmad : *Marwiyyāt Ibn Mas'ūd*, Abū Hurairah; Ibn Mājah : *Kitāb al-Manāsik*. The *Ḥādīth* which Ibn Mājah has related in this connection contains very pathetic words. The Holy Prophet said: "Beware! I shall have arrived at the Fountain before you and shall pride myself by your means upon the greater numbers of my *Ummah* as against other *ummahs*. Do not at that time cause my face to be blackened. Beware: I shall have some

people released, and some people shall be separated from me. I shall say: O my Lord, they are my companions. He will reply: Don't you know what innovations they introduced after you?" According to Ibn Mājah, these words were said by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in his Sermon at 'Arafāt.

(6) Likewise, the Holy Prophet has also warned the Muslims coming after him till Resurrection, saying: "Whoever from among you will swerve from my Way and effect changes in it, will be removed from the Fountain. I shall say: O Lord, they belong to me, they are the people of my *Ummah*. In response it will be said: Don't you know what changes they effected after you and then turned back on their heels? Then I too shall turn them away and shall not allow them to approach the Fountain." Many traditions on this subject are found in the *Hadith*. (Bukhārī : *Kitāb al-Musāqāt*, *Kitāb ar-Riqāq*, *Kitāb al-Fitan*; Muslim : *Kitāb al-Ṭaharah*, *Kitāb aṣ-Ṣalāt*, *Kitāb al-Fadā'il*; Ibn Mājah : *Kitāb az-Zuhd*; Musnad Aḥmad : *Marwiyyāt Ibn 'Abbās*).

Traditions about this Fountain have been related by more than 50 Companions, and the earliest scholars generally have taken it to mean the Fountain of *Kauthar*. Imām Bukhārī has named the last chapter of his *Kitāb ar-Riqāq* as *Bābun fil ḥawd wa qual-Allāhu innā a'ḥaināk al-Kauthar*, and in a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Anas there is the explanation that the Holy Prophet said about *Kauthar*: "It is a Fountain at which my *Ummah* shall alight."

The River *Kauthar* which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) shall be granted in Paradise, also has been mentioned in a large number of the traditions of *Hadith*. Many traditions have been related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas in which he says (and in some he explains that he is reporting the exact words of the Holy Prophet himself) that on the occasion of *mi'rāj* the Holy Prophet was taken round Paradise and shown a river on the banks of which there were vaults of pearls or precious stones carved from within; the earth of its bed was of the strong-scented musk. He asked Gabriel, or the angel who took him round, what it was. He replied that it was the River *Kauthar*, which Allah had granted him. (Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd Ṭāyālīsī, Ibn Jarīr). Again, according to Ḥaḍrat Anas, the Holy Prophet was asked (or a person asked him): "What is the *Kauthar*?" He replied: "It is a River which Allah has granted me in Paradise. Its earth is musk; its water is whiter than milk and sweeter

than honey." (Masnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarir; according to another tradition of Musnad Aḥmad, describing the merits of the River *Kauthar* the Holy Prophet said that at its bottom there are pearls instead of pebbles." Ibn 'Umar says that the Holy Prophet said: "The Kauthar is a river in Paradise the banks of which are golden; it flows on pearls and diamonds (i.e. its bed has diamonds instead of pebbles); its earth smells sweeter than musk; its water is whiter than milk (or snow), cooler than snow and sweeter than honey." (Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Abī Ḥatim, Dārimī, Abū Da'ūd Ṭayālīsī, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Ibn Abī Shaibah). Usāmah bin Zaid says that the Holy Prophet once went to visit Ḥaḍrat Ḥamzah; he was not at home; his wife entertained him and during the conversation said: "My husband has told me that you have been granted a river in Paradise, which is called the *Kauthar*." The Holy Prophet replied: "Yes, and its bed is of rubies and corals and emeralds and pearls." (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Mardūyah. Though the *sanad* of this tradition is weak, the presence of a large number of traditions dealing with this subject strengthens it). Besides these *marfū'* traditions, a great many sayings of the Companions and their successors have been related in the *Ḥadīth* to the effect that the *Kauthar* implies a river in Paradise. These traditions describe its qualities as have been mentioned above. For instance, the sayings of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Mujāhid and Abul-'Āliyah are found in Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī and the books of Ibn Mardūyah, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abī Shaibah and other traditionists.

2. Different commentaries of it have been reported from different scholars. Some of them take the Prayer to mean the five times obligatory Prayer (*ṣalāt*); some take it to imply the Prayer of 'Īd al-Aḍḥā, and some say that it implies the Prayer itself. Likewise, the meaning of *wanḥar* (and sacrifice) according to some illustrious scholars, is to place the right hand over the left hand and to fold them on the chest in the Prayer; some say that it implies raising both hands with *Allahu Akbar* at the commencement of the Prayer; some say that it implies raising both hands at the commencement of the Prayer, at bowing for *Rukū'* and after rising from *Rukū'*; and some say that it means performing the 'Īd al-Aḍḥā Prayer and then offering the animal sacrifice. But if the context in which this command has been enjoined, is considered, its meaning clearly seems to be: "O Prophet, when your Lord has granted you so many and so

splendid blessings, then you should perform the Prayer only for His sake and offer sacrifice only for His sake." This Command was given in the environment when not only the pagans of Quraish but the pagans of entire Arabia and the world worshipped their self-made gods and offered sacrifices at their shrines. Therefore, the intention of the Command is: "Contrary to the polytheistic practice, you should remain steadfast to your creed: your Prayer is only for Allah and your sacrifice also is for Him alone, as it has been said at another place: 'Declare, O Prophet, my *salāt* and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah, Lord of the universe, Who has no partner with Him. This is what I have been enjoined, and I am the first to surrender to Him.' " (Al-An'ām : 162-163). This same meaning has been explained of it by Ibn 'Abbās, 'Aṭā', Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Qatādah, Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Qurẓī, Ḍaḥḥāk, Rabi' bin Anas, 'Aṭā' al-Khurasānī and many other major commentators (may Allah bless them all). (Ibn Jarīr). However, this by itself is correct that when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) enforced by Allah's Command the practice of the 'Īd al-Adḥā Prayer and the offering of animal sacrifice at Madīnah, he himself gave the first place to the Prayer (*salāt*) and the second to the sacrifice, as commanded in the verses : *Inna salāti wa nusuki* and *Fa-salli li-Rabbika wanḥar*, and enjoined on the Muslims also to do the same, i.e. they should first perform the Prayer and then offer the sacrifice. This is neither the explanation of this verse nor the occasion of its revelation but a deduction made by the Holy Prophet from these verses and his deduction of injunctions also is a kind of Divine inspiration.

3. The word *shāni'* as used in the original is derived from *sha'n*, which means the hatred and spite because of which a person may start ill-treating another. At another place in the Qur'ān it has been said: "(And O Muslims,) the enmity of any people should not so provoke you as to turn you away from justice." (Al-Mā'idah : 8). Thus, *shāni'aka* implies every such person who blinded by his enmity of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) should bring false accusations against him, slander and defame him and vent his personal spite against him by taunting and scoffing at him in every possible way.

4. *Huwa'l abtar* : "He himself is abtar", i.e. though he calls you abtar he in fact himself is abtar. Some explanations of abtar have already been given in the Introduction to the Sūrah. It is derived

from *batar* which means to cut off, but idiomatically it is used in a comprehensive meaning. In the *Hadith*, the *rak'ah* of the Prayer which is not coupled with another *rak'ah* is called *butaira'*, i.e. the lonely *rak'ah*. According to another *Hadith*, "Every piece of work, which is in any way important, is *abtar* if it is started without the glorification and praise of Allah", implying that it is cut off from the root, it has no stability, and it is doomed to failure. A man who fails to achieve his object is *abtar* as also the one who is deprived of all means and resources. A person who is left with no hope of any good and success in life is also *abtar*. A person who has been cut off from his family, brotherhood, associates and helpers is also *abtar*. The word *abtar* is also used for the man who has no male child, or whose male child or children have died, for after him there remains no one to remember him, and he is lost to posterity after death. In almost all these meanings the disbelieving Quraish called the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) *abtar*. At this, Allah said: "O Prophet, not you but your enemies are *abtar*." This was not merely a "reprisal", but a prophecy out of the most important prophecies of the Qur'an, which literally proved true. When it was made, the people regarded the Holy Prophet as *abtar*, and no one could imagine how the big chiefs of the Quraish would become *abtar*, who were famous not only in Makkah but throughout Arabia, who were successful in life, rich in worldly wealth and children, who had their associates and helpers everywhere in the country, who enjoyed intimate relations with all the Arabian tribes, being monopolists in trade and managers of Hajj. But not long afterwards the conditions altogether changed. There was a time when on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench (A.H. 5) the Quraish had invaded Madinah with the help of many Arabian and Jewish tribes, and the Holy Prophet being besieged had to resist the enemy by digging a trench around the city. After only three years, in A.H. 8, when he attacked Makkah, the Quraish had no helper and they had to surrender helplessly. After this within a year or so the whole Arabia came under his control, deputations of tribes from all over the country began to visit him to take the oaths of allegiance and his enemies were left utterly helpless and resourceless. Then they were so lost to posterity that even if their children survived, none of them today knows that he is a descendent of Abū Jahl, Abū Lahab, 'Āṣ bin Wā'il, or 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'aiṣ, the enemies of Islam, and even if he knows it, he is not prepared to claim that his ancestors were those people. On the contrary, blessings are being invoked on the children of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace)

throughout the world; millions and millions of Muslims take pride in bearing relationship to him; hundreds of thousands of people regard it as a mark of honour and prestige to have descended not only from him but from his family and even the families of his Companions. Thus, some one is a Sayyid, another an 'Alavī, an 'Abbāsi, a Hāshmi, a Şiddiqī, a Fāruqī, an 'Uthmāni, a Zubairī, or an Anşārī, but no one is an Abū Jahli or Abū Lahabī. History has proved that not the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's deace and blessings) but his enemies were, and are, *abtar*.





CIX

AL-KĀFIRŪN الكُفْرُون



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

## CIX

### AL-KĀFIRŪN الكُفِرُونَ

#### INTRODUCTION

##### **Name**

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *al-kāfirūn* occurring in the first verse.

##### **Period of Revelation**

Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ūd, Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī and ‘Ikrimah say that this Sūrah is Makkī, while Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullah bin Zubair says that it is Madanī. Two different views have been reported from Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbās and Qatādah, first that it is Makkī, and second that it is Madanī. However, according to the majority of commentators, it is a Makkī Sūrah, and its subject-matter itself points to its being a Makkī revelation.

##### **Historical Background**

There was a time in Makkah when although a storm of opposition had arisen in the pagan society of Quraish

against the message of Islam preached by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), yet the Quraish chiefs had not yet lost hope that they would reach some sort of a compromise with him. Therefore, from time to time they would visit him with different proposals of compromise so that he accepted one of them and the dispute between them was brought to an end. In this connection, different traditions have been related in the *Ḥadīth*.

According to Ḥadīrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, the Quraish proposed to the Holy Prophet: "We shall give you so much of wealth that you will become the richest man of Makkah; we shall give you whichever woman you like in marriage; we are prepared to follow and obey you as our leader, only on the condition that you will not speak ill of our gods. If you do not agree to this, we present another proposal which is to your as well as to our advantage." When the Holy Prophet asked what it was, they said that if he would worship their gods, Lāt and 'Uzzā, for a year, they would worship his God for the same space of time. The Holy Prophet said: "Wait awhile; let me see what my Lord commands in this regard."<sup>1</sup> Thereupon the revelation

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1. This does not mean that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) regarded this proposal as worthy of consideration in any degree, and, God forbid, he had given this reply to the disbelievers in the hope that Allah might approve of it. But this, in fact, was similar to the response that is made by a subordinate officer before whom an un-reasonable demand is placed and he, knowing full well that it would not be acceptable to his government, does not reject it straightaway but says to those making the demand that he would send their request to the higher authorities and would inform them of the reply when it was received from above accordingly. In this regard the noteworthy point is that if the subordinate officer himself turns down the demand, the people continue to press it, but if he tells them that the higher authorities have turned it down, they become reconciled to its rejection.

came down: *Qul yā-ayyuhā-kāfirūn ... and: Qul afa-ghair-Allāhi ...* (Az-Zumar : 64) : "Say to them: ignorant people, do you bid me to worship others than Allah?" (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Hātim, Ṭabarānī). According to another tradition from Ibn 'Abbās, the Quraish said to the Holy Prophet: "O Muḥammad, if you kiss our gods, the idols, we shall worship your God." Thereupon, this Sūrah was sent down. ('Abd bin Ḥumaid).

Sa'id bin Mīnā' (the freed slave of Abul-Bakhtarī) has related that Walīd bin Muḡīrah, 'Aṣ bin Wā'il, Aswad bin al-Muṭṭalib and Umayyah bin Khalaf met the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and said to him: "O Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), let us agree that we would worship your God and you would worship our gods, and we would make you a partner in all our works. If what you have brought was better than what we possess, we would be partners in it with you, and have our share in it, and if what we possess is better than what you have brought, you would be partner in it with us and have your share of it." At this Allah sent down: *Qul yā-ayyuhā-kāfirūn...*" (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Hātim, Ibn Hishām also has related this incident in the *Sīrah*).

Wahb bin Munabbih has related that the people of Quraish said to Allah's Messenger: "If you like we would enter your faith for a year and you would enter our faith for a year." ('Abd bin Ḥumaid, Ibn Abī Hātim).

These traditions show that the Quraish had proposed such things to the Holy Prophet not once, in one sitting, but at different times and on different occasions, and there was need that they should be given a definite, decisive reply so that their hope that he would come to terms with them on the principle of "give and take" was frustrated for ever.

**Theme and Subject-Matter**

If the Sûrah is read with this background in mind, one finds that it was not revealed to preach religious tolerance as some people of today seem to think, but it was revealed in order to exonerate the Muslims from the disbelievers' religion, their rites of worship, and their gods, and to express their total disgust and unconcern with them and to tell them that Islam and *kufr* (unbelief) had nothing in common and there was no possibility of their being combined and mixed into one entity. Although it was addressed in the beginning to the disbelieving Quraish in response to their proposals of compromise, yet it is not confined to them only, but having made it a part of the Qur'ân, Allah gave the Muslims the eternal teaching that they should exonerate themselves by word and deed from the creed of *kufr* wherever and in whatever form it be, and should declare without any reservation that they cannot make any compromise with the disbelievers in the matter of Faith. That is why this Sûrah continued to be recited when the people to whom it was addressed as a rejoinder, had died and been forgotten, and those Muslims also continued to recite it who were disbelievers at the time it was revealed, and the Muslims still recite it centuries after they have passed away, for expression of disgust with and dissociation from *kufr* and its rites is a perpetual demand of Faith.

As for the esteem in which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) held this Sûrah, it can be judged from the following few *ahādīth* :

Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) has related that on many an occasion he heard the Holy Prophet recite Sûrahs *Qul Yā-ayyuhā-kāfirīn* and *Qul Huwa-Allahu aḥad* in the two *rak'ahs*

before the Fajr obligatory Prayer and in the two *rak'ahs* after the Maghrib obligatory Prayer. Several traditions on this subject with a little variation in wording have been related by Imām Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Hibbān, Ibn Mardūyah from Ibn 'Umar.

Ḥaḍrat Khabbāb says: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said to me: when you lie down in bed to sleep, recite *Qul yā-ayyuhā kāfirūn*, and this was the Holy Prophet's own practice also; when he lay down to sleep, he recited this Sūrah." (Bazzār, Ṭabarānī, Ibn Mardūyah).

According to Ibn 'Abbās, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said to the people: "Should I tell you the word which will protect you from polytheism? It is that you should recite *Qul yā-ayyuhā kāfirūn* when you go to bed." (Abū Ya'lā, Ṭabarānī).

Ḥaḍrat Anas says that the Holy Prophet said to Ḥaḍrat Mu'ādh bin Jabal; "Recite *Qul yā-ayyuhā-kāfirūn* at the time you go to bed, for this is immunity from polytheism." (Baihaqī in *Ash-Shu'ab*).

Both Fardāh bin Naufal and 'Abdur Raḥmān bin Naufal have stated that their father, Naufal bin Mu'āwiyah al-Ashja'ī, said to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace): "Teach me something which I may recite at the time I go to bed." The Holy Prophet replied: "Recite *Qul yā-ayyuhā' kāfirūn* to the end and then sleep, for this is immunity from polytheism." (Musnad Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Hākim, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī in *Ash-Shu'ab*). A similar request was made by Ḥaḍrat Jabalah bin Ḥārithah, brother of Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Ḥārithah, to the Holy Prophet and to him also he gave the same reply. (Musnad Ahmad, Ṭabarānī).

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قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ ۝ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ۝ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عِبَادُونَ  
 مَا أَعْبُدُ ۝ وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُمْ ۝ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عِبَادُونَ مَّا  
 أَعْبُدُ ۝ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَرَبِّي دِينِي ۝

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AL-KĀFIRŪN الكافرون

Verses: 6

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

Say: "O disbelievers,<sup>1</sup> I do not worship those whom you worship,<sup>2</sup> nor are you worshippers of Him Whom I worship,<sup>3</sup> nor am I a worshipper of those whom you have worshipped; nor are you worshippers of Him Whom I worship.<sup>4</sup> For you is your religion and for me is mine."<sup>5</sup>

1-6

1. A few points in this verse are particularly noteworthy:

(1) Although the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been commanded to tell this to the disbelievers plainly, the theme that follows makes it explicit that every believer should tell the disbelievers plainly what has been said in the following verses; so much so that the person who has just believed and repented of *kufir* is also bound to express similarly his disgust with and disapproval of the creed and rites of worship and gods of *kufir*. Thus, though the first addressee of the word *qul* (say) is the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself, the command is not restricted to him alone but it reaches every believer through him.

(2) The word "*kāfir*" is no abuse, which might have been used for the addressees of this verse, but it implies the one who refuses

to believe, or is an unbeliever. As against it the word "*mu'min*" is used for the believer. Therefore, the Holy Prophet's saying, by Allah's command, "O disbelievers, ...", in fact, means: "O you, who have refused to believe in my apostleship and in the teaching brought by me." Likewise, when a believer uses this word, it will imply those who do not believe in the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

(3) The word used is "*O kāfirs*" and not "*O mushriks*"; therefore, the addressees are not only the *mushriks* but all those people who do not acknowledge Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) as Allah's Messenger and the teachings and guidance brought by him as the teaching and guidance given by Allah Himself, whether they be Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians or the disbelievers, polytheists and pagans of the entire world. There is no reason why this address be restricted to the pagans of Quraish or of Arabia only.

(4) To address the deniers with the word "*O kāfirs*" is just like addressing certain people as "*O enemies*", or "*O opponents*". Such an address is not, in fact, directed to the person of the addressee but it is made on the basis of their characteristic of enmity and opposition, and lasts only until they are so characterised. If one of them gives up enmity and opposition, or turns a friend and supporter, he no longer remains the addressee of this word. Likewise, the address of "*O kāfirs*" to the people also is in view of their characteristic of *kufr* and not their person. This address would be perpetual for him who continues to be a *kāfir* till death, but the one who believes will no longer be its addressee.

(5) Many scholars from among the commentators have expressed the opinion that in this Surah the address of "*O disbelievers*" applied only to a few persons of Quraish, who were visiting the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) with proposals of compromise regarding religion and about whom Allah had informed His Messenger that they would not believe. They have formed this opinion for two reasons. First, that it is followed by *Lā a'budu mā ta'budūn*: "I do not worship him or those whom you worship". They say that this does not apply to the Jews and Christians, for they worship Allah. Second, that this is also followed by: *wa lā antum 'ābidūna mā a'bud*: "Nor are you worshippers of Him Whom I worship". Their reasoning is that this statement does not apply to the people who at the revelation of this Sūrah were disbelievers but later believed. Both

these arguments are incorrect. As for these verses, their explanation that follows will show that they do not bear the meaning which has been understood from them. Here, to point out the error of the reasoning it would be enough to say that if the addressees of this Sūrah were only these people, why then does this Sūrah still continue to be recited when they are dead and gone from the world long long ago? And what was the need of making this Sūrah a part of the Qur'ān permanently so that the Muslim should continue to read it for ever afterwards?

2. This includes all those deities whom the disbelievers and the polytheists have been, and are still, worshipping everywhere in the world, whether they are the angels, the jinn, prophets, saints, spirits of the living or dead men, or the sun, the moon, stars, animals, trees, rivers, idols and imaginary gods and goddesses. One may say that the pagans of Arabia acknowledged Allah also as a Deity and the other pagans of the world also have never disacknowledged Allah as a Deity till today. As for the followers of the earlier scriptures, they also acknowledge Allah alone as the real Deity. How then can it be correct to exonerate oneself from the worship of all the deities of all those people, without exception, when Allah too is included among them? The answer is that if Allah is worshipped along with others regarding Him as a Deity among other deities, the believer in *Tauhid* will inevitably express his immunity from this worship, for in his sight Allah is not a Deity out of a collection of deities, but He alone is the real Deity, and the worship of the collection of deities is no worship of Allah, although worship of Allah also is included in it. The Qur'ān has clearly stated that Allah's worship is only that which does not have any tinge of the worship of another and in which man makes his worship exclusively Allah's. "And the only Command they were given, was to worship Allah, making their religion sincerely His, turning all their attention towards Him." (Al-Bayyinah : 5). This subject has been explained at many places in the Qur'ān forcefully; for example, see An-Nisā' : 145-146, Al-A'rāf : 29, Az-Zumar : 2, 3, 11, 14, 15, Al-Mu'min : 14, 64-66. It has been further explained in a *Hadith Qudsi* (i.e. Divine Word revealed through the mouth of the Prophet) in which the Messenger of Allah says: "Allah says: I am Self-Sufficient of the association of every associate most of all. Whoever performed an act in which he associated another also with Me, I am free of it, and the entire act is for him who was associated." (Muslim, Mushad Ahmad, Ibn Mājah). Thus, acknowledging Allah as one of the two, three or

many gods and serving and worshipping others along with Him is, in fact, the real *kufr*, declaration of immunity from which is the object of this Sūrah.

3. The words used are: *mā a'budu*. The word *mā* in Arabic is generally used for lifeless or unintelligent things, and the word *man* for intelligent and rational beings. The question arises why has *mā a'budu* been used here instead of *man a'budu*? The commentators generally give four answers to it: (1) that *mā* here is in the meaning of *man*; (2) that *mā* here is in the meaning of *alladhī* (i.e. which or who); (3) that in both the sentences *mā* is in the meaning of a noun of action (*maṣḍar*) and it means: "I do not perform the kind of worship that you perform, i.e. polytheistic worship, and you do not perform the kind of worship that I perform, i.e. worship of One God;" (4) that since in the first sentence *mā ta'budūna* has been used, in the second *mā a'budu* has been used to keep the style; in both places there is only the uniformity of the word, there is no uniformity of meaning; instances of this are found elsewhere also in the Qur'ān. For example, in Al-Baqarah : 194, it has been said: "Therefore, if anyone transgresses a prohibition by attacking you, you may do likewise." Obviously, to transgress likewise in retaliation is no transgression, but the word transgression (in retaliation) has been used only for the sake of uniformity in style. In Sūrah At-Taubah : 67, it has been said: "They forgot Allah, so Allah forgot them", whereas Allah does not forget. What is meant to be said is that Allah ignored them. The word *nisyān* in respect of Allah has been used corresponding to their *nisyān* (forgetfulness) only to keep the uniformity of the style.

Although all these four interpretations are correct in their own way, and there is room in Arabic to take all these meanings, yet none of these explains the real object for which *mā a'budu* has been used instead of *man a'budu*. As a matter of fact, when *man* is used for a person in Arabic, it is meant to say or ask something about his person, and when *mā* is used, it is meant to ask or express something about his characteristics and traits. This can be explained in English by the questions: who is he, and what is he?, about a person. When it is asked, who is he?, the object is to know something about his person. But when it is asked, what is he?, the object is to know whether, for example, he belongs to the army, and if so, what is his rank, or whether he belongs to some teaching organisation, and if so, whether he is a lecturer in it, or a reader, or a professor, what

science or art subject he teaches, what are his qualifications, etc. Thus, if in this verse, it was said: *Lā antum 'ābidūna man a'bud*, it would mean: "You are not worshippers of the being whom I worship," and in response, the disbelievers and the polytheists could have said that they too believed in the Being of Allah and also worshipped Him. But when it was said: *Lā antum 'ābidūna mā a'bud*, it meant: "You are not worshippers of the Deity who has the attributes of the Deity whom I worship." And this is the real point on the basis of which the religion of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is absolutely distinguished from the religions of all kinds of disbelievers, besides the deniers of God, for his God is utterly different from the God of all of them. The God of some of them is such that He stood in need of rest on the seventh day after having created the world in six days, Who is not God of the universe but God of Israel, Who stands in a special relationship to the people of one particular race, which is not shared by other men, Who wrestles with the Prophet Jacob and cannot throw him, Who has also a son, named Ezra. The God of some others is father of an only son, called Jesus Christ, and He causes His son to be crucified in order to make him an atonement for the sins of others. The God of some has wife and children, but begets only daughters. The God of some assumes human form and shape and living in a human body on the earth works like men. The God of some is merely an Essence, or Cause of causes, or the First Cause, Who after giving the system of the universe the initial push is sitting aside unconcerned, the universe is working by itself according to some relentless laws, and now He and man have nothing to do with each other. In short, even the unbelievers who acknowledge God do not, in fact, acknowledge the God, Who is the Creator, Master, Disposer, Administrator and Ruler of the entire universe, Who has not only set the system of the universe but is running and controlling it by Himself every moment, Who is above every defect, fault, weakness and error, Who is free from every similitude, every physical limitation, every likeness, Who is Self-Sufficient of every companion and associate, Who has no partner in His Being, attributes, powers and entitlement to worship, Who is far too Holy that He should have children, or should take some one for a son, or should have an exclusive relationship with a community or race, Who is directly related to each individual creature of His as its Providence, Sustainer and Guardian, Who hears the prayers and answers them, Who alone possesses all the powers to give life and death, to cause profit and

loss, and to make and mar destinies, Who not only sustains His creatures but also guides each according to its nature and need, Who is not only our God Whom we worship but also enjoins commands and prohibitions through His Prophets and His Books, which we have to obey, before Whom we are accountable for our deeds, Who will resurrect us after death, call us to account and reward and punish us accordingly. No one in the world except for Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and his followers, is worshipping the God with these attributes. If at all some others also are worshipping God, they are not worshipping the real and true God but the God who is their self-invented, imaginary God.

4. A section of the commentators is of the view that both these sentences are a repetition of the theme of the first two sentences and the repetition is meant to strengthen the statement in the first two sentences. But many commentators do not regard it as a repetition. They say that a new theme has been expressed in these which is different from the theme of the first two sentences. In our opinion they are correct in so far as there is no repetition in these sentences, for in these only "nor are you worshippers of Him Whom I worship" has been repeated, and this repetition also is not in the sense in which this sentence was used first. But after negating the repetition the meanings that this section of the commentators has given of these two sentences, are very different from each other. There is no occasion here to take up and discuss each of the meanings given by the commentators. Avoiding details we shall only discuss the meaning which is correct in our opinion.

In the first sentence, it has been said: "Nor am I a worshipper of those whom you have worshipped." Its theme is absolutely different from the theme of verse 2, in which it was said: "I do not worship those whom you worship." These two things widely differ in two aspects. First, that although there is denial, and a forceful denial, in saying that "I do not, or shall not, do such and such a thing", yet there is much greater force in saying that "I am not a doer of such and such a thing", for it means: "It is such an evil thing that nothing to say of committing it, it is not possible that I would even think of it, or have intention of doing it." Second, that the sentence "whom you worship" applies to only those gods whom the disbelievers are worshipping now. On the contrary, the sentence "whom you have worshipped" applies to all those gods whom the

disbelievers and their forefathers have been worshipping in the past. Now, it is a well known fact that the gods of the polytheists and disbelievers have always been changing and their number increasing and decreasing. In different ages different groups of them have been worshipping different gods and the gods of all the disbelievers have never always been the same everywhere. Therefore, the verse means: "I exonerate myself not only from your gods of today but also from the gods of your forefathers, and I am not a person who would even think of worshipping such gods."

As for the second sentence, although its words in verse 5 are the same as in verse 3, yet its meaning at the two places is different. In verse 3, it follows this sentence: "I do not worship those whom you worship." Therefore, it means: "Nor are you worshippers of the God having the attributes of the One God Whom I worship." And in verse 5, it follows this sentence: "Nor am I a worshipper of those whom you have worshipped." Therefore, it means: "Nor does it seem you would become worshippers of the One God Whom I worship." Or, in other words, "It is not possible that I should become a worshipper of each of those gods whom you and your forefathers have worshipped, and on account of your aversion to adopting worship of One God, instead of many gods, it cannot be expected that you would desist from this wrong worship and will become worshipper of Him Whom I worship."

5. That is, "My religion is entirely distinct and separate from your religion. I am not a worshipper of your gods and you are not worshippers of my God. I cannot worship your gods and you are not prepared to worship my God. Therefore, you and I can never follow and walk one and the same path together." This is not a message of tolerance to the disbelievers, but a declaration of immunity, disgust with and dissociation from them as long as they are disbelievers. Its object is to disappoint them absolutely and finally that in the matter of religion the party of Allah's Messenger and his followers would ever come to terms with them. This same declaration of immunity and expression of disgust has been made in the Makki Sūrahs revealed after this Sūrah successively. Thus, in Sūrah Yūnus, it was said: "If these people deny you, say to them: I am responsible for my deeds and you are responsible for yours: you are not accountable for what I do, and I am not accountable for what you do." (v. 41). Then further on in the same Sūrah it was said: "O Prophet, say: O mankind, if you are still in doubt concerning my Faith, know

that I do not worship those whom you worship beside Allah, but I worship that Allah alone, Who has the power to cause your death." (v. 104). In Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā' it was said: "If they disobey you, tell them: I am not responsible for what you do." (v. 216). In Sūrah Sabā it was said: "Say to them: you will not be questioned for the errors we have committed, nor shall we be answerable for what you are doing. Say, our Lord will gather us together, then He will judge between us rightly." (vv. 25-26). In Sūrah az-Zumar: "Tell them plainly: O my people, do whatever you will, so shall I. Soon you shall come to know as to whom comes the disgraceful torment and who gets the enduring punishment." (vv. 39-40). Then the same lesson was taught in Madīnah to all the Muslims: "There is indeed an excellent example for you in Abraham and his companions when they said to their people plainly: 'We have nothing to do with you and your gods, whom you worship beside God: we have renounced you and there has arisen between us and you enmity and hatred for ever, until you believe in Allah, the One.'" (Al-Mumtahinah : 4). These continuous explanations of the Qur'ān do not leave any room whatever for the doubt that the verse *Lakum dīnu-kum wa liya dīn* does not mean: "You may go on following your religion and allow me to follow mine", but it is the kind of declaration made in Sūrah Az-Zumar : 14: "O Prophet, say to them: I shall serve Allah alone, making my religion sincerely His. As for you, you may serve whomever you please beside Him." (v. 14).

From this verse Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Shāfe'i have deduced that *kufir* (unbelief), as a whole, is one community, however discordant and different from each other be the religions of the unbelievers; therefore, a Jew can inherit a Christian, and a Christian a Jew, and likewise the unbeliever of one religion can inherit the unbeliever of another religion, if there exists between them a relationship by descent or marriage, or some other connection, which necessitates the passage of inheritance of one to another. On the contrary, Imām Mālik, Imām Auzā'i and Imām Aḥmad hold the view that the followers of one religion cannot inherit the followers of another religion. They deduce this from the *Ḥadīth*, which has been related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-Āṣ, saying that Allah's Messenger (upon whom be peace) said: "The people of two different communities cannot inherit each other." (Musnad Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Dāraqūṭnī). A *Ḥadīth* with almost the same content has been related by Tiṣmidhī from



Ḥaḍrat Jābir, by Ibn Ḥibbān from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, and by Bazzār from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah. Dealing with this legal problem comprehensively, the well known Ḥanafī Imām, Shamsul-A'immah Sarakhsi, writes: "The unbelievers can inherit each other mutually for all those reasons for which the Muslims inherit each other mutually, and they can also inherit each other in certain other cases in which the Muslims do not inherit each other ... The fact is that Allah recognizes only two ways of life, the religion of Truth and the religion of falsehood; that is why He has declared: *Lakum dīnu-kum wa līya dīn*. And He has classified the people also into two groups, one group will go to Paradise and this consists of the believers, and the second group will go to Hell and this consists of the disbelievers collectively. And He has declared the two groups only as the potential opponents of each other: "These are the two parties who have disputed about their Lord." (Al-Ḥajj: 19). That is, one group comprises all the disbelievers collectively and they are opposed to the believers ... We do not admit that they are separate and distinct communities according to their beliefs, but as against the Muslims they all form one community. For the Muslims affirm faith in the apostleship of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and in the Qur'ān and they refuse to affirm faith. For this very reason they have been declared to be unbelievers and are one community as opposed to the Muslims ... The Ḥadīth, *Lā yatawārith ahl millatain*, points to the same thing as explained above. For the Holy Prophet has explained the word *millatain* (two communities) by his saying: *La yarithul Muslim al-kāfir wa lal-kāfir al-Muslim*: "The Muslim cannot inherit the disbeliever, nor the disbeliever can inherit the Muslim." (Al-Mabsūṭ, vol. 30, pp. 30-32). The Ḥadīth cited here by Imām Sarakhsi has been related by Bukhāri, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Abū Da'ūd on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Usāmah bin Zaid.



CX

AN-NASR النُصْر



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

CX

AN-NASR النصر

## INTRODUCTION

### Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *naṣr* occurring in the first verse.

### Period of Revelation

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās states that this is the last Sūrah of the Qur'ān to be revealed, i.e. no complete Sūrah was sent down to the Holy Prophet after it.'

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1. Different traditions show that certain verses were sent down after it, but there is a difference of opinion as to which verse was revealed last of all. Bukhārī and Muslim have related a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Barā' bin 'Āzib, saying that it was the last verse of Sūrah An-Nisā', viz. *Yastaftūnaka* ... Imām Bukhārī has cited Ibn 'Abbās's view that the *Āyat Ribā* (i.e. the verse enjoining prohibition of interest) was the last verse of the Qur'ān to be revealed. This is

(Muslim, Nasā'i, Ṭabarānī, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Ibn Mardūyah). According to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, this Sūrah was sent down on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage in the middle of the *Tashriq* Days at Minā, and after it the Holy Prophet rode his she-camel and gave his well-known Sermon. (Tirmidhī, Bazzār, Baihaqī, Ibn Abī Shaibah, 'Abd bin Humaid, Abū Ya'lā, Ibn Mardūyah). Baihaqī in *Kitāb al-Ḥajj* has related from the tradition of Ḥaḍrat Sarrā' bint-Nablhān the Sermon which the Holy Prophet gave on this occasion. She says:

“At the Farewell Pilgrimage I heard the Holy Prophet say: O people, do you know what day it is? They said: Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge. He said: This is the middle day of the *Tashriq* Days. Then he said: Do you know what place it is? They said: Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge. He said: This is *Mash'aril-Ḥarām*. Then he said: I do not know, I might not meet you here

also supported by those traditions which Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah and Ibn Mardūyah have related from Ḥaḍrat 'Umar but they do not explicitly state that it was the last verse. What Ḥaḍrat 'Umar meant was that it was one of the verses revealed last of all. Abū 'Ubaid in his *Fadā'il al-Qur'ān* has cited the view of Imām Zuhri, and Ibn Jarīr in his commentary the view of Ḥaḍrat Sa'id bin al-Musayyab, that the *Āyat Ribā* and the *Āyat Dayn* (Al-Baqarah : 282) were the last verses of the Qur'ān to be revealed. Nasā'i, Ibn Mardūyah and Ibn Jarīr have cited another view of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, saying that *Wattaqū yaum-an turja'ūna fi-hi* (Al-Baqarah : 281) was the last verse of the Qur'ān to be revealed. The view of Ibn 'Abbās that Al-Firyābī has cited in his commentary adds that this verse was sent down 81 days before the Holy Prophet's death, and according to Sa'id bin Jubair's view which Ibn Abī Ḥātim has cited, there was an interval of only 9 days between the revelation of this verse and the Holy Prophet's death. The *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad and *Al-Mustadrik* of Imām Ḥākim contain a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Ubayy bin Ka'b, saying that vv. 128, 129 of Sūrah At-Taubah were the last verses of the Qur'ān to be revealed,

again. Beware, your bloods and your honours are forbidden, until you appear before your Lord, and He questions you about your deeds. Listen: let the one who is near convey it to him who is far away. Listen: have I conveyed the message to you? Then, when we returned to Madīnah, the Holy Prophet passed away not many days after that.”

If both these traditions are read together, it appears that there was an interval of three months and some days between the revelation of Sūrah An-Naşr and the Holy Prophet's death, for historically the same was the interval between the Farewell Pilgrimage and the passing away of the Holy Prophet.

Ibn ‘Abbās says that when this Sūrah was revealed, the Holy Prophet said that he had been informed of his death and his time had approached. (Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah). In the other traditions related from Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbās, it has been stated that at the revelation of this Sūrah the Holy Prophet understood that he had been informed of his departure from the world. (Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ṭabarāni, Nasā’i, Ibn Abī Hātim, Ibn Mardūyah).

Mother of the Believers, Ḥaḍrat Umm Ḥabībah, says that when this Sūrah was revealed the Holy Prophet said that he would leave the world that year. Hearing this Ḥaḍrat Fātimah wept. Thereat he said: “From among my family you will be the first to join me.” Hearing this she laughed. (Ibn Abī Hātim, Ibn Mardūyah). A tradition containing almost the same theme has been related by Baihaqi from Ibn ‘Abbās.

Ibn ‘Abbās says: “Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar used to invite me to sit in his assembly along with some of the important elderly Companions who had fought at Badr. This was

not liked by some of them. They complained that they also had sons who were like the boy. Why then was he in particular invited to sit in the assembly? (Imām Bukhārī and Ibn Jarīr have pointed out that such a thing was said by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdur Raḥmān bin 'Auf). Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said that the boy enjoyed the position and distinction because of his knowledge. Then one day he invited the Companions of Badr and called me also to sit with them. I understood that he had invited me to the assembly to prove his contention. During the conversation Ḥaḍrat 'Umar asked the Companions of Badr: 'What do you say about *Idhā jā'ā naṣrullāhi wal-fath?*' Some said: 'In it we have been enjoined to praise Allah and ask for His forgiveness when His succour comes and we attain victory.' Some others said that it implied the conquest of cities and forts. Some kept quiet. Then Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said: 'Ibn 'Abbās, do you also say the same?' I said: No. He asked: 'What then is your view?' I submitted that it implied the last hour of Allah's Messenger (upon whom be peace); in it he was informed that when Allah's succour came and victory was attained, it would be a sign that his hour had come; therefore, he should praise Allah and ask for His forgiveness. Thereat Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said: 'I know nought but what you have said.' In another tradition there is the addition that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said to the Companions: "How can you blame me when you yourselves have seen why I invite this boy to join the assembly?" (Bukhārī, Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Mardūyah, Baghawī, Baihaqī, Ibn al-Mundhir).

### Theme and Subject-Matter

As is shown by the above traditions, Allah in this Sūrah had informed His Messenger (upon whom be peace) that when Islam attained complete victory in



Arabia and the people started entering Allah's religion in great numbers, it would mean that the mission for which he had been sent to the world, had been fulfilled. Then, he was enjoined to busy himself in praising and glorifying Allah by Whose bounty he had been able to accomplish such a great task, and should implore Him to forgive whatever failings and frailties he might have shown in the performance of the service. Here, by a little consideration one can easily see the great difference that there is between a Prophet and a common worldly leader. If a worldly leader in his own lifetime is able to bring about a revolution, which was the aim and objective of his struggle, this would be an occasion for exultation for him. But here we witness quite another phenomenon. The Messenger of Allah in a brief space of 23 years revolutionized an entire nation as regards its beliefs, thoughts, customs, morals, civilization, ways of living, economy, politics and fighting ability, and raising it from ignorance and barbarism enabled it to conquer the world and become leader of nations; yet when he had accomplished this unique task, he was not enjoined to celebrate it but to glorify and praise Allah and to pray for His forgiveness, and he busied himself humbly the implementation of that command.

Hadrat 'A'ishah says: "The Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) often used to recite *Subḥānak-Allāhumma wa bi-ḥamdika astaghfiruka wa atūbu ilaika* (according to some other traditions, *Subḥān Allāhi wa bi ḥamdi-hi astaghfirullāha wa atūbu ilaihi*) before his death. I asked: O Messenger of Allah, what are these words that you have started reciting now? He replied: A sign has been appointed for me so that when I see it, I should recite these words, and it is: *Idhā jā'ā naşrullāhi wal-fathu.*" (Musnad Aḥmad, Muslim, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah). In some other traditions on the same

subject Ḥadrat 'A'ishah has reported that the Holy Prophet often recited the following words in his *rukū'* and *sajdah*; *Subḥānak-Allahumma wa-bi ḥamdika, Allahumma-aghfirli*. This was the interpretation of the Qur'ān (i.e. of Sūrah An-Naṣr) that he had made. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Jarīr).

Ḥadrat Umm Salamah says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) during his last days very often recited the following words sitting and standing, going out of the house and coming back to it: *Subḥān Allāhi wa-bi ḥamdi-hī*. I one day asked: "Why do you recite these words so often? O Messenger of Allah". He replied: I have been enjoined to do so. Then he recited this Sūrah." (Ibn Jarīr).

According to Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, when this Sūrah was revealed, the Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace) frequently began to recite the words *Subḥānak-Allahumma wa bi-ḥamdika, Allāhumma-aghfirli, subḥānaka Rabbanā wa bi-ḥamdika, Allahumma-aghfirli, innaka anta at-Taṣṣwāb al-Ghafūr*. (Ibn Jarīr, Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

Ibn 'Abbās has stated that after the revelation of this Sūrah the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) began to labour so intensively and devotedly hard for the Hereafter as he had never done before. (Nasā'i, Ṭabarānī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Mardūyah).



وقيل النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم  
١٠٤٥

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ ۗ وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ  
اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا ۗ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ  
تَوَّابًا ۝

CX

AN-NASR النصر

Verses : 3

Revealed at Madinah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

When Allah's help comes and victory is attained,<sup>1</sup> and (O Prophet,) you see that the people are entering into Allah's Religion in crowds,<sup>2</sup> then glorify your Lord with His praise,<sup>3</sup> and pray for His forgiveness.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, He is ever inclined to accept repentance.

1-3

1. Victory here does not imply victory in any one particular campaign but the decisive victory after which there remained no power in the land to resist and oppose Islam, and it became evident that Islam alone would hold sway in Arabia. Some commentators have taken this to imply the Conquest of Makkah. But the conquest of Makkah took place in A.H. 8, and this Sūrah was revealed towards the end of A.H. 10, as is shown by the traditions related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and Ḥaḍrat Sarrā' bint Nabhān, which we have cited in the Introduction. Besides, the statement of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās that this is the last Sūrah of the Qur'ān to be revealed, also goes against this commentary. For if the victory implied the conquest of Makkah, the whole of Sūrah at-Taubah was revealed after it; then it could not be the last Sūrah. There is no doubt that the conquest of Makkah was decisive in that it broke the power of the Arabian pagans, yet even after this,

they showed clear signs of resistance. The Battles of Ṭā'if and Hunain were fought after it, and it took Islam about two years to attain complete control over Arabia.

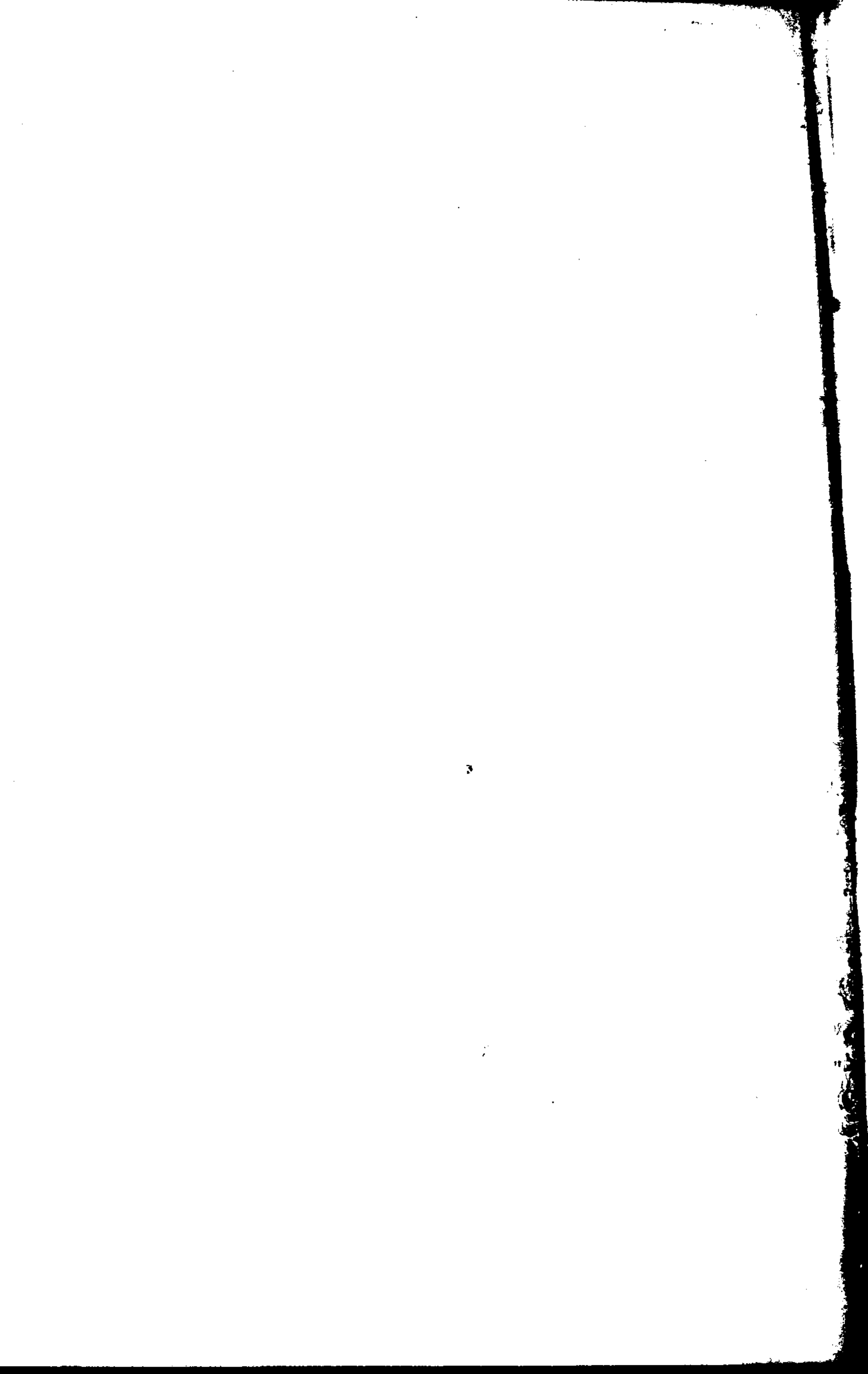
2. "You see ... in crowds": "When the time for the people to enter Islam in one's and two's comes to an end, and when whole tribes and people belonging to large tracts start entering it in crowds, of their own free will, and without offering battle or resistance." This happened from the beginning of A.H. 9, because of which that year has been described as the year of deputations. Deputations from every part of Arabia started coming before the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace), entering Islam and taking the oath of allegiance to him, until when he went for the Farewell Pilgrimage to Makkah, in A.H. 10, the whole of Arabia had become Muslim, and not a single polytheist remained anywhere in the country.

3. *Ḥamd* implies praising and hallowing Allah Almighty as well, as thanking and paying obeisance to Him; *tasbīḥ* means to regard Allah as pure and free from every blemish and weakness. The Holy Prophet was enjoined to do *ḥamd* and *tasbīḥ* of Allah when he witnessed this manifestation of His power. Here, *ḥamd* means that in respect of his great success he should never entertain even a tinge of the idea that it was the result of any excellence of his own, but he should attribute it to Allah's favour and mercy, thank Him alone for it, and acknowledge with the heart and tongue that praise and gratitude for the victory and success belonged to Him alone. And *tasbīḥ* means that he should regard Allah as pure and free from the limitation that exaltation of His Word stood in need of his effort and endeavour, or was dependent on it. On the contrary, his heart should be filled with the faith that the success of his effort and struggle was dependent upon Allah's support and succour. He could take this service from any of His servants He pleased, and it was His favour that He had taken it from him, and made His religion meet success through him. Besides, there is an aspect of wonder also in pronouncing the *tasbīḥ*, i.e. *Subḥān-Allah*. When a wonderful incident takes place, one exclaims *subḥān-Allah*, thereby implying that only by Allah's power such a wonderful thing had happened; otherwise no power of the world could have caused it to happen.

4. "Pray for His forgiveness": "Pray to your Lord to overlook and pardon whatever error or weakness you might have shown inadvertently in the performance of the service that He had entrusted to you." This is the etiquette that Islam has taught to man. A man

might have performed the highest possible service to Allah's Religion, might have offered countless sacrifices in its cause, and might have exerted himself extremely hard in carrying out the rites of His worship, yet he should never entertain the thought that he has fulfilled the right his Lord had on him wholly. Rather he should always think that he has not been able to fulfil what was required of him, and he should implore Allah, saying: "Lord, overlook and forgive whatever weakness I might have shown in rendering Your right, and accept the little service that I have been able to perform." When such an etiquette was taught to the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace), when none in the world conceivably has toiled and struggled so hard in the cause of Allah as he did, how can another person regard his work as superb and be involved in the misunderstanding that he has fulfilled the right Allah had imposed on him? Allah's right, in fact, is so supreme that no creature can ever fulfil and render it truly and fully.

Allah in this Command has taught Muslims an eternal lesson: "Do not regard any of your worship, devotion or religious service as something superb; even if you have expended your entire life in the cause of Allah, you should always think that you could not do all that was required of you by your Lord. Likewise, when you attain some victory, you should not regard it as a result of some excellence in yourselves but as a result of only Allah's bounty and favour. Then bowing humbly before your Lord, you should praise and glorify Him, and should repent and beg for His forgiveness instead of boasting and bragging of your success and victory."



CXI

AL-LAHAB اللّٰهَب





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## CXI

AL-LAHAB <sup>اللاب</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Name**

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *Lahab* in the first verse.

#### **Period of Revelation**

Although the commentators have not disputed its being a Makki Sūrah, yet it is difficult to determine in which phase of the life at Makkah precisely it was revealed. However, in view of Abū Lahab's role and conduct against the Holy Prophet's message of Truth, it can be assumed that it must have been revealed in the period when he had transgressed all limits in his mad hostility to him, and his attitude was becoming a serious obstruction in the progress of Islam. It may well have

been revealed in the period when the Quraish had boycotted the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) together with the people of his clan and besieged them in Shi'b Abi Tālib, and Abū Lahab was the only person to join with the enemies against his own relatives. The basis of this assumption is that Abū Lahab was the Holy Prophet's uncle, and public condemnation of the uncle by the tongue of the nephew could not be proper until the extreme excesses committed by the uncle had become visible to everyone. If the Sūrah had been revealed before this, in the very beginning, the people would have regarded it as morally discourteous that the nephew should so condemn the uncle.

### Background

This is the only place in the Qur'ān where a person from among the enemies of Islam has been condemned by name, whereas in Makkah as well as in Madīnah, after the migration, there were many people who were in no way less inimical to Islam and the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) than Abū Lahab. The question is, what was the special trait of the character of this person, which became the basis of his condemnation by name? To understand this it is necessary that one should understand the Arabian society of that time and the role that Abū Lahab played in it.

In ancient days since there prevailed chaos and confusion, bloodshed and plunder throughout Arabia, and the condition since centuries was that a person could have no guarantee of the protection of life, honour and property except with the help and support of his clansmen and blood relations, therefore *ṣilah reḥmī* (good treatment of the kindred) was esteemed most highly among the moral values of the Arabian society

and breaking off of connections with the kindred was regarded as a great sin. Under the influence of the same Arabian tradition when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) began to preach the message of Islam, the other clans of Quraish and their chiefs resisted and opposed him tooth and nail, but the Banī Hāshim and the Banī al-Muṭṭalib (children of al-Muṭṭalib, brother of Hāshim) not only did not oppose him but continued to support him openly, although most of them had not yet believed in his Prophethood. The other clans of Quraish themselves regarded this support by the blood relations of the Holy Prophet as perfectly in accordance with the moral traditions of Arabia. That is why they never taunted the Banī Hāshim and the Banī al-Muṭṭalib in that they had abandoned their ancestral faith by supporting a person who was preaching a new faith. They knew and believed that they could in no case hand over an individual of their clan to his enemies, and their support and aid of a clansman was perfectly natural in the sight of the Quraish and the people of Arabia.

This moral principle, which the Arabs even in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, regarded as worthy of respect and inviolable was broken only by one man in his enmity of Islam, and that was Abū Lahab, son of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib. He was an uncle of the Holy Prophet, whose father and he were sons of the same father. In Arabia, an uncle represented the father especially when the nephew was fatherless. The uncle was expected to look after the nephew as one of his own children. But this man in his hostility to Islam and love of *kufir* trampled all the Arab traditions under foot.

The traditionists have related from Ibn 'Abbās with several chains of transmitters the tradition that when the Holy Prophet was commanded to present the message of Islam openly, and he was instructed in the

Qur'ân to warn first of all his nearest kinsfolk of the punishment of God, he ascended the Mount Şafâ one morning and called out aloud: *Yâ sabâḥah* (O, the calamity of the morning!). This alarm in Arabia was raised by the person who noticed early at dawn an enemy tribe advancing against his tribe. When the Holy Messenger made this call, the people enquired as to who had made the call. They were told that it was Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). Thereat the people of all the clans of Quraish rushed out. Everyone who could, came; he who could not, sent another one for himself. When the people had assembled, the Holy Messenger calling out each clan by name, viz. O Banī Hāshim, O Banī 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, O Banī Fihri, O Banī so and so, said: "If I were to tell you that behind the hill there was an enemy host ready to fall upon you, would you believe me?" The people responded with one voice, saying that they never had so far experienced a lie from him. The Holy Prophet said: "Then I warn you that you are heading for a torment." Thereupon, before anyone else could speak, Abū Lahab, the Holy Prophet's uncle, said: "May you perish! Did you summon us for this?" Another tradition adds that he picked up a stone to throw at the Holy Prophet. (Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhāri, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarir, and others).

According to Ibn Zaid, one day Abū Lahab asked the Holy Prophet: "If I were to accept your religion, what would I get?" The Holy Prophet replied: "You would get what the other believers would get." He said: "Is there no preference or distinction for me?" The Holy Prophet replied: "What else do you want?" Thereupon he said: "May this religion perish in which I and all other people should be equal and alike!" (Ibn Jarir).

In Makkah Abū Lahab was the next door neighbour

of the Holy Prophet. Their houses were separated by a wall. Besides him, Ḥakam bin 'Aṣ (Father of Marwān), 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'ait, 'Adi bin Ḥāmra' and Ibn al-Aṣḍā' il-Hudhāl also were his neighbours. These people did not allow him to have peace even in his own house. Sometimes when he was performing the Prayer, they would place the goat's stomach on him; sometimes when food was being cooked in the courtyard, they would throw filth at the cooking-pot. The Holy Prophet would come out and say: "O Bani 'Abdi Manāf, what kind of neighbourliness is it?" Abū Lahab's wife, Umm Jamīl (Abū Sufyān's sister), had made it a practice to cast thorns at his door in the night so that when he or his children came out of the house at dawn, they should run thorns in the foot. (Baihaqī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn 'Asākir, Ibn Hishām).

Before the proclamation of Prophethood, two of the Holy Prophet's daughters were married to two of Abū Lahab's sons, 'Utbah and 'Utaibah. After his call when the Holy Prophet began to invite the people to Islam, Abū Lahab said to both his sons: "I would forbid myself seeing and meeting you until you divorced the daughters of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings)." So, both of them divorced their wives. 'Utaibah in particular became so nasty in his spitefulness that one day he came before the Holy Prophet and said: "I repudiate *An-najmi idha hawā* and *Alladhī danā fatadallā*", and then he spat at him, but his spittal did not fall on him. The Holy Prophet prayed: "O God, subject him to the power of a dog from among Your dogs." Afterwards, 'Utaibah accompanied his father in his journey to Syria. During the journey the caravan halted at a place which, according to local people, was visited by wild beasts at night. Abū Lahab told his companions, the Quraish: "Make full arrangements for

the protection of my son, for I fear the curse invoked by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) on him." Accordingly, the people made their camels sit all around 'Utaibah and went to sleep. At night a tiger came which crossed the circle of the camels and devoured 'Utaibah tearing him to pieces. (Ibn 'Abdul Barr: *Al-Istī'āb*; Ibn Hajar: *Al-Iṣābah*; Abū Nu'aim al-Iṣfahānī: *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwat*; As-Suhaili: *Rauḍ al-Unuf*. Here, there is a difference of opinion. Some reporters say that the divorce took place after the Holy Prophet's proclamation of Prophethood and some say that it took place after the revelation of *Tabbat yadā' Abī Lahab*. There is also a difference of opinion about whether Abū Lahab's this son was 'Utbah or 'Utaibah. But this much is confirmed that after the conquest of Makkah, 'Utbah embraced Islam and took the oath of allegiance at the Holy Prophet's hand. Therefore, the correct view is that it was 'Utaibah).

Abū Lahab's wickedness can be judged from the fact that when after the death of the Holy Prophet's son Ḥaḍrat Qāsim, his second son, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah, also died, this man instead of condoling with his nephew in his bereavement, hastened to the Quraish chiefs joyfully to give them the news that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) had become childless that night. This we have already related in the commentary of Sūrah Al-Kauthar.

Wherever the Holy Prophet went to preach his message of Islam, this man followed him and forbade the people to listen to him. Rabī'ah bin 'Abbād ad-Dīlī has related: "I was a young boy when I accompanied my father to the fare of Dhul-Majāz. There I saw the Holy Messenger (may peace be upon him) who was exhorting the people, saying: 'O people, say: there is no deity but Allah, you will attain success.'" Following behind him I saw a man, who was telling the people:

‘This fellow is a liar: he has gone astray from his ancestral faith.’ I asked; who is he? The people replied: He is his uncle, Abū Lahab.” (Musnad Ahmad, Baihaqī). Another tradition from Hadrat Rabī‘ah is to the effect; “I saw that the Holy Prophet went to the halting place of each tribe and said: ‘O children of so and so, I have been appointed Allah’s Messenger to you. I exhort you to worship only Allah and to associate none with Him. So, affirm faith in me and join me so that I may fulfil the mission for which I have been sent.’ Following close behind him there was a man who was saying: ‘O children of so and so, he is leading you astray from Lāt and ‘Uzzā and inviting you to the religion of error and innovation which he has brought. Do not at all listen to what he says and do not follow him.’ I asked my father: who is he? He replied: He is his uncle, Abū Lahab.” (Musnad Ahmad, Ṭabarānī). Ṭāriq bin ‘Abdullah al-Muhāribī’s tradition is similar. He says: “I saw in the fare of Dhul-Majāz that the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) was exhorting the people, saying: ‘O people, say *La ilāha ill-Allāh*, you will attain success’, and behind him there was a man who was casting stones at him, until his heels bled, and he was telling the people: ‘Do not listen to him, he is a liar.’ I asked the people who he was. They said he was his uncle, Abū Lahab.” (Tirmidhī).

In the 7th year of Prophethood, when all the clans of Quraish boycotted the Banī Hāshim and the Banī al-Muṭṭalib socially and economically, and both these clans remaining steadfast to the Holy Prophet’s support, were besieged in Shi‘b Abi Ṭālib, Abū Lahab was the only person, who sided with the disbelieving Quraish against his own clan. This boycott continued for three years, so much so that the Banī Hāshim and the Banī al-Muṭṭalib began to starve. This, however, did not move Abū Lahab. When a trade caravan came to Makkah and

a besieged person from Shi'b Abi Ṭālib approached it to buy some article of food, Abū Lahab would shout out to the merchants to demand a forbidding price, telling them that he would make up for any loss that they incurred. Thus, they would demand exorbitant rates and the poor customer had to return empty handed to his starving children. Then Abū Lahab would purchase the same articles from them at the market rates. (Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Hishām).

On account of these very misdeeds this man was condemned in this Sūrah by name, and there was a special need for it. When the Holy Prophet's own uncle followed and opposed him before the Arabs who came for Hajj from outside Makkah, or gathered together in the fares held at different places, they regarded it as against the established traditions of Arabia that an uncle should run down his nephew without a reason, should pelt stones at him and bring false accusations against him publicly. They were, therefore, influenced by what Abū Lahab said and were involved in doubt about the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). But when this Sūrah was revealed, and Abū Lahab, filled with rage, started uttering nonsense, the people realized that what he said in opposition to the Holy Prophet was not at all reliable, for he said all that in his mad hostility to his nephew.

Besides, when his uncle was condemned by name, the people's expectation that the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) could treat some relative leniently in the matter of religion was frustrated for ever. When the Holy Messenger's own uncle was taken to task publicly the people understood that there was no room for preference or partiality in their faith. A non-relative could become a near and dear one if he believed, and a near-relation a non-relative if he disbelieved. Thus, there is no place for the ties of blood in religion.





تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ۗ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ ۗ سَيَصْلَىٰ  
نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ ۗ وَامْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ۗ فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ ۗ

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ع ٥  
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## CXI

### AL-LAHAB الْلَّهَب

Verses : 5

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

Broken were the hands of Abū Lahab and he was doomed to utter failure.<sup>1</sup> His wealth and whatever he earned did not avail him anything.<sup>2</sup> Certainly he shall be cast into a blazing Fire, and (along with him) his wife, too,<sup>3</sup> the bearer of slander.<sup>4</sup> Round her neck will be a rope of palm-fibre.<sup>5</sup>

1-5

1. His real name was 'Abd al-'Uzzā, and he was called Abū Lahab on account of his glowing, ruddy complexion. *Lahab* means the flame of fire, and *Abū Lahab* the one with a flaming, fiery face. His being mentioned here by his nickname (*kunya*), instead of his real name, has several reasons. First, that he was better known by his nickname than by his real name; second, that the Qur'ān did not approve that he should be mentioned by his polytheistic name 'Abd al-'Uzzā (slave of 'Uzzā); third, that his *kunya* goes well with the fate that has been described of him in this Sūrah.

Some commentators have translated *tabbat yadā' Abi Lahab* to mean: "May the hands of Abū Lahab be broken", and *tabba* to mean: "may he perish" or "he perished". But this, in fact, was not a curse which was invoked on him, but a prophecy in which an event taking place in the future, has been described in the past tense, to suggest that its occurrence in the future is certain and inevitable.

In actual fact, at last the same thing happened as had been foretold in this Sūrah a few years earlier. Breaking of the hands obviously does not imply breaking of the physical hands, but a person's utterly failing in his aim and object for which he has exerted his utmost. And Abū Lahab indeed had exerted his utmost to defeat and frustrate the message of Islam presented by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). But hardly seven or eight years after the revelation of this Sūrah most of the big chiefs of Quraish, who were a party with Abū Lahab in his hostility to Islam, were killed in the Battle of Badr. When the news of the defeat reached Makkah, he was so shocked that he could not survive for more than seven days. His death occurred in a pitiable state. He became afflicted with malignant pustule and the people of his house left him to himself, fearing contagion. No one came near his body for three days after his death, until the body decomposed and began to stink. At last, when the people began to taunt his sons, according to one tradition, they hired some negroes, who lifted his body and buried it. According to another tradition, they got a pit dug out and threw his body into it by pushing it with wood, and covered it up with earth and stones. His utter failure became manifest when the religion which he had tried his utmost to impede and thwart, was accepted by his own children. First of all, his daughter, Darrah, migrated from Makkah to Madīnah and embraced Islam; then on the conquest of Makkah, both his sons, 'Utbah and Mu'attab, came before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) through the mediation of Ḥaḍrat 'Abbās, believed and took oath of allegiance to him.

2. Abū Lahab was a stingy, materialistic man. Ibn Jarīr has stated that once in the pre-Islamic days he was accused of having stolen two golden deer from the treasury of the Ka'bah. Though later the deer were recovered from another person, the fact that he was accused of stealing indicates the opinion the people of Makkah held of him. About his riches Qāḍī Rashīd bin Zubair writes in his *Adh-Dhakhā'ir wat-Tuḥaf*: He was one of the four richest men of the Quraish, who owned one *qinlār* (about 260 oz) of gold each. His love of wealth can be judged from the fact that when on the occasion of the Battle of Badr the fate of his religion was going to be decided for ever, and all the Quraish chiefs had personally gone to fight, he sent 'Āṣ bin Hishām to fight on his own behalf, telling him: "This is in lieu of the debt of four thousand *dirhams* that you owe to me." Thus, he contrived a plan to realize his debt, for 'Āṣ had become bankrupt and there was no hope of the recovery of the debt from him.

Some commentators have taken *mā kasaba* in the meaning of the earning, i.e. the benefits that accrued to him from his wealth were his *kasab* (earning), and some other commentators have taken it to imply children, for the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has said that a man's son also is his *kasab* (earning). (Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Abī Hātim). Both these meanings fully correspond to the fate met by Abū Lahab. For when he was afflicted with the malignant pustule, his wealth availed him nothing, and his children also left him alone to die a miserable, wretched death. They did not even bury him honourably. Thus, within a few years the people witnessed how the prophecy which had been made in this Sūrah about Abū Lahab was literally fulfilled.

3. Her name was Arwā' and her nickname (*kunyat*) Umm Jamil. She was sister of Abū Sufyān and was no less bitter than her husband, Abū Lahab, in her enmity to the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace). Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr's daughter, Ḥaḍrat Asmā', has related that when this Sūrah was revealed, and Umm Jamil heard it, she was filled with rage and went out in search of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). She carried a handful of stones and she was crying some verses of her own, satirizing the Holy Prophet. She came to the Ka'bah, where the Holy Prophet was sitting with Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr. The latter said: "O Messenger of Allah, there she comes and I fear lest she should utter something derogatory to you." The Holy Prophet replied: "She will not see me." The same thing happened. She could not see the Holy Prophet although he was there. She said to Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr: "I hear that your Companion has satirized me." Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr replied: "No, by the Lord of this House, he has not satirized you." Hearing this she went off. (Ibn Abī Hātim, Ibn Hishām; Bazzār has related an incident on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also, which closely resembles this). What Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr meant was that she had not been satirized by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), but by Allah Himself.

4. The words in the original are *ḥammālat al-ḥalab*, which literally mean: "carrier of the wood". The commentators have given several meanings of it. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ibn Zaid, Ḍaḥḥāk and Rabī' bin Anas say: She used to strew thorns at the Holy Prophet's door in the night; therefore, she has been described as carrier of the wood. Qatādah, 'Ikrimah, Ḥasan Baṣri, Mujāhid and Sufyān Thauri say: She used to carry evil tales and

slander from one person to another in order to create hatred between them; therefore, she has been called the bearer of wood idiomatically. Sa'Id bin Jubair says: The one who is loading himself with the burden of sin, is described idiomatically in Arabic as: *Fulān-un yah-ṭatibu 'alā zahri-hi* (so and so is loading wood on his back); therefore, *ḥammālat al-ḥaṭab* means: the one who carries the burden of sin. Another meaning also which the commentators have given is: she will do this in the Hereafter, i.e. she will bring and supply wood to the fire in which Abū Lahab would be burning.

5. The word used for her neck is *jīd*, which in Arabic means a neck decorated with an ornament. Sa'Id bin al-Musayyab, Ḥasan Baṣri and Qatādah say that she wore a valuable necklace and used to say: "By Lāt and 'Uzzā, I will sell away this necklace and expend the price to satisfy my enmity against Muḥammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him)." That is why the word *jīd* has been used here ironically, thereby implying that in Hell she would have a rope of palm-fibre round her neck instead of that necklace upon which she prides herself so arrogantly. Another example of this ironical style is found at several places in the Qur'ān in the sentence: *Bash-shir-hum bi-'adhāb-in alīm*: "Give them the good news of a painful torment."

The words *ḥabl-um-min-masad* have been used for the rope which will be put round her neck, i.e. it will be a rope of the *masad* kind. Different meanings of this have been given by the lexicographers and commentators. According to some, *masad* means a tightly twisted rope; others say that *masad* is the rope made from palm-fibre; still others say that it means the rope made from rush, or camel-skin, or camel-hair. Still another view is that it implies a cable made by twisted iron strands together.

CXII

AL-IKHLĀS الاخلاص



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## CXII

AL-IKHLĀS الاخلاص

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Name**

*Al-Ikhlāṣ* is not merely the name of this Sūrah but also the title of its contents, for it deals exclusively with *Tauhīd*. The other Sūrahs of the Qur'ān generally have been designated after a word occurring in them, but in this Sūrah the word *Ikhlāṣ* has occurred nowhere. It has been given this name in view of its meaning and subject matter. Whoever understands it and believes in its teaching, will get rid of *shirk* (polytheism) completely.

#### **Period of Revelation**

Whether it is a Makkī or a Madanī Sūrah is disputed, and the difference of opinion has been caused by the traditions which have been related concerning the occasion of its revelation. We give them below ad seriatum:

(1) Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has reported that the Quraish said to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace): "Tell us of the ancestry<sup>1</sup> of your Lord." Thereupon this Sūrah was sent down. (Ṭabarānī).

(2) Abul-'Āliyah has related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Ubayy bin Ka'b that the polytheists said to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace): "Tell us of your Lord's ancestry." Thereupon Allah sent down this Sūrah. (Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Jarīr, Tirmidhi, Bukhārī in *Al-Tārikh*, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ḥākim, Baihaqī). Tirmidhi has related a tradition on the same theme from Abul-'Āliyah, which does not contain any reference to Ḥaḍrat Ubayy bin Ka'b, and has declared it to be more authentic.

(3) Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah has stated that a bedouin (according to other traditions, some people) said to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace): "Tell us of your Lord's ancestry." Thereupon Allah sent down this Sūrah. (Abū Ya'lā, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ṭabarānī in *Al-Ausat*, Baihaqī. Abū Nu'aim in *Al-Hilyah*).

(4) 'Ikrimah has related a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās, saying that a group of the Jews, including Ka'b bin Ashraf, Ḥuyayy bin Akhtab and others, came before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and said: "O Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), tell us of the attributes of your Lord, Who has sent you as a Prophet." Thereupon Allah sent down this Sūrah. (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn 'Adī, Baihaqī in *Al-Asmā' waṣ-Ṣifāt*).

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1. The custom among the Arabs was that whenever they wanted to be introduced to a stranger, they would say: *Insibhu lanā*: "Tell us of his ancestry", for among them the foremost thing required to be known was the lineage of the stranger and the tribe he belonged to. That is why when they wanted to ask the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) who his Lord was and what were his attributes, they said: *Insib lanā Rabbaka*: "Tell us of your Lord's lineage."



In addition to these, some other traditions also have been cited by Ibn Taimiyyah in his commentary of Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ, which are as follows:

(5) Ḥaḍrat Anas has stated that some Jews of Khaiber came before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and they said: "O Abul-Qāsim, Allah created the angels from light, Adam from rotten clay, Iblis from the flame of fire, the sky from smoke, and the earth from the foam of water. Now tell us about your Lord (of what He is made)." The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) did not give any reply to this question. Then Gabriel came and he said: "O Muḥammad, say to them: *Huwa Allahu aḥad.*"

(6) 'Amir bin at-Ṭufail said to the Holy Prophet: "O Muḥammad, what do you call us to?" The Holy Prophet replied: "To Allah." 'Amir said: "Then, tell us of what He is made, whether of gold, silver, or iron?" Thereupon this Sūrah was sent down.

(7) Daḥḥāk, Qatādah and Muqātil have stated that some Jewish rabbis came before the Holy Prophet, and they said: "O Muḥammad, tell us what is your Lord like, so that we may believe in you. Allah in the Torah has sent down His description. Kindly tell us of what He is made, what is His sex, whether He is made of gold, copper, brass, iron, or silver, and whether He eats and drinks. Also tell us from whom He has inherited the world, and who will inherit it after Him." Thereupon Allah sent down this Sūrah.

(8) Ibn 'Abbās has reported that a deputation of the Christians of Najrān along with seven priests visited the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), and they said: "O Muḥammad, tell us what is your Lord like and of what substance He is made." The Holy Prophet replied: "My Lord is not made from any substance: He is unique

and exalted above everything." Thereupon Allah sent down this Sūrah.

These traditions show that different people on different occasions had questioned the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) about the essence and nature of the God to Whose service and worship he invited the people, and on every occasion he recited by Allāh's command this very Sūrah in response. First of all, the pagans of Quraish asked him this question in Makkah, and in reply this Sūrah was sent down. Then, at Madinah, sometimes the Christians, and sometimes the other people of Arabia, asked him questions of this nature, and every time Allah inspired him to recite this very Sūrah in answer to them. In each of these traditions, it has been said that this Sūrah was revealed on this or that occasion. From this one should not form the impression that all these traditions are mutually contradictory. The fact is that whenever there existed with the Holy Prophet a verse or a Sūrah previously revealed in respect of a particular question or matter, and later the same question was presented before him, Allah inspired him to recite the same verse or Sūrah to the people as it contained the answer to their question. The reporters of *Hadith* describe the same thing, saying: When such and such a question or matter was presented before the Holy Prophet, such and such a verse or Sūrah was revealed. This has also been described as repetition of revelation, i.e. the revelation of a verse or Sūrah several times.

Thus, the fact is that this Sūrah is Makki, rather in view of its subject-matter a Sūrah revealed in the earliest period at Makkah, when detailed verses of the Qur'ān dealing with the essence and attributes of Allah Almighty had not yet been revealed, and the people hearing the Holy Prophet's invitation to Allah, wanted to know

what was his Lord like to whose worship and service he was calling them. Another proof of this Sūrah's being one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed is that when in Makkah Umayyah bin Khalaf, the master of Ḥadrat Bilāl, made him lie down on burning sand and placed a heavy stone on his chest, Bilāl used to cry "Aḥad, Aḥad!" This word was derived from this very Sūrah.

### Theme and Subject-Matter

A little consideration of the traditions regarding the occasion of the revelation of this Sūrah, shows what were the religious concepts of the world at the time the Holy Prophet began to preach the message of *Tauḥīd*. The idolatrous polytheists were worshipping gods made of wood, stone, gold, silver and other substances. These gods had a form, shape and body. The gods and goddesses were descended from each other. No goddess was without a husband and no god without a wife. They stood in need of food and drink and their devotees arranged these for them. A large number of the polytheists believed that God assumed human form and there were some people who descended from Him. Although the Christians claimed to believe in One God, yet their God also had at least a son, and besides the Father and Son, the Holy Ghost also had the honour of being an associate in Godhead; so much so that God had a mother and a mother-in-law too. The Jews also claimed to believe in One God, but their God too was not without physical, material and other human qualities and characteristics. He went for a stroll, appeared in human form, wrestled with a seryant of His, and was father of a son, Ezra. Besides these religious communities, the Zoroastrians were fire worshippers, and the Sabeans star-worshippers. Under such conditions when the people were invited to believe in Allah, the One, Who had no associate, it was inevitable that questions arose

in the minds as to what kind of a God it was, Who was One and Only Lord and invitation to believe in Whom was being given at the expense of all other gods and deities. It is a miracle of the Qur'ān that in a few words briefly it answered all the questions and presented such a clear concept of the Being of Allah as destroyed all polytheistic concepts, without leaving any room for the ascription of any of the human qualities to His Being.

### Merit and Importance

That is why the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace) held this Sūrah in great esteem, and he made the Muslims realize its importance in different ways so that they recited it frequently and disseminated it among the people. For it states the foremost and fundamental doctrine of Islam (viz. *Tauhīd*) in four such brief sentences as are immediately impressed on human memory and can be read and recited easily. There are a great number of the traditions of *Ḥadīth*, which show that the Holy Prophet on different occasions and in different ways told the people that this Sūrah is equivalent to one-third of the Qur'ān. Several *ahādīth* on this subject have been related, in Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭabarāni and other books, on the authority of Abū Sa'īd Khudrī, Abū Hurairah, Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī, Abū ad-Dardā', Mu'ādh bin Jabal, Jābir bin 'Abdullah, Ubayy bin Ka'b, Umm Kulthūm bint 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'aīṭ, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn Mas'ūd, Qatādah bin an-Nu'mān, Anas bin Mālik, and Abū Mas'ūd (may Allah be pleased with all of them). The commentators have given many explanations of the Holy Prophet's this saying. But in our opinion it simply means that the religion presented by the Qur'ān is based on three doctrines: *Tauhīd*, Apostleship and the Hereafter. This Sūrah teaches *Tauhīd*, pure and undefiled. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) regarded it as equal to one-third of the Qur'ān.

A tradition on the authority of Ḥaḍrat ‘A’ishah has been related in Bukhārī, Muslim and other collections of the *Aḥādith*, saying that the Holy Prophet sent a man as leader of an expedition. During the journey he concluded his recitation of the Qur’ān in every Prayer with *Qul Huwa-Allahu aḥad*. On their return his companions mentioned this before the Holy Prophet. He said: Ask him why he did so. When the man was asked, he replied: In this Sūrah the attributes of the Merciful God have been stated; therefore, I love to recite it again and again. When the Holy Prophet heard this reply, he said to the people: “Inform him that Allah holds him in great love and esteem.”

A similar incident has been related in Bukhārī, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas. He says: “A man from among the Anṣār led the Prayers in the Qubā Mosque. His practice was that in every *rak‘ah* he first recited *Qul Huwa Allah* and then would join another Sūrah to it. The people objected to it and said to him: “Don’t you think that *Qul Huwa Allah* is by itself enough? Why do you join another Sūrah to it? You should either recite only this Sūrah, or should leave it and recite some other Sūrah. He said: I cannot leave it, I would rather give up leadership in the Prayer, if you so desired.” The people did not approve that another man be appointed leader instead of him. At last, the matter was brought before the Holy Prophet. He asked the man, “What prevents you from conceding what your companions desire? What makes you recite this particular Sūrah in every *rak‘ah*?” The man submitted: “I have great love for it.” The Holy Prophet remarked: “Your this love for this Sūrah has earned you entry into Paradise.”





قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْهُ ۝ وَلَمْ يُولَدْهُ ۝ وَكَفَىٰ لَكُمْ  
 آتِهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدُهُ ۝

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CXII

AL-IKILĀS الاخلاص

Verses : 4

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

Say:<sup>1</sup> "He is Allah,<sup>2</sup> the One and Only.<sup>3</sup> Allah is Independent of all and all are dependent on Him.<sup>4</sup> Neither has He an offspring nor is He the offspring of anyone;<sup>5</sup> and none is equal with Him in rank."<sup>6</sup> 1-4

1. The first addressee of this Command is the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself for it was he who was asked: "Who is your Lord and what is He like?" Again it was he who was commanded to answer the question in the following words. But after him every believer is its addressee. He too should say what the Holy Prophet had been commanded to say.

2. That is, "My Lord to Whom you want to be introduced is none but Allah." This is the first answer to the questions, and it means: "I have not introduced a new lord who I want you to worship beside all other gods, but it is the same Being you know by the name of Allah." "Allah" was not an unfamiliar word for the Arabs. They had been using this very word for the Creator of the universe since the earliest times, and they did not apply this word to any of their other gods. For the other gods they used the word *ilāh*. Then their beliefs about Allah had become fully manifest at the time Abrahah invaded Makkah. At that time there existed 360 idols of gods (*ilāhs*) in and around the Ka'bah, but the polytheists forsaking all of them had invoked only Allah for protection. In other words, they

knew in their heart of hearts that no *ilāh* could help them on that critical occasion except Allah. The Ka'bah also was called *Bait-Allah* by them and not *Bait-ilāhs* after their self-made gods. At many places in the Qur'ān the polytheistic Arabian belief about Allah has been expressed, thus:

In Sūrah Az-Zukhruf it has been said: "If you ask them who created them, they will surely say, 'Allah'." (v. 87)

In Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt: "If you ask them, 'Who has created the earth and the heavens and Who has subjected the moon and the sun?' they will surely say: Allah ... And if you ask them, 'Who sent down rainwater from the sky and thereby raised the dead earth back to life?' they will surely say: 'Allah'." (vv. 61-63)

In Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn: "Say to them, 'Tell me, if you know, whose is the earth and all who dwell in it?' They will say, 'Allah's'... Say to them, 'To Whom do the seven heavens and the Glorious Throne belong?' They will say, 'To Allah' ... Say to them, 'Tell me, if you know, Whose is the sovereignty over everything? And Who is that Being Who gives protection while none else can give protection against Him?' They will surely reply, 'This power belongs to Allah'." (vv. 84-89).

In Sūrah Yūnus: "Ask them: Who provides for you from the heavens and the earth? Who has power over the faculties of hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? Who directs the system of the universe? They will surely reply, 'Allah'." (v. 31)

Again in Sūrah Yūnus at another place: "When you set sails in ships, rejoicing over a fair breeze, then all of a sudden a strong wind begins to rage against the passengers and waves begin to surge upon them from every side and they realize that they have been encircled by the tempest. At that time they pray to Allah with sincere faith, saying: 'If thou deliverest us from this peril, we will become Thy grateful servants.' But when He delivers them, the same people begin to rebel on the earth against the Truth." (vv. 22-23)

The same thing has been reiterated in Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, thus: "When a misfortune befalls you on the sea, all of those whom you invoke for help fail you but He (is there to help you), yet when He brings you safe to land, you turn away from Him." (v. 67)

Keeping these verses in view, let us consider that when the people asked: "Who is your Lord and what is He like to Whose



service and worship you call 'us?' the answer given was "*Huwa'l Allah: He is Allah.*" This answer by itself gives the meaning: "My Lord is He Whom you yourself acknowledge as your own as well as the whole world's Creator, its Master, Sustainer and Administrator, and He Whom you invoke for help at critical times beside all other deities, and I invite you to His service alone." This answer comprehends all the perfect and excellent attributes of Allah. Therefore, it is not at all conceivable that the Creator of the universe, its Administrator and Disposer of its affairs, Sustainer of all the creatures living in it, and the Helper of the servants in times of hardship, would not be living, hearing and seeing, that He would not be an All-Powerful, All-Knowing, All-Wise, All-Merciful and All-Kind Sovereign.

3. The scholars have explained the sentence *Huwa'l-Allah Ahad* syntactically, but in our opinion its explanation which perfectly corresponds to the context is that *Huwa* is the subject and *Allahu* its predicate, and *Ahad-un* its second predicate. According to this parsing the sentence means: "He (about Whom you are questioning me) is Allah, is One and Only." Another meaning also can be, and according to language rules it is not wrong either: "He is Allah, the One."

Here, the first thing to be understood is the unusual use of *ahad* in this sentence. Usually this word is either used in the possessive case as *yaum ul-ahad* (first day of the week), or to indicate total negative as *Mā jā'a-nī ahad-un* (No one has come to me), or in common questions like *Hal 'indaka ahad-un* (Is there anyone with you?), or in conditional clauses like *In ja'a-ka ahad-un* (If someone comes to you), or in counting as *ahad, ithnān, ahad'ashar* (one, two, eleven). Apart from these uses, there is no precedent in the pre-Qur'ānic Arabic that the mere word *ahad* might have been used as an adjective for a person or thing. After the revelation of the Qur'ān this word has been used only for the Being of Allah, and for no one else. This extraordinary use by itself shows that being single, unique and matchless is a fundamental attribute of Allah; no one else in the world is qualified with this quality: He is One, He has no equal.

Then, keeping in view the questions that the polytheists and the followers of earlier scriptures asked the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) about his Lord, let us see how they were answered with *ahad-un* after *Huwa-Allah*.

First, it means: "He alone is the Sustainer: no one else has any share or part in providence, and since He alone can be the *Ilāh* (Deity) Who is Master and Sustainer, therefore, no one else is His associate in Divinity either."

Secondly, it also means: "He alone is the Creator of the universe: no one else is His associate in this work of creation. He alone is the Master of the universe, the Disposer and Administrator of its system, the Sustainer of His creatures, Helper and Rescuer in times of hardship; no one else has any share or part whatever in the works of Godhead, which as you yourselves acknowledge, are works of Allah."

Thirdly, since they had also asked the questions: Of what is your Lord made? What is His ancestry? What is His sex? From whom has He inherited the world and who will inherit it after Him?—all these questions have been answered with one word *aḥad* for Allah. It means: (1) He alone has been, and will be, God for ever; neither was there a God before Him, nor will there be any after Him; (2) there is no race of gods to which He may belong as a member: He is God, one and single, and none is homogeneous with Him; (3) His being is not merely One (*wāḥid*) but *aḥad*, in which there is no tinge of plurality in any way: He is not a compound being, which may be analysable or divisible, which may have a form and shape, which may be residing somewhere, or may contain or include something, which may have a colour, which may have some limbs, which may have a direction, and which may be variable or changeable in any way. Free from every kind of plurality He alone is a Being Who is *Aḥad* in every aspect. (Here, one should fully understand that the word *wāḥid* is used in Arabic just like the word "one" in English. A collection consisting of great pluralities is collectively called *wāḥid* or one, as one man, one nation, one country, one world, even one universe, and every separate part of a collection is also called one. But the word *Aḥad* is not used for anyone except Allah. That is why wherever in the Qur'ān the word *wāḥid* has been used for Allah, He has been called *Ilāh waḥid* (one Deity), or *Allah-ul-Wāḥid-al-Qaḥḥār* (One Allah Who is Omnipotent), and nowhere just *wāḥid*, for this word is also used for the things which contain pluralities of different kinds in their being. On the contrary, for Allah and only for Allah the word *Aḥad* has been used absolutely, for He alone is the Being Who exists without any plurality in any way, Whose Oneness is perfect in every way).

4. The word used in the original is *ṣamad* of which the root is *ṣmd*. A look at the derivatives in Arabic from this root will show how comprehensive and vast this word is in meaning. (Lexical discussion of the meanings of the derivatives is omitted).

On the basis of these lexical meanings the explanations of the word *aṣ-Ṣamad* in the verse *Allah-uṣ-Ṣamad*, which have been reported from the Companions, their immediate successors and the later scholars are given below:

Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, 'Ikrimah and Ka'b Aḥbār: "*Ṣamad* is he who has no superior."

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Abū Wā'il Shaqīq bin Salamah: "The chieftain whose chieftancy is perfect and of the most extraordinary kind."

Another view of Ibn 'Abbās: "*Ṣamad* is he to whom the people turn when afflicted with a calamity." Still another view of his: "The chieftain who in his chieftancy, in his nobility and glory, in his clemency and forbearance, in his knowledge and wisdom is perfect."

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah: "He who is Independent of all and all others are dependent upon him."

Other views of 'Ikrimah: "He from whom nothing ever has come out, nor normally comes out;" "who neither eats nor drinks." Views containing the same meaning have been related from Sha'bi and Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Qurazi also.

Suddī: "The one to whom the people turn for obtaining the things they need and for help in hardships."

Sa'id bin Jubair: "He who is perfect in all his attributes and works."

Rabī' bin Anas: "He who is immune from every calamity."

Muqātil bin Ḥayyān: "He who is faultless."

Ibn Kaysān: "He who is exclusive in his attributes."

Ḥasan Baṣrī and Qatādah: "He who is ever-living and immortal."

Similar views have been related from Mujāhid, Ma'mar and Murrat al-Hamadānī also.

Murrat al-Hamadānī's another view is: "He who decides whatever he wills and does whatever he wills, without there being anyone to revise his judgement and decision."

Ibrāhīm Nakha'i: "He to whom the people turn for fulfilment of their desires."

Abū Bakr al-Anbārī: "There is no difference of opinion among the lexicographers that *ṣamad* is the chief who has no superior and to whom the people turn for fulfilment of their desires and needs and in connection with other affairs." Similar to it is the view of Az-Zajjāj, who says: "*Ṣamad* is he in whom leadership has been perfected, and to whom one turns for fulfilment of one's needs and desires."

Now, let us consider why *Allahu-Aḥad* has been said in the first sentence and why *Allah-uṣ-Ṣamad* in this sentence. About the word *aḥad* we have explained above that it is exclusively used for Allah, and for none else. That is why it has been used as *aḥad*, in the indefinite sense. But since the word *samad* is used for the creatures also, *Allah-us-Ṣamad* has been said instead of *Allah Ṣamad*, which signifies that real and true *Ṣamad* is Allah alone. If a creature is *ṣamad* in one sense, it may not be *samad* in some other sense, for it is mortal, not immortal; it is analysable and divisible, is compound, its parts can scatter away any time; some creatures are dependent upon it, and upon others it is dependent; its chieftaincy is relative and not absolute; it is superior to certain things and certain other things are superior to it; it can fulfil some desires of some creatures but it is not in the power of any creature to fulfil all the desires of all the creatures. On the contrary, Allah is perfect in His attributes of *Ṣamad* in every respect: the whole world is dependent upon Him in its needs, but He is dependent upon none; everything in the world turns to Him, consciously or unconsciously, for its survival and for fulfilment of the needs of everyone; He is Immortal and Ever-living; He sustains others and is not sustained by anyone; He is Single and Unique, not compound so as to be analysable and divisible; His sovereignty prevails over entire universe and He is Supreme in every sense. Therefore, He is not only *Ṣamad* but *As-Ṣamad*, i.e. the Only and One Being Who is wholly and perfectly qualified with the attribute of *samad* in the true sense.

Then, since He is *As-Ṣamad*, it is necessary that He should be Unique, One and Only, for such a being can only be One, which is not dependent upon anyone and upon whom everyone else may be dependent; two or more beings cannot be self-sufficient and fulfillers of the needs of all. Furthermore, His being *As-Ṣamad* also requires that He alone should be the Deity, none else, for no sensible person would worship and serve the one who had no power and authority to fulfil the needs of others.

5. The polytheists in every age have adopted the concept that like men, gods also belong to a species, which has many members and they also get married, beget and are begotten. They did not even regard Allah, Lord of the universe, as supreme and above this concept of ignorance, and even proposed children for Him. Thus, the Arabian belief as stated in the Qur'an was that they regarded the angels as daughters of Allah. The prophetic communities too could not remain immune from this creed of paganism. They too adopted the creed of holding one saintly person or another as son of God. Two kinds of concepts have always been mixed up in these debasing superstitions. Some people thought that those whom they regarded as Allah's children, were descended from Him in the natural way and some others claimed that the one whom they called son of God, had been adopted by Allah Himself as a son. Although they could not dare call anyone as, God forbid, father of God, obviously human mind cannot remain immune against such a concept that God too should be regarded as a son of somebody when it is conceived that He is not free from sex and procreation and that He too, like man, is the kind of being which begets children and needs to adopt a son in case it is childless. That is why one of the questions asked of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was: what is the ancestry of Allah? and another was: from whom has He inherited the world and who will inherit it after him?

If these assumptions of ignorance are analysed, it becomes obvious that they logically necessitate the assumption of some other things as well.

First, that God should not be One, but there should be a species of Gods, and its members should be associates in the attributes, acts and powers of Divinity. This not only follows from assuming God begetting children but also from assuming that He has adopted someone as a son, for the adopted son of somebody can inevitably be of his own kind. And when, God forbid, he is of the same kind as God, it cannot be denied that he too possesses attributes of Godhead.

Second, that children cannot be conceived unless the male and the female combine and some substance from the father and the mother unites to take the shape of child. Therefore, the assumption that God begets children necessitates that He should, God forbid, be a material and physical entity, should have a wife of His own species, and some substance also should issue from His body.

Third, that wherever there is sex and procreation, it is there because individuals are mortal and for the survival of their species it is inevitable that they should beget children to perpetuate the race. Thus, the assumption that God begets children also necessitates that He should, God forbid, Himself be mortal, and immortality should belong to the species of Gods, not to God Himself. Furthermore, it also necessitates that like all mortal individuals, God also, God forbid, should have a beginning and an end. For the individuals of the species whose survival depends upon sex and procreation neither exist since eternity nor will exist till eternity.

Fourth, that the object of adopting some one as a son is that a childless person needs a helper in his lifetime and an heir after his death. Therefore, the supposition that Allah has adopted a son inevitably amounts to ascribing all those weaknesses to His sublime Being which characterise mortal man.

Although all these assumptions are destroyed as soon as Allah is called and described as *Aḥad* and *As-Ṣamad*, yet when it is said: "Neither has He an offspring nor is He the offspring of another", there remains no room for any ambiguity in this regard. Then, since these concepts are the most potent factors of polytheism with regard to Divine Being, Allah has refuted them clearly and absolutely not only in *Sūrah Al-Ikhlās* but has also reiterated this theme at different places in different ways so that the people may understand the truth fully. For example let us consider the following verses:

"Allah is only One Deity: He is far too exalted that He should have a son: whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth belongs to Him." (*An-Nisā'*: 171)

"Note it well: they, in fact, invent a falsehood when they say, 'Allah has children'. They are utter liars." (*Aṣ-Ṣāffat* : 151-152)

"They have invented a blood-relationship between Allah and the angels, whereas the angels know full well that these people will be brought up (as culprits)." (*Aṣ-Ṣāffat* : 158)

"These people have made some of His servants to be part of Him. The fact is that man is manifestly ungrateful." (*Az-Zukhruf*: 15)

"Yet the people have set up the Jinn as partners with Allah, whereas He is their Creator; they have also invented for Him sons and daughters without having any knowledge, whereas He is absolutely free from and exalted far above the things they say. He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth: how should He have a son, when He has no consort? He has created each and every thing." (*Al-An'ām* : 100-101)

“They say: the Merciful has offspring. Glory be to Allah! They (whom they describe as His offspring) are His mere servants who have been honoured.” (Al-Anbiyā : 26)

“They remarked: Allah has taken a son to Himself. Allah is All-pure: He is Self-Sufficient: He is the Owner of everything that is in the heavens and the earth. Have you any authority for what you say? What, do you ascribe to Allah that of which you have no knowledge?” (Yūnus : 68)

“And (O Prophet,) say: praise is for Allah Who has begotten no son nor has any partner in His Kingdom nor is helpless to need any supporter.” (Banī Isrā'il : 111)

“Allah has no offspring, and there is no other deity as a partner with Him.” (Al-Mu'minūn : 91)

In these verses the belief of the people who ascribe real or adopted children to Allah, has been refuted from every aspect, and its being a false belief has also been proved by argument. These and many other Qur'ānic verses on the same theme explain Sūrah Al-Ikhlās fully well.

6. The word *kufu'* as used in the original means an example, a similar thing, the one equal in rank and position. In the matter of marriage, *kufu'* means that the boy and the girl should match each other socially. Thus, the verse means that there is no one in the entire universe, nor ever was, nor ever can be, who is similar to Allah, or equal in rank with Him, or resembling Him in His attributes, works and powers in any degree whatever.





# CXIII-CXIV

MU'AWWIDHATAYN معوذتين

AL-FALAQ الفلق AN-NĀS الناس



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

## CXIII–CXIV

MU‘AWWIDHATAYN معوذتین

AL-FALAQ الفلق AN-NĀS الناس

### INTRODUCTION

#### Name

Although these two Sūrahs of the Qur’ān are separate entities and are written in the *Mushaf* also under separate names, yet they are so deeply related mutually and their contents so closely resemble each other’s that they have been designated by a common name *Mu‘awwidhatayn* (the two Sūrahs in which refuge with Allah has been sought). Imām Baihaqī in *Dalā’il an-Nubuwwat* has written that these Sūrahs were revealed together, that is why the combined name of both is *Mu‘awwidhatayn*. We are writing the same one Introduction to both, for they discuss and deal with just the same matters and topics. However, they will be explained and commented on separately below.

### Period of Revelation

Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Ikrimah, 'Aṭā' and Jābir bin Zaid say that these Sūrahs are Makkī. A tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also supports the same view. However, according to another tradition from him, it is Madanī and the same view is held also by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair and Qatādah. One of the traditions which strengthens this second view is the *Ḥadīth* which Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī and Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Amir. He says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) one day said to him: "Do you know what kind of verses have been revealed to me tonight? - these matchless verses are *A'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *A'ūdhu bi-Rabbīn-nās.*" This *Ḥadīth* is used as an argument for these Sūrahs to be Madanī because Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Amir had become a Muslim in Madīnah after the *hijrah*, as related by Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī on the basis of his own statement. Other traditions which have lent strength to this view are those related by Ibn Sa'd, Muḥiyy-us-Sunnah Baghawī, Imām Nasafī, Imām Baihaqī, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar, Ḥāfiẓ Badr-uddīn 'Aynī, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid and others to the effect that these Sūrahs were revealed when the Jews had worked magic on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in Madīnah and he had fallen ill under its effect. Ibn Sa'd has related on the authority of Wāqidī that this happened in A.H. 7. On this very basis Sufyān bin 'Uyaynah also has described these Sūrahs as Madanī.

But, as we have explained in the Introduction to Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ, when it is said about a certain Sūrah or verse that it was revealed on this or that particular occasion, it does not necessarily mean that it was revealed for the first time on that very occasion. Rather it sometimes so happened that a Sūrah or a verse had

previously been revealed, then on the occurrence or appearance of a particular incident or situation, the Holy Prophet's attention was drawn to it by Allah for the second time, or even again and again. In our opinion the same also was the case with the *Mu'awwidhatayn*. The subject-matter of these Sūrah's is explicit that these were sent down at Makkah in the first instance when opposition to the Holy Prophet there had grown very intense. Later, when at Madinah storms of opposition were raised by the hypocrites, Jews and polytheists, the Holy Prophet was instructed to recite these very Sūrah's, as has been mentioned in the above-cited tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir. After this, when magic was worked on him, and his illness grew intense, Gabriel came and instructed him by Allah's command to recite these very Sūrah's. Therefore, in our opinion, the view held by the commentators who describe both these Sūrah's as Makkī is more reliable. Regarding them as connected exclusively with the incident of magic is difficult, for to this incident relates only one verse (v. 4), the remaining verses of Sūrah al-Falaq and the whole of Sūrah An-Nās have nothing to do with it directly.

### **Theme and Subject-Matter**

The conditions under which these two Sūrah's were sent down in Makkah were as follows. As soon as the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) began to preach the message of Islam, it seemed as though he had provoked all classes of the people around him. As his message spread the opposition of the disbelieving Quraish also became more and more intense. As long as they had any hope that they would be able to prevent him from preaching his message by throwing some temptation in his way, or striking some bargain with him, their hostility did not become very active. But when the Holy Prophet disappointed them completely that he

would not effect any kind of compromise with them in the matter of faith, and in Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn they were plainly told: "I do not worship those whom you worship nor are you worshippers of Him Whom I worship. For you is your religion and for me is mine", the hostility touched its extreme limits. More particularly, the families whose members (men or women, boys or girls) had accepted Islam, were burning with rage from within against the Holy Prophet. They were cursing him, holding secret consultations to kill him quietly in the dark of the night so that the Banī Hāshim could not discover the murderer and take revenge; magic and charms were being worked on him so as to cause his death, or make him fall ill, or become mad; satans from among the men and the jinn spread on every side so as to whisper one or another evil into the hearts of the people against him and the Qur'ān brought by him so that they became suspicious of him and fled him. There were many people who were burning with jealousy against him, for they could not tolerate that a man from another family or clan than their own should flourish and become prominent. For instance, the reason why Abū Jahl was crossing every limit in his hostility to him has been explained by himself: "We and the Banī 'Abdi Manāf (to which the Holy Prophet belonged) were rivals of each other: they fed others, we too fed others; they provided conveyances to the people, we too did the same; they gave donations, we too gave donations, so much so that when they and we have become equal in honour and nobility, they now proclaim that they have a Prophet who is inspired from the heaven; how can we compete with them in this field? By God, we will never acknowledge him, nor affirm faith in him". (*Ibn Hishām*, vol. I, pp. 337-338).

Such were the conditions when the Holy Prophet

(upon whom be peace) was commanded to tell the people: "I seek refuge with the Lord of the dawn, from the evil of everything that He has created, and from the evil of the darkness of night and from the evil of the magicians, men and women, and from the evil of the envious", and to tell them: "I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, and the Deity of mankind, from the evil of the whisperer, who returns over and over again, who whispers (evil) into the hearts of men, whether he be from among the jinn or men." This is similar to what the Prophet Moses had been told to say when Pharaoh had expressed his design before his full court to kill him: "I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning." (Al-Mu'min : 27). And: "I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord lest you should assail me." (Ad-Dukhān ; 20).

On both occasions these illustrious Prophets of Allah were confronted with well-equipped, resourceful and powerful enemies. On both occasions they stood firm on their message of Truth against their strong opponents, whereas they had no material power on the strength of which they could fight them, and on both occasions they utterly disregarded the threats and dangerous plans and hostile devices of the enemy, saying: "We have taken refuge with the Lord of the universe against you." Obviously, such firmness and steadfastness can be shown only by the person who has the conviction that the power of His Lord is the supreme power, that all powers of the world are insignificant against Him, and that no one can harm the one who has taken His refuge. Only such a one can say: "I will not give up preaching the Word of Truth. I care the least for what you may say or do, for I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord and Lord of all universe."

**Question whether Mu'awwidhatayn are, or are not, Qur'ānic**

The above discussion is enough to help one understand fully the theme and content of the two Sūrahs, but since three points in the books of *Hadīth* and commentary concerning these Sūrahs have been discussed, which are likely to create doubts in the minds, it is necessary to clear them also here.

First, whether it is absolutely established that these two Sūrahs are the Qur'ānic Sūrahs, or whether there is some doubt in this regard. This question arose because in the traditions related from an illustrious Companion like Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, it has been said that he did not regard these two Sūrahs as the Sūrahs of the Qur'ān and had eliminated these from his copy of the *Mushaf*. Imām Aḥmad, Bazzār, Ṭabarānī, Ibn Mardūyah, Abū Ya'lā, 'Abdullah bin Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, Ḥumaydī, Abū Nu'aim, Ibn Ḥibbān and other traditionists have related this from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd with different chains of transmitters and mostly on sound authority. According to these traditions, he not only eliminated these Sūrahs from the *Mushaf* but it has also been reported that he used to say: "Do not mix up with the Qur'ān that which is not of the Qur'ān. These two Sūrahs are not included in the Qur'ān. This was only a command enjoined on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for seeking God's refuge." In some traditions there is also the addition that he did not recite these Sūrahs in the Prayer.

On the basis of these traditions the opponents of Islam had an opportunity to raise doubts about the Qur'ān, saying that this Book, God forbid, is not free from corruption. For when, according to a Companion of the rank of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, these two Sūrahs are an annexation to the Qur'ān, many other additions and subtractions also might have been made



in it. To rid the Qur'ān of this blame Qādī Abū Bakr Al-Bāqillāni, Qādī 'Iyāḍ and others took the stand that Ibn Mas'ūd was not in fact a denier of the *Mu'awwidhatayn* being Qur'ānic but only refused to write them in the *Muṣḥaf*. For, according to him, only that which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had allowed, should be written in the *Muṣḥaf*, and Ibn Mas'ūd did not receive the information that the Holy Prophet had allowed this. But this stand is not correct, for according to sound evidence, it is confirmed that Ibn Mas'ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) had denied that these were Sūrahs of the Qur'ān. Some other scholars, for instance, Imām Nawawī, Imām Ibn Ḥazm and Imām Fakhr-uddīn Rāzī, regard this as a pure lie and falsehood that Ibn Mas'ūd had asserted any such thing. But to reject genuine historical facts without sound evidence is unscientific.

Now, the question is: How can the blame that attaches to the Qur'ān because of these traditions of Ibn Mas'ūd, be correctly refuted? This question has several answers which we shall give below in sequence:

(1) Ḥāfiẓ Bazzār after relating these traditions of Ibn Mas'ūd in his *Musnad*, has written that he is solitary and isolated in his this opinion; no one from among the Companions has supported this view.

(2) The copies of the Qur'ān which the third Caliph, Ḥadrat 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with him), had got compiled by the consensus of the Companions and which he had sent from the Islamic Caliphate officially to the centres of the world of Islam contained both these Sūrahs.

(3) The *Muṣḥaf* which, since the sacred time of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) till today, has the seal of consensus of the entire world of Islam, contains both these Sūrahs. The solitary opinion of only

'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, in spite of his high rank, has no weight against this great consensus.

(4) It is confirmed by sound and reliable *ahādīth* from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) that he not only recited these Sūrahs in the Prayer himself but instructed others also to recite them, and taught them to the people as the Sūrahs of the Qur'ān. Consider, for instance, the following *ahādīth*:

We have cited on the authority of Muslim, Ahmad, Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī the tradition of Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Amir that the Holy Prophet told him about Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah An-Nās, saying that those verses had been revealed to him that night. A tradition in Nasā'ī from 'Uqbah bin 'Amir is to the effect that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) recited both these Sūrahs in the Morning Prayer. Ibn Hibbān from this same Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah has related the traditions that the Holy Prophet said to him: "As far as possible, do not give up recitation of these two Sūrahs in the Prayer." Sa'id bin Manṣūr has related, on the authority of Mu'adh bin Jabal, that the Holy Prophet recited both these Sūrahs in the Morning Prayer. Imām Ahmad on sound authority has related in his *Musnad* the tradition from a Companion that the Holy Prophet said to him, "When you perform the Prayer, recite both these Sūrahs in it." In *Musnad Ahmad*, Abū Dā'ūd and Nasā'ī this tradition of 'Uqbah bin 'Amir has been related: "The Holy Prophet said to him: Should I not teach you two such Sūrahs as are among the best Sūrahs that the people recite? He said: Do teach me, O Messenger of Allah. Thereupon the Holy Prophet taught him the *Mu'awwizhatayn*. Then the Prayer began and the Holy Prophet recited the same two Sūrahs in it also, and when after the Prayer the Holy Prophet passed by him, he said to him, 'O 'Uqbah, how did you like it?' Then he instructed him to the effect: When you go to bed, and when you

get up from bed, recite these Sūrahs." In Musnad Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī there is a tradition from 'Uqbah bin 'Amir, saying that the Holy Prophet exhorted him to recite the *Mu'awwidhāt* (i.e. *Qul Huwa Allahu aḥad* and the *Mu'awwidhatayn*) after every Prayer. Nasā'ī, Ibn Mardūyah and Hākim have related this tradition also from 'Uqbah bin 'Amir: "Once the Holy Prophet was riding on a conveyance and I was walking along with him with my hand placed on his sacred foot. I said: Kindly teach me Sūrah Hūd or Sūrah Yūsuf. He replied: In the sight of Allah there is nothing more beneficial for the servant than *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq*." A tradition from 'Abdullah bin 'Abīs al-Juhanī has been related by Nasā'ī, Baihaqī and Ibn Sa'd, saying that the Holy Prophet said to him: "Ibn 'Abīs, should I not tell you what are the best things out of the means by which the seekers of refuge have sought refuge with Allah? I submitted: Do teach me, O Messenger of Allah. He replied: *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-nās*—both these Sūrahs." Ibn Mardūyah has related from Ḥadrat Umm Salamah: "The Sūrahs best liked by Allah are: *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-nās*."

Here, the question arises: what caused Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd the misunderstanding that these two are not Sūrahs of the Qur'ān? We get the answer to it when we combine two traditions: first, that Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd asserted that this was only a command which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was given to teach him the method of seeking refuge with Allah; second, the tradition which Imām Bukhārī has related in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Imām Ahmad in his *Musnad*, Hāfiẓ Abū Bakr al-Ḥumaidī in his *Musnad*, Abū Nu'aim in his *Al-Mustakhraj* and Nasā'ī in his *Sunan*, with different chains of transmitters, on the authority of Zirr bin Ḥubaish, with a slight variation in wording:

from Ḥaḍrat Ubayy bin Ka'b, who held a distinguished place among the Companions on the basis of his knowledge of the Qur'ān. Zirr bin Ḥubāish states: "I said to Ḥaḍrat Ubayy: Your brother, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, says these things. What do you say about this view? He replied: I had questioned the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) about this. He said to me: I was told to say 'qul', so I said 'qul'. Therefore, we too say the same as the Holy Prophet said." In the tradition related by Imām Ahmad, Ḥaḍrat Ubayy's words are to the effect: "I bear witness that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) told me that Gabriel (peace be on him) had told him to say: *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq*; therefore, he recited likewise, and Gabriel asked him to say: *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbin-nās*; therefore he too said likewise. Hence, we too say as the Holy Prophet said." A little consideration of these two traditions will show that the word *qul* (say) in the two Sūrah's caused Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd the misunderstanding that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had been commanded to say: *A'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *A'ūdhu bi-Rabbin-nās*. But he did not feel any need to question the Holy Prophet about it. In the mind of Ḥaḍrat Ubbay bin Ka'b also a question arose about this and he put it before the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet replied: "Since Gabriel (peace be on him) had said *qul*, so I too say *qul*." Let us put it like this. If somebody is commanded and asked: "Say, I seek refuge", he will not carry out the command, saying: "Say, I seek refuge", but he will drop the word "say" and say: "I seek refuge." On the contrary, if the messenger of a superior officer conveys to somebody the message in these words: "Say, I seek refuge", and this command is given to him not only for his own person but to be conveyed to others, he will convey the words of the message verbatim to the people, and will not have the permission to drop anything from the text of the message. Thus, the fact that these two Sūrah's

begin with the word *qul* is a clear proof that it is Divine Word, which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was bound to convey verbatim. It was not merely a command given to him for his person. Besides these two Sūrah's, there are 330 other verses in the Qur'ān which begin with the word *qul* (say). The presence of *qul* in all these is a proof that it is Divine Word, which was obligatory for the Holy Prophet to convey verbatim; otherwise if *qul* everywhere had meant a command, the Holy Prophet would have dropped it and said only that which he was commanded to say, and it would not have been recorded in the Qur'ān, but, on the contrary, he would have remained content with saying only what he was commanded to say.

Here, if one considers this, one can understand fully well how unreasonable it is to regard the Companions as infallible and to make the clamour that a Companion has been defamed as soon as one hears a saying or doing of his being described as wrong. Here, one can clearly see what a blunder happened to be committed by an illustrious Companion like Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd about two Sūrah's of the Qur'ān. If such an error could be committed by an eminent Companion like him, others also might commit an error. We can examine it in the scientific way, and describe it as wrong if a thing said or done by a Companion is proved to be wrong. But wicked indeed would be the person who went beyond describing a wrong act as wrong and started reproving and finding fault with the Companions of the Holy Prophet of Allah. Concerning the *Mu'awwidhatayn* the commentators and traditionists have described the opinion of Ibn Mas'ūd as wrong, but no one has dared to say that by denying these two Sūrah's of the Qur'ān, he had, God forbid, become a disbeliever.

#### **Question of Holy Prophet's being affected by Magic**

The second thing that has arisen in respect of these

two Sūrah's is that, according to traditions, magic had been worked on the Holy Prophet, and he had fallen ill under its effect, and Gabriel (peace be on him) had instructed him to repeat these Sūrah's to remove the charm. This has been objected to by many rationalists of both ancient and modern times. They say that if these traditions are accepted, the whole *Shari'ah* becomes doubtful. For if the Prophet could be charmed, and according to these traditions he was charmed, one cannot say what the Prophet might have been made to say and do under the influence of magic by his opponents, and what in his teaching may be Divine and what the result of magic. Not only this: they also allege that if this is accepted as true, it might well be that the Prophet might have been prompted to make the claim to Prophethood through magic and the Prophet by misunderstanding might have thought that an angel had come to him. They also argue that these traditions clash with the Qur'an. The Qur'an mentions the accusation of the disbelievers who said that the Prophet was bewitched (Bani Isrā'il : 47), but these traditions confirm the accusation of the disbelievers that the Prophet had actually been charmed and bewitched.

For a proper investigation of this question it is necessary that one should first see whether it is established by authentic historical evidence that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had actually been affected by magic, and if so, what it was and to what extent. Then it should be seen whether the objections raised against what is established historically do actually apply to it or not.

The Muslim scholars of the earliest period were truly honest and upright in that they did not try to corrupt history or conceal facts according to their own ideas, concepts and assumptions. They conveyed intact

to the later generations whatever was confirmed historically, and did not at all care how the material supplied by them could be used by the one who was bent upon drawing perverse conclusions from the facts. Now, if something stands confirmed by authentic and historical means, it is neither right for an honest and rightminded person that he should deny history on the ground that in case he accepted it, it would lead to these evil results according to his thinking, nor it is right that he should add to and stretch beyond its genuine limits by conjecture and speculation whatever is established historically. Instead, he should accept history as history and then see what is actually proved by it and what is not.

As far as the historical aspect is concerned, the incident of the Holy Prophet's being affected by magic is absolutely confirmed, and if it can be refuted by scientific criticism, then no historical event of the world can be proved right and genuine. It has been related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Imām Aḥmad, 'Abdur Razzāq, Humaidī, Baihaqī, Ḥabarāni, Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Mardūyah, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Ḥākim, 'Abd bin Humaid and other traditionists on the authority of Ḥadrat 'A'ishah, Ḥadrat Zaid bin Arqam and Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, through so many different and numerous channels that forgery is out of the question. Although each tradition by itself is an isolated report (*khabar wāhid*), we give it below as a connected event from the details provided by the traditions.

After the peace treaty of Ḥudaibiyah when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) returned to Madīnah, a deputation of the Jews of Khaibar visited Madīnah in Muḥarram, A.H. 7 and met a famous magician, Labīd bin A'ṣam, who belonged to the Anṣār tribe of Banī

Zurayq.<sup>1</sup> They said to him: "You know how Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has treated us. We have tried our best to bewitch him but have not succeeded. Now we have come to you because you are a more skilled magician. Here are three gold coins, accept these and cast a powerful magic spell on Muhammad." In those days the Holy Prophet had a Jewish boy as his attendant. Through him they obtained a piece of the Holy Prophet's comb with some hair stuck to it. Magic was worked on the same hair and teeth of the comb. According to some traditions, magic was worked by Labid bin A'sam himself, according to others, his sisters were more skilled than him and he got the spell cast through them. Whatever be the case, Labid placed this spell in the spathe<sup>2</sup> of a male date-tree and hid it under a stone at the bottom of Dharwān or Dhī Arwān, the well of Banī Zurayq. The spell took one whole year to have effect upon the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). In the latter half of the year the Holy Prophet started feeling as if he was unwell. The last forty days became hard on him, of which the last three days were even harder. But its maximum effect on him was that he was melting away from within. He thought he had done a thing whereas, in fact, he had not done it; he thought he had visited his

1. Some reporters regard him as a Jew and some as a hypocrite and ally of the Jews, but they all agree that he belonged to Banī Zurayq, and everybody knows that Banī Zurayq was not a Jewish tribe but a tribe of the Anṣār of Khazraj. Therefore, either he was from among those who had become Jews from the people of Madinah, or on account of his being an ally of the Jews some people considered him also a Jew. However, use of the word hypocrite for him shows that he had become a Muslim only outwardly.

2. The cluster of the palm fruit in the beginning is covered in the spathe, and the colour of the male tree's spathe resembles man's colour and its smell his seminal fluid.

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wives whereas he had not visited them; and sometimes he would doubt having seen something whereas, in fact, he had not seen it. All these effects were confined to his own person; so much so that the other people could not notice what state he was passing through. As for his being a Prophet, no change occurred in the performance of his duties. There is no tradition to say that he might have forgotten some verses of the Qur'ān in those days, or might have recited a verse wrongly, or a change might have occurred in the assemblies and in his counsels and sermons, or he might have presented a discourse as Revelation which may not have been revealed to him, or he might have missed a Prayer and thought that he had performed it. God forbid, if any such thing had happened, it would have caused a clamour and the whole of Arabia would have known that a magician had overpowered the one whom no power had been able to overpower. But the Holy Prophet's position as a Prophet remained wholly unaffected by it. Only in his personal life he remained worried on account of it. At last, one day when he was in the house of Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah, he prayed to Allah to be restored to full health. In the meantime he fell asleep or drowsed and on waking he said to Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah: "My Lord has told me what I had asked of Him." Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah asked what it was. He replied: "Two men (i.e. two angels in human guise) came to me. One sat near my head and the other near my feet. The first asked: what has happened to him? The other replied: Magic has been worked on him. The first asked: who has worked it? He replied: Labīd bin A'ṣam. He asked: In what is it contained? He replied: In the comb and hair covered in the spathe of a male date-tree. He asked: where is it? He replied: under a stone at the bottom of Dhī Arwān (or Dharwān), the well of Banī Zurayq. He asked: what should be done about it? He replied: the well should be

emptied and it should be taken out from under the stone. The Holy Prophet then sent Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat 'Ammār bin Yāsir and Ḥaḍrat Zubair. They were also joined by Jubair bin Iyās az-Zurqī and Qais bin Miḥṣan az-Zurqī (two men from Banī Zurayq). Later the Holy Prophet also arrived at the well along with some Companions. The water was taken out and the spathe recovered. There they found that beside the comb and hair there was a cord with eleven knots on it and a wax image with needles pricked into it. Gabriel (peace be on him) came and told him to repeat the *Mu'awwidhatayn*. As he repeated verse after verse, a knot was loosened and a needle taken out every time, till on finishing the last words all the knots were loosened and all the needles removed, and he was entirely freed from the charm. After this he called Labid and questioned him. He confessed his guilt and the Holy Prophet let him go, for he never avenged himself on anyone for any harm done to his person. He even declined to talk about it to others, saying that Allah had restored him to health; therefore he did not like that he should incite the people against anyone.

This is the story of the magic worked on the Holy Prophet. There is nothing in it which might run counter to his office of Prophethood. In his personal capacity if an injury could be inflicted on him as it happened, in the Battle of Uhud, if he could fall from the horse and be hurt as is confirmed by the *Ḥadīth*, if he could be stung by a scorpion as has been mentioned in some Traditions and none of these negates the protection promised him by Allah in his capacity as a Prophet, he could also fall ill under the influence of magic in his personal capacity. That a Prophet can be affected by magic is also confirmed by the Qur'ān. In Sūrah Al-A'rāf it has been said about the magicians of Pharaoh that when they confronted the Prophet Moses, they

bewitched the eyes of thousands of people who had assembled to witness the encounter (v. 116). In *Sūrah Tā Hā* it has been said that not only the common people but the Prophet Moses too felt that the cords and staffs that they cast were running towards them like so many snakes, and this filled Moses' heart with fear. Thereupon Allah revealed to him: "Don't fear for you will come out victorious. Cast down your staff." (vv. 66-69). As for the objection that this then confirms the accusation of the disbelievers of Makkah that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was a bewitched man, its answer is that the disbelievers did not call him a bewitched man in the sense that he had fallen ill under the effect of magic cast by somebody, but in the sense that some magician had, God forbid, made him mad, and he had made claim to Prophethood and was telling the people tales of Hell and Heaven in his same madness. Now, obviously this objection does not at all apply to a matter about which history confirms that the magic spell had affected only the person of Muḥammad (upon whom be peace) and not the Prophethood of Muḥammad (upon whom be peace), which remained wholly unaffected by it.

In this connection, another thing worthy of mention is that the people who regard magic as a kind of superstition hold this view only because the effect of magic cannot be explained scientifically. But there are many things in the world which one experiences and observes but one cannot explain scientifically how they happen. If we cannot give any such explanation it does not become necessary that we should deny the thing itself which we cannot explain. Magic, in fact, is a psychological phenomenon which can affect the body through the mind just as physical things affect the mind through the body. Fear, for instance, is a psychological pheno-

menon, but it affects the body: the hair stand on end and the body shudders. Magic does not; in fact, change the reality, but under its influence man's mind and senses start feeling as if reality had changed. The staffs and the cords that the magicians had thrown towards the Prophet Moses, had not actually become snakes, but the eyes of the multitude of people were so bewitched that everybody felt they were snakes; even the senses of the Prophet Moses could not remain unaffected by the magic spell. Likewise, in Al-Baqarah : 102, it has been said that in Babylon people learnt such magic from Hārūt and Mārūt as could cause division between husband and wife. This too was a psychological phenomenon. Obviously, if the people did not find it efficacious by experience they could not become its customers. No doubt, it is correct that just like the bullet of the rifle and the bomb from the aircraft, magic too cannot have effect without Allah's permission, but it would be mere stubbornness to deny a thing which has been experienced and observed by man for thousands of years.

### Question of Reciting Charms and Amulets in Islam

The third thing that arises in connection with these Sūrah's is whether recitation of charms and amulets has any place in Islam, and whether such recitation is by itself efficacious or not. This question arises for in many *ahādīth* it has been reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) at the time of going to bed every night, especially during illness, used to recite the *Mu'awwidhatayn* (or according to other reports, the *Mu'awwidhāt*, i.e. *Qul Huwa-Allahu Ahad* and the *Mu'awwidhatayn*) thrice, blow in his hands and then rub the hands on his body from head to foot as far as his hands could reach. During his last illness when it was no longer possible for him to do so, Hadrat 'A'ishah recited these Sūrah's

herself or by his command, blew on his hands in view of their being blessed and rubbed them on his body. Traditions on this subject have been related in Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Abū Da'ūd and Mu'attā of Imām Mālik through authentic channels on the authority of Ḥadrat 'A'ishah herself beside whom no one could be better acquainted with the domestic life of the Holy Prophet.

In this regard, one should first understand its religious aspect. In the *Ḥadīth* a lengthy tradition has been related on the authority of Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, at the end of which the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "The people of my *Ummah* to enter Paradise without reckoning will be those who neither turn to treatment by branding, nor to enchanting, nor take omens, but have trust in their Lord." (Muslim). According to a tradition reported on the authority of Ḥadrat Mughirah bin Shu'bah, the Holy Prophet said: "He who got himself treated by branding, or enchanting, became independent of trust in Allah." (Tirmidhī). Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has reported that the Holy Prophet disapproved of ten things one of which was recitation of charms and amulets except by means of the *Mu'awwidhatayn* or *Mu'awwidhāt*. (Abū Da'ūd, Ahmad, Nasā'ī, Ibn Hibbān, Ḥākim). Some *ahādīth* also show that in the beginning the Holy Prophet had altogether forbidden recitation of charms and amulets, but later he allowed it on the condition that it should not smack of polytheism, but one should recite and blow by means of the holy names of Allah, or the words of the Qur'ān. The words used should be understandable and one should know that there is nothing sinful in it, and one should not wholly rely on the recitation of charms but on Allah's will to make it beneficial." After the explanation of the religious aspect, let us now see what the *Ḥadīth* says in this regard.

Ṭabarānī in *Aṣ-Ṣaghīr* has related a tradition on the authority of Ḥadrat 'Alī, saying: "Once the Holy Prophet was stung by a scorpion during the Prayer. When the Prayer was over, he remarked: God's curse be on the scorpion: it neither spares a praying one, nor any other. Then he called for water and salt, and started rubbing the place where the scorpion had stung with salt water and reciting *Qul yā ayyuhal-kāfirūn*, *Qul Huwa Allahu aḥad*, *Qul a'udhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Qul a'udhu bi-Rabbil-nās*, along with it "

Ibn 'Abbās also has related a tradition to the effect: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) used to recite this invocation over Ḥadrat Ḥasan and Ḥusain: *U'udhu kuma bi-kalimāt Allāhit-tāmatī min kulli shaitān-in wa hīmmāti-wa min kulli 'ayr-in-lām nati*: "I give you in the refuge of Allah's blameless words, from every devil and troublesome thing, and from every evil look." (Bukhārī, Musnad Ahmad, Firmidhī, Ibn Mājah).

A tradition has been related in Muslim, Mu'waṭṭā, Ṭabarānī and Hākim about 'Uthmān bin al-'Aṣ ath-Thaqafī, with a little variation in wording, to the effect that he complained to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), saying: "Since I have become a Muslim, I feel a pain in my body, which is killing me." The Holy Prophet said: "Place your right hand on the place where you feel the pain, then recite *Bismillah* thrice, and *A'udhu billāhi wa qudratihi min sharri mā ajidu wa uhādhiru* ("I seek refuge with Allah and with His power from the evil that I find and that I fear") seven times, and rub your hand." In *Mu'waṭṭā* there is the addition: "Uthmān bin Abī al-Āṣ said: After that my pain disappeared and now I teach the same formula to the people of my house."

Musnad Ahmad and Tahāvi contain this tradition from Talq bin 'Alī; "I was stung by a scorpion in the

presence of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). The Holy Prophet recited something and blew over me and rubbed his hand on the affected place.”

Muslim contains a tradition from Abū Sa'īd Khudri, which says: “Once when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) fell ill, Gabriel came and asked: O Muḥammad, are you ill? The Holy Prophet answered in the affirmative. Gabriel said: I blow on you in the name of Allah from everything which troubles you and from the evil of every soul and the evil look of every envier. May Allah restore you to health. I blow on you in His name.” A similar tradition has been related in Musnad Aḥmad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ubādah bin aṣ-Ṣāmit, which says: “The Holy Prophet was unwell. I went to visit him and found him in great trouble. When I re-visited him in the evening I found him quite well. When I asked how he had become well so soon, he said; Gabriel came and blew over me with some words. Then he recited words similar to those reported in the above *Ḥadīth*. A tradition similar to this has been related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah also in Muslim and Musnad Aḥmad.

Imām Aḥmad in his Musnad has related this tradition from Ḥaḍrah, mother of the Faithful: “One day the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) visited me in the house and a woman, named Shifā,<sup>1</sup> was sitting with me. She used to blow on the people to cure them of blisters. The Holy Prophet said to her: Teach Ḥaḍrah also the formula.” Imām Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd and

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1. Her real name was Lailā but she had become well known as Shifā bint 'Abdullah. She became Muslim before the *hijrah*; she belonged to the clan of Bani 'Adi of the Quraish. This is the same clan to which Ḥaḍrat 'Umar belonged. Thus, she was a relative of Ḥaḍrat Ḥaḍrah.

Nasā'i have related this tradition from Shifā bint 'Abdullah herself, saying: "The Holy Prophet said to me: Just as you have taught Ḥafṣah reading and writing, so teach her blowing to cure blisters as well."

In Muslim there is a tradition from 'Auf bin Mālik al-Ashja'i to the effect: "We used to practise blowing to cure diseases. We asked the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for his opinion in this regard. He said: Let me know the words with which you blow over the people. There is no harm in blowing unless it smacks of polytheism."

Muslim, Musnad Ahmad and Ibn Mājah contain a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, saying: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had forbidden us blowing to cure disease. Then the people of the clan of Ḥaḍrat 'Amr bin Ḥazm came and they said: We had a formula with which we used to blow on the people to cure them of scorpion's sting (or snake-bite). But you have forbidden us the practice. Then they recited before him the words which they made use of. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: I do not see any harm in it, so let the one who can do good to his brother, do him good." Another tradition from Jābir bin 'Abdullah in Muslim is: "The family of Ḥazm had a formula to cure snake-bite and the Holy Prophet permitted them to practise it." This is also supported by the tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, which is contained in Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, and Ibn Mājah: "The Holy Prophet granted permission to a family of the Anṣār for blowing to cure the evil effects of biting by every poisonous creature." Traditions resembling these have been related from Ḥaḍrat Anas also in Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Muslim and Ibn Mājah, saying that the Holy Prophet gave permission for blowing to cure the bite by



poisonous creatures, the disease of blisters and the effects of the evil look.”

Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah and Hākim have related this tradition on the authority of Hadrat ‘Umair, freed slave of Abi al-Laḥam: “In the pre-Islamic days I had a formula with which I used to blow over the people. I recited it before the Holy Prophet, whereupon he told me to drop out such and such words from it, and permitted me to blow with the rest of it.”

According to *Mu'waṭṭā*, Hadrat Abū Bakr went to the house of his daughter, Hadrat ‘Ā’ishah, and found that she was unwell and a Jewish woman was blowing over her. Thereupon he said to her: “Blow over her by means of the Book of Allah.” This shows that if the people of the Book practise blowing by means of the verses of the Torah and the Gospel, it is also permitted.

As for the question whether blowing for curing disease is efficacious also, or not, its answer is that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) not only did not forbid anybody to have recourse to cure and medical treatment but himself stated that Allah has created a cure for every disease and exhorted his followers to use cures. He himself told the people remedies for certain diseases, as can be seen in the *Ḥadīth* in *Kitāb al-Ṭib* (Book of Cures). But the cure can be beneficial and useful only by Allah’s command and permission, otherwise if the cure and medical treatment were beneficial in every case, no one would have died in hospitals. Now, if beside the cure and medical treatment, Allah’s Word and His beautiful names also are made use of, or Allah is turned to and invoked for help by means of His Word, Names and Attributes in a place where no medical aid is available, it would not be against reason

except for the materialists.<sup>1</sup> However, it is not right to disregard intentionally a cure or treatment where it is available, and recourse had only to enchanting and reciting of charms, and the people should start a regular practice of granting amulets as a means of earning their livelihood.

Many people in this regard argue from Ḥadrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī's tradition which has been related in Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd and Ibn Mājah, and it is supported also by a tradition related in Bukhārī on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās. According to it the Holy Prophet sent some of his Companions including Ḥadrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī on an expedition. They halted on the way at the settlement of an Arabian tribe and demanded hospitality from the people, but they refused to extend any hospitality. In the meantime the chief of the tribe was stung by a scorpion and the people came to the travellers to ask if they had any medicine or formula by which their chief could be cured. Ḥadrat Abū Sa'īd said: "Yes, we do have, but since you have refused us hospitality, we would not treat him unless you promised to give us

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1. Many doctors of the materialistic world also have admitted that the prayer and recourse to Allah are efficacious in recovery from disease. I have had personal experience of this twice in my life. In 1948 when I was interned, a stone passed into my bladder and blocked the urinary channel so that I could not pass urine for 16 hours. I prayed to Allah Almighty for help; for I did not want to request the cruel rulers to arrange medical aid for me. So, the stone left the urinary channel and remained away from it till 1968 when again it started giving me trouble and had to be removed by a surgical operation. Again, in 1953 when I was arrested, I had been suffering from ring-worms on the legs for several months, and no treatment was proving efficacious. After my arrest I again prayed to Allah Almighty as I had prayed in 1948, and my shins were cleansed of the ring-worms without any treatment and medicine, and I have never suffered from this disease again.

something." They promised to give them a flock of goats (according to some traditions, 30 goats), and Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd went and started reciting Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah and rubbing his saliva on the affected place.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the chief felt relieved of the effect of poison and the people of the tribe gave them the goats as promised. But the Companions said to one another; "Let us not make any use of the goats until we have asked the Holy Prophet about it", for they were not sure whether it was permissible to accept any reward for what they had done. So they came before the Holy Prophet and related what had happened. The Holy Prophet smiled and said: "How did you know that Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah could also be used for curing such troubles? Take the goats and allocate my share also in it."

But before one uses this *Ḥadīth* for permission to adopt a regular profession of granting amulets and reciting charms, one should keep in view the conditions under which Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī had recourse to it, and the Holy Prophet not only held it as permissible but also said that a share for him also should be allocated so that there remained no doubt in the minds of the Companions that such a thing was permissible. The conditions in Arabia in those days were, as they still are, that settlements were situated hundreds of miles apart, there were no hotels and restaurants where a traveller could buy food when he reached one of these after several days' journey. Under such conditions it was considered a moral duty that when a traveller reached a settlement the people of the place should extend hospitality to him. Refusal on their part in

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1. There is no mention in the traditions that Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah was recited by Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī; they do not even mention that Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd himself had accompanied the expedition, but Tirmidhī has made mention of both these things,

many cases meant death for the travellers, and this was looked upon as highly blameworthy among the Arabs. That is why the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) allowed as permissible the act of his Companions. Since the people of the tribe had refused them hospitality, they too refused to treat their chief, and became ready to treat him only on the condition that they should promise to give them something in return. Then, when one of them with trust in God recited Sūrah Al-Fātibah over the chief and he became well, the people gave the promised wages and the Holy Prophet allowed that the wages be accepted as lawful and pure. In Bukhāri the tradition related on the authority of Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās about this incident contains the Holy Prophet's words to the effect: "Instead that you should have acted otherwise, it was better that you recited the Book of Allah and accepted the wages for it." He said this in order to impress the truth that Allah's Word is superior to every other kind of enchanting and practice of secret arts. Furthermore, the Message also was incidentally conveyed to the Arabian tribe and its people made aware of the blessings of the Word that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had brought from Allah. This incident cannot be cited as a precedent for the people who run clinics in the cities and towns for the practice of secret arts and have adopted it as a regular profession for earning livelihood. No precedent of it is found in the life and practice of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) or his Companions, their followers and the earliest Imāms.

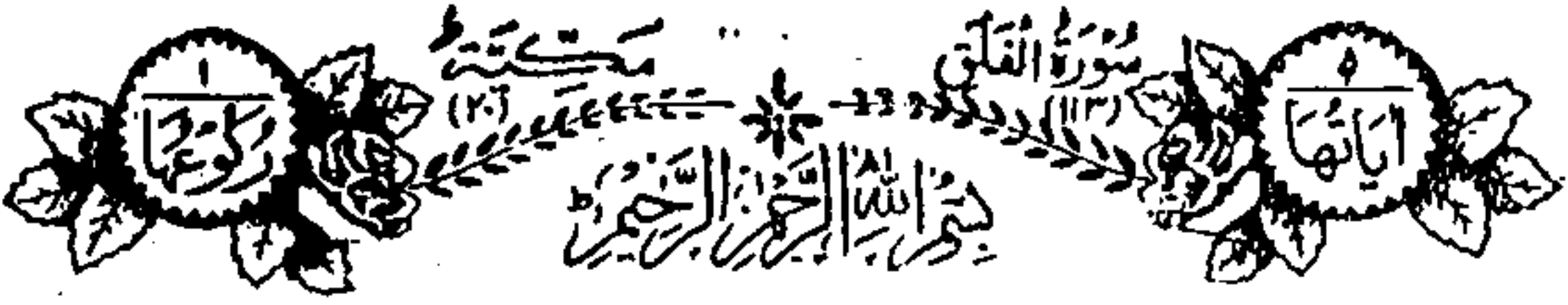
### **Relation between Sūrah Al-Fātibah and the Mu'awwidhatayn**

The last thing which is noteworthy with regard to the *Mu'awwidhatayn* is the relation between the beginning and the end of the Qur'ān. Although the Qur'ān has

not been arranged chronologically, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) arranged in the present order the verses and Sūrahs revealed during 23 years on different occasions to meet different needs and situations not by himself but by the command of Allah Who revealed them. According to this order, the Qur'ān opens with the Sūrah Al-Fatihah and ends with the *Mu'awwidhatayn*. Now, let us have a look at the two. In the beginning, after praising and glorifying Allah, Who is Lord of the worlds, Kind, Merciful and Master of the Judgement Day, the servant submits: "Lord, You alone I worship and to You alone I turn for help, and the most urgent help that I need from You is to be guided to the Straight Way." In answer, he is given by Allah the whole Qur'ān to show him the Straight Way, which is concluded thus: Man prays to Allah, Who is Lord of dawn, Lord of men, King of men, Deity of men, saying: "I seek refuge only with You for protection from every evil and mischief of every creature, and in particular, from the evil whisperings of devils, be they from among men or jinn, for they are the greatest obstacle in following the Straight Way." The relation that the beginning bears with the end, cannot remain hidden from anyone who has understanding and insight.

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قُلْ اَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ﴿١﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ﴿٢﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ اِذَا  
 وَقَبَ ﴿٣﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثِ فِي الْعُقَدِ ﴿٤﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ اِذَا حَسَدَ ﴿٥﴾

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CXIII

AL-FALAQ الفلق

Verses : 5

Revealed at Makkah

*In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.*

Say:<sup>1</sup> "I seek refuge<sup>2</sup> with the Lord of the dawn,<sup>3</sup> from the evil of everything He has created,<sup>4</sup> and from the evil of the darkness of night when it overspreads,<sup>5</sup> and from the evil of the blowers (men or women) into knots,<sup>6</sup> and from the evil of an envious one when he envies."<sup>7</sup>

1-5

1. As *qul* (say) is a part of the message which was conveyed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) by Revelation for preaching his prophetic message, its first addressee is the Holy Prophet himself but after him every believer too is its addressee.

2. The act of seeking refuge necessarily consists of three parts: (1) The act of seeking refuge itself; (2) the seeker of refuge; and (3) he whose refuge is sought. Seeking refuge implies feeling fear of something and seeking protection of another, or taking cover of it, or clinging to it, or going under its shelter for safety. The seeker after refuge in any case is the person, who feels that he cannot by himself resist and fight the thing that he fears, but stands in need of refuge with another for protection. Then the one whose refuge is sought must necessarily be a person or being about whom the seeker after refuge believes that he or it alone can protect him from the calamity. Now, one kind of refuge is that which is obtained according to natural laws in the physical world from a perceptible material

object or person or power, for example, taking shelter in a fort for protection against the enemy's attack, or taking cover in a trench or behind a heap of earth, or wall, for protection against a shower of bullets, or taking refuge with a man or government, for protection from a powerful tyrant, or taking refuge in the shade of a tree or building for protection from the sun. Contrary to this, the other kind of refuge is that which is sought in a supernatural Being from every kind of danger and every kind of material, moral or spiritual harm and injury on the basis of the belief that that Being is ruler over the physical world and can protect in supersensory ways the one who seeks His refuge. This second kind of refuge is the one that is implied not only in Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah An-Nās but wherever in the Qur'ān and the *Hadith* mention has been made of seeking refuge with Allah, it implies this particular kind of refuge, and it is a necessary corollary of the doctrine of *Tauhid* that this kind of refuge should be sought from no one but Allah. The polytheists sought this kind of protection, and seek even today, from other beings than Allah, e.g. the jinn, or gods and goddesses. The materialists turn for this also to material means and resources, for they do not believe in any supernatural power. But the believer only turns to Allah and seeks refuge only with Him, against all such calamities and misfortunes to ward off which he feels he has no power. For example, about the polytheists it has been said in the Qur'ān: "And that from among men some people used to seek refuge with some people from among the jinn (Al-Jinn : 16)." And explaining it in E.N. 47 of Sūrah Al-Jinn we have cited Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās's tradition that when the polytheistic Arabs had to pass a night in an uninhabited valley, they would call out, saying: "We seek refuge of the lord of this valley (i.e. of the jinn who is ruler and master of this valley)." Contrary to this, about Pharaoh it has been said: "When he witnessed the great Signs presented by the Prophet Moses, he showed arrogance on account of his might." (Adh-Dhāriyāt : 39). As for the attitude and conduct of the God-worshippers the Qur'ān says that they seek Allah's refuge for protection against the evil of everything that they fear, whether it is material or moral or spiritual. Thus, about Mary it has been said that when God's angel appeared before her suddenly in human guise (when she did not know that he was an angel), she cried out: "I seek the merciful God's refuge from you, if you are a pious man." (Mary : 18). When the Prophet Noah made an improper petition to Allah, and was rebuked by Allah in response, he imme-



diately submitted: "My Lord, I seek Your protection lest I should ask of You anything of which I have no knowledge." (Hūd : 47). When the Prophet Moses commanded the children of Israel to sacrifice a cow, and they said that perhaps he was having a jest with them, he replied: "I crave Allah's protection from behaving like ignorant people." (Al-Baqarah : 67)

The same is the case with all the acts of seeking refuge which have been reported in respect of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in the books of *Hadith*. For instance, consider the following prayers that the Holy Prophet made:

Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) used to pray, saying: "O God, I seek Your refuge from the evil of the works which I did and from the evil of the works which I did not do." (i.e. if I have done a wrong, I seek refuge from its evil results, and if I have not done a work which I should have done, I seek refuge from the loss that I have incurred, or from that I should do what I should not do)." (Muslim)

Ibn 'Umar has reported that one of the supplications of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was to the effect: "O God, I seek Your refuge from being deprived of a blessing that You have bestowed on me, and from being deprived of the well-being that You have granted me, and I seek refuge lest Your wrath should descend on me suddenly, and I seek refuge from every kind of Your displeasure." (Muslim)

Zaid bin Arqam has reported that the Messenger of Allah used to pray: "O God, I seek Your refuge from the knowledge which is not beneficial, from the heart which does not fear You, from the soul which is never satisfied, and from the prayer which is not answered." (Muslim)

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah has reported that the Holy Messenger used to pray: "O God, I seek Your refuge from hunger, for it is a most evil thing with which one may have to pass a night, and I seek Your refuge from dishonesty, for it is sheer evil-mindedness." (Abū Da'ūd).

Ḥaḍrat Anas has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) used to pray: "O God, I seek Your refuge from leprosy and madness and all evil diseases." (Abū Da'ūd).

Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) used to pray in these words: "O God, I seek Your

refuge from the mischief of the fire and from the evil of affluence and poverty." (Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd)

Shakal bin Humaid requested the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to teach him some prayer. He told him to say: "O God, I seek Your refuge from the evil of my hearing, from the evil of my sight, from the evil of my tongue, from the evil of my heart, and from the evil of my lust." (Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd).

Anas bin Mālik has reported that the Holy Prophet used to say: "O God, I seek Your refuge from helplessness, indolence, cowardice, old age and stinginess, and I seek Your refuge from the torment of the grave and from the mischief of life and death, (and according to a tradition in Muslim also) from the burden of debt and that the people should overpower me." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

Khawlā bint Hukaym Sulamiyyah says that she heard the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as saying that the one who halts at a new stage (during the journey) and says: "I seek refuge in the blameless Words of Allah from the evil of the creatures", will not be caused any harm until he departs from that stage. (Muslim)

We have related these few prayers of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) from the *Ḥadīth*, which show that the believer should seek Allah's refuge from every danger and evil and not the refuge of anyone else, nor he should become self-sufficient of Allah and place reliance only on himself.

3. The word used in the original is *Rabbul-falaq*. *Falaq* actually means to split and to pierce through. A great majority of the commentators have taken it to mean bringing out the light of dawn by splitting the darkness of night, for in Arabic *falaq as-subḥ* is often used for the breaking of dawn, and in the Qur'ān also the words *Fāliq-ul-ısbāḥ* (He Who causes the dawn to appear by splitting the darkness of night) have been used for Allah. (Al-An'ām : 96). Another meaning of *falaq* also is to create, to bring into being, for everything created in the world appears by splitting something. All vegetation sprouts by splitting open the seed and the soil; all animals come out either from the womb of mother or by breaking open the egg, or some other obstruction. All springs gush out by splitting open the rock or soil. The day appears by piercing through the curtain of the night. The drops of rain pierce through the clouds and fall on the earth. In short, everything in the world comes into being as a result of breaking and splitting another thing; so much so that the earth and the heavens also in the beginning were one mass,

then they were broken and parted. (Al-Anbiyā' : 30). Thus, according to this meaning the word *falaq* is common to all creations. Now, if the first meaning is adopted, the verse would mean: "I seek refuge with the Lord of rising dawn", and according to the second meaning, it would mean: "I seek refuge with the Lord of all creation." Here the attribute of "*Rabb*" has been used for Allah instead of His proper Name, for Allah's attribute of being *Rabb*, i.e. Master, Sustainer and Providence, is more relevant to seeking and taking of His refuge. Then, if *Rabb-ul-falaq* implies Lord of the rising dawn, seeking His refuge would mean: "I seek refuge with the Lord Who brings out the bright daylight from the darkness of night so that He may likewise bring well-being for me from all kinds of physical and psychical dangers." If it is taken to mean *Rabb al-khalaq* the meaning would be: "I seek refuge with the Lord of all creation, so that He may protect me from the evil of His creation."

4. In other words: "I seek His refuge from the evil of all creatures." A few things in this sentence deserve consideration;

First, that the creation of evil has not been attributed to Allah, but the creation of creatures has been attributed to Allah and of evil to the creatures. That is, it has not been said: "I seek refuge from the evils that Allah has created" but that "I seek refuge from the evil of the things He has created." This shows that Allah has not created any creature for the sake of evil, but all His work is for the sake of good and a special purpose. However, from the qualities that He has created in the creatures to fulfil the purpose of their creation, sometimes evil appears from some kinds of creatures in most cases.

Second, that even if this one sentence was given and no mention made of seeking Allah's refuge separately from the evils of some particular kinds of creatures in the following sentences, this one sentence alone would have sufficed to express the intent, for in it Allah's refuge has been sought from the evil of all creatures. After this general prayer for refuge making mention of seeking refuge from some particular evils by itself gives this meaning: "Though I seek Allah's refuge from the evil of everything created by Allah, I stand in great need of Allah's refuge from the particular evils that have been mentioned in the remaining verses of Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah An-Nās."

Third, that the most suitable and effective prayer for seeking refuge from the evil of the creatures is that refuge should be sought with their Creator, for He is in any case dominant over His creatures.

and is aware of their evils, which we know, as well as of those which we do not know. Hence, His refuge is the refuge of the supreme Ruler Whom no power can fight and oppose, and with His refuge we can protect ourselves from every evil of every creature, whether we are aware of it or not. Moreover, this contains the prayer for refuge not only from the evils of the world but also from every evil of the Hereafter.

Fourth, that the word *sharr* (evil) is used for loss, injury, trouble and affliction as well as for the means which cause losses and injuries and afflictions; for example, hunger, disease, injury in accident or war, being burnt by fire, being stung or bitten by a scorpion or snake, being involved in the grief of children's death and similar other evils which are evils in the first sense, for they are by themselves troubles and afflictions. Contrary to this, unbelief, polytheism and every kind of sin and wickedness, for instance, are evils in the second sense, for they cause loss and affliction, although apparently they do not cause any trouble at the moment, rather some sins give pleasure and bring profit. Thus, seeking refuge from evil comprehends both these meanings.

Fifth, that seeking refuge from evil contains two other meanings also. First, that man is praying to his God to protect him from the evil that has already taken place; second, that man is praying to his God to protect him from the evil that has not yet taken place.

5. After seeking Allah's refuge generally from the evil of the creatures, now prayer is being taught for seeking refuge from the evil of some special creatures in particular. The word *ghāsiq* in the verse literally means dark. Thus, at another place in the Qur'an it has been said: "Establish the *ṣalāt* from the declining of the sun to the darkness of the night (*ilā ghasaq-il-lail*)." (Banī Isrā'il : 78), and *waqab* means to enter or to overspread. Prayer has been taught to seek refuge in particular from the evil of the darkness of night, for most of the crimes and acts of wickedness are committed at night, harmful animals also come out at night, and the night was a very dreadful thing in the days chaos prevailed in Arabia when these verses were revealed. Raiders came out in the dark of night and plundered and destroyed settlements. The people who were thinking of putting the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to death, also made their secret plans at night, so that the murder could not be detected. Therefore, command was given to seek Allah's refuge from the evils and calamities which descend at night. Here, the subtle relation that exists between seeking refuge from the evil of the

dark night with the Lord of breaking dawn cannot remain hidden from anybody having insight and understanding.

A difficulty is confronted in the explanation of this verse in view of several authentic traditions. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported: "Once during a moon-lit night, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) took hold of my hand and pointing to the moon said: 'Seek Allah's refuge, for this is *al-ghāsiq idhā waqab*'." (Tirmidhī, Aḥmad, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ḥākim, Ibn Mardūyah). To explain this some scholars said that *idhā waqab* here means *idhā khasaf*, i.e. when the moon is eclipsed. But in no tradition has it been mentioned that when the Holy Prophet pointed to the moon, it was in eclipse. In the Arabic lexicon also *idhā waqab* cannot mean *idhā khasaf*. In our opinion the correct explanation of this *Ḥadīth* is that since the moon rises in the night (in the daytime it does not shine even if it is there in the sky), what the Holy Prophet meant was this: 'Seek God's refuge from the night, the time when it (the moon) appears, for the light of the moon is not as helpful for the one who resists as for the one who attacks, and not as helpful for the victim of the crime as for the culprit.' On this very basis the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) is reported to have said: "When the sun has set, devils scatter on every side. Therefore, gather your children together in the house and keep your animals tied down until the darkness of night disappears."

6. The word '*uqad* in *naffāthāt fil-'uqad* is plural of '*uqdah*, which means a knot that is tied on a string or piece of thread. *Naffath* means to blow. *Naffāthāt* is plural of *naffāthah*, which may mean the men who blow much, and if taken as a feminine gender, women who blow much; it may as well relate to *nufūs* (human beings) or to *jamā'ats* (groups of men), for both *nafas* and *jamā'at* are grammatically feminine. Blowing upon knots, according to most, rather all, commentators implies magic, for the magicians usually tie knots on a string or thread and blow upon them as they do so. Thus, the verse means: "I seek refuge with the Lord of rising dawn from the evil of magicians, male and female." This meaning is also supported by the traditions which show that when magic was worked on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), Gabriel (peace be on him) had come and taught him to recite the *Mu'awwidhatayn*, and in the *Mu'awwidhatayn* this is the only sentence which relates directly to magic. Abū Muslim Iṣfahānī and Zamakhsharī have given another meaning also of *naffāthāt fil-'uqad*, which is that it implies the deceitfulness of women and their influencing men's resolutions, views

and ideas and this has been compared to a magic spell, for in the love of women, man starts behaving as if he was under a spell. Though this explanation is interesting, it runs counter to the commentary given by the earliest scholars; and it also does not correspond to the conditions in which the *Mu'awwidhatayn* were sent down as we have shown in the Introduction.

About magic one should know that in it since help is sought of the satans and evil spirits or stars to influence the other person evilly, it has been called *kufir* (unbelief) in the Qur'ān: "Solomon was not involved in *kufir* but the satans who taught magic to the people." (Al-Baqarah : 102). But even if it does not contain any word of *kufir*, or any polytheistic element, it is forbidden and unlawful and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has counted it among the seven heinous sins which ruin the Hereafter of man. In Bukhārī and Muslim a tradition has been related from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, saying that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Avoid seven deadly sins: associating another with Allah, magic, killing a soul, which Allah has forbidden, unjustly, devouring interest, eating the orphan's property, fleeing from the enemy in the battle-field, and slandering simple and chaste Muslim women with unchastity."

7. *Hasad* means that a person should feel unhappy at the better fortune, superiority or good quality that Allah has granted to another, and should wish that it should be taken away from the other person and given to him, or at least the other one should be deprived of it. However, *hasad* does not mean that a person should wish that he too should be blessed with the bounty that the other one has been blessed with. Here, Allah's refuge has been sought from the evil of the jealous one when he feels jealous, and takes a practical step with word or deed to satisfy his heart. For until he takes a practical step, his being unhappy may by itself be bad but it is not an evil for the other person so that he may seek refuge from it. When such an evil appears from a jealous person the best thing would be to seek Allah's refuge from it. Besides this, there are a few other things also which are helpful for obtaining immunity from the evil of the jealous person. First, that one should have trust in Allah and the faith that unless Allah so wills no one can harm him in any way. Second, that one should have patience over what the jealous person says and does and should not start behaving impatiently so as to be degraded morally to the level of the jealous person. Third, that one should in any case maintain dignity

and practise piety even if the jealous person behaves frivolously, being fearless of God and shameless of the people. Fourth, that one should free one's mind of every thought about the jealous person and should disregard him altogether, for making him a subject of one's thought is a prelude to being influenced by him. Fifth, that one should do the jealous person a good turn as and when one can, not to speak of treating him evilly, no matter whether this good behaviour mitigates his jealousy or not. Sixth, that one should understand rightly and remain steadfast to the doctrine of *Tauhid*, for the heart which enshrines *Tauhid*, cannot be affected by anyone else's fear except the fear of Allah.







قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ ۝ الْمَلِكِ النَّاسِ ۝ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ ۝ مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ ۝ الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ ۝ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ ۝

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## CXIV

### النَّاسِ AN-NĀS

Verses : 6

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, the real God of mankind,<sup>1</sup> from the evil of the whisperer, who returns over and over again,<sup>2</sup> who whispers (evil) into the hearts of men, whether he be from among the jinn or mankind."<sup>3</sup>

1-6

1. Here also, as in Sūrah Al-Falaq, instead of saying *A'ūdhu-billāhi* (I seek Allah's refuge), a prayer has been taught to seek Allah's refuge by reference to His three attributes: first, that He is *Rabb-un-nās*, i.e. Sustainer, Providence and Master of all mankind; second, that He is *Malik-un-nās*, i.e. Judge and Ruler of all mankind; third, that He is *Ilāh-un-nās*, i.e. real Deity of all mankind. (Here, one should clearly understand that the word *ilāh* has been used in two meanings in the Qur'ān: first for the thing or person who is practically being worshipped although it or he is not entitled to worship; second, for Him Who is entitled to worship, Who is in fact the Deity whether the people worship Him or not. Wherever this word is used for Allah, it has been used in the second meaning). Seeking refuge by means of these three attributes means: "I seek refuge with that God, Who being the Sustainer, King and Deity of men, has full power over them, can fully protect them and can really save them from the evil, to save myself and others from which I am seeking His refuge. Not only this: since He alone is Sustainer, King and Deity, therefore, there is no one beside Him with Whom I may seek refuge and he may give real refuge."

2. The word *waswās* in *waswās-il-khannās* means the one who whispers over and over again, and *waswasa* means to whisper into someone's heart an evil suggestion over and over again in such a way or ways that the one who is being inspired may not feel that the whisperer is whispering an evil suggestion into his heart. *Waswasah* by itself suggests repetition just as *zalzalah* contains the meaning of repetitive movement. Since man is not tempted by just one attempt but effort has to be made over and over again to seduce and tempt him, such an attempt is called *waswasah* and the tempter *waswās*. As for the word *khannās*, it is derived from *khunūs*, which means to hide after appearing and to retreat after coming into view. Since *khannās* is the intensive form, it would imply the one who behaves thus very frequently. Now, obviously the whisperer has to approach man for whispering again and again, and besides, when he is also described as *khannās*, the combination of the two words by itself gives the meaning that after whispering once he retreats and then again returns over and over again to repeat the act of whispering. In other words, when once he fails in his attempt to whisper evil, he withdraws, then he again returns to make the second and the third and the next attempt over and over again.

After understanding the meaning of *waswās-il-khannās*, let us consider what is meant by seeking refuge from its evil. Its one meaning is that the seeker after refuge himself seeks God's refuge from its evil, i.e. from the evil lest it should whisper some evil suggestion into his own heart. The second meaning is that the caller to Truth seeks God's refuge from the evil of the one who whispers evil suggestions into the hearts of the people against himself. It is not in his own power to approach all the people in whose hearts evil suggestions are being whispered against himself individually and remove the misunderstandings of every person. It is also not right and proper for him that he should give up his mission of inviting others to Allah and should devote all his time and energy to removing the misunderstandings created by the whisperer and to answering their accusations. It is also below his dignity that he should stoop to the level of his opponents. Therefore, Allah has instructed the caller to Truth to seek only His refuge from the evil of the wicked people, and then to attend single-mindedly to his work of invitation and mission. For it is not for him to deal with them but for Allah, Who is Sustainer of men, King of men, God of men.

Here, one should also understand that an evil suggestion is the

starting point of the evil act. When it affects a careless or heedless person, it creates in him a desire for evil. Then, further whisperings change the evil desire into an evil intention and evil purpose. When the evil suggestion grows in intensity, the intention becomes a resolution, which then culminates in the evil act. Therefore, the meaning of seeking God's refuge from the evil of the whisperer is that Allah should nip the evil in the bud.

If seen from another aspect, the order of the evil of the whisperers seems to be this: first, they incite one to open unbelief, polytheism, or rebellion against Allah and His Messenger, and enmity of the righteous (godly) people. If they fail in this and a person does enter Allah's religion, they misguide him to some innovation. If they fail in this too, they tempt him to sin. If they do not succeed even in this, they inspire the man with the suggestion that there is no harm in indulging in minor sins, so that if he starts committing these freely, he is overburdened with sin. If one escapes from this too, in the last resort they try that one should keep the true religion confined to oneself, and should do nothing to make it prevail, but if a person defeats all these plans, the whole party of the devils from among men and jinn makes a common front against him, incites and stirs up the people and makes them shower him with invective and accusation and slander, and defames him as widely as it can. Then, Satan comes to the believer and excites him to anger, saying: "It is cowardly of you to have borne all this insult: arise and clash with your opponents." This is the last and final device with Satan by which he tries to thwart the struggle of the caller to Truth and entangle him in difficulties and obstructions. If he succeeds in escaping from this too, Satan becomes powerless before him. About this same thing it has been said in the Qur'ān: "If Satan ever excites you to anger, seek refuge with Allah." (Al-A'rāf : 200, Hā Mīm As-Sajdah : 36); "Say: Lord, I seek refuge with You from the promptings of satans." (Al-Mu'minūn : 97); "The fact is that if ever an evil suggestion from Satan so much as touches those, who are God-fearing people, they immediately get alerted and clearly see the right course they should adopt." (Al-A'rāf : 201). And on this very basis about the people who escape from this last attack of Satan Allah says: "None can attain to this rank except those who are men of great good fortune." (Hā Mīm As-Sajdah : 35).

In this connection, another thing also should be kept in mind, and it is this: Evil suggestion is not whispered into the heart of man only from outside by the satans from among men and jinn, but also

by the self of man from within. His own wrong theories misguide his intellect, his own unlawful motives and desires lead his power of discrimination, will and power of judgement astray, and it is not only the satans from outside but within man his satan of the self also beguiles him. This same thing has been expressed in the Qur'ān, thus: "And We know the evil suggestions arising from his self." (Qāf : 16). On this very basis, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in his well-known Sermon said: "We seek Allah's refuge from the evils of our self."

3. According to some scholars, these words mean that the whisperer whispers evil into the hearts of two kinds of people: the jinn and the men. If this meaning is admitted, the word *nās* would apply to both jinn and men. They say that this can be so, for when the word *rijāl* (men) in the Qur'ān has been used for the jinn, as in Al-Jinn : 6, and when *nafar* can be used for the group of jinn, as in Al-Aḥqāf : 29, men and jinn both can be included metaphorically in the word *nās* also. But this view is wrong because the words *nās*, *ins* and *insān* are even lexically contrary in meaning to the word *jinn*. The actual meaning of *jinn* is hidden creation and jinn is called jinn because he is hidden from man's eye. On the contrary, the words *nās* and *ins* are spoken for *insān* (man) only on the basis that he is manifest and visible and perceptible. In Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ : 29, the word *ānasa* has been used in the meaning of *rā'a*, i.e. "the Prophet Moses saw a fire in the direction of *Tūr*." In Sūrah An-Nisā' : 6, the word *ānastum* has been used in the meaning of *aḥsastum* or *ra'aytum* (i.e. if you perceive or see that the orphans have become capable). Therefore, *nās* cannot apply to *jinn* lexically, and the correct meaning of the verse is: "From the evil of the whisperer who whispers evil into the hearts of men, whether he be from among the jinn or from the men themselves." In other words, whispering of evil is done by devils from among jinn as well as by devils from among men and the Prayer in this Sūrah has been taught to seek refuge from the evil of both. This meaning is supported by the Qur'ān as well as by the *Hadīth*. The Qur'ān says: "And so it has always been that We set against every Prophet enemies from among devils of men and devils of jinn, who have been inspiring one another with charming things to delude the minds." (Al-An'ām : 112)

And in the *Hadīth*, Imām Ahmad, Nasā'i, and Ibn Hibbān have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Dharr a tradition, saying: "I went before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), who was in

the Mosque. He said: Abū Dharr, have you performed the Prayer? I replied in the negative. He said: Arise and perform the Prayer. So, I performed the Prayer. The Holy Prophet said: O Abū Dharr, seek Allah's refuge from the devils of men and the devils of jinn. I asked: Are there devils among men also? O Messenger of Allah! He replied: Yes."



## CONCLUSION

I thank Allah, the Exalted, most sincerely that the difficult and exacting task of writing the *Tafhim al-Qur'an*, which I began in Muḥarram, A.H. 1361 (February, 1942), has come to completion today after 30 years and four months. This is entirely Allah's favour and beneficence that He blessed a humble servant of His with the grace to render this service to the cause of His Holy Book. Whatever is right and correct in it is because of Allah's guidance, and wherever I have made a mistake in the interpretation and explanation of the Qur'an, it is due to my own incorrect and unsound knowledge and understanding. But I thank God that I have not committed a mistake deliberately. Therefore, I hope from Allah's beneficence that He will forgive it; and if His servants have found this work of mine helpful in any way in attaining to guidance, He will make it a means of my forgiveness in the Hereafter. I also request the learned to point out my errors and mistakes. Whatever is proved wrong to me by argument, I will rectify it, if Allah so wills. I seek God's refuge that I should commit a mistake with regard to Allah's Book, or persist in a mistake, deliberately.

As is obvious from the name of this Book, my effort has been to help the common educated people to understand the Qur'an as I have understood it myself, to explain its real meaning and intention so that the people may reach its spirit, to dispel the doubts and suspicions, and to answer the questions which arise in the hearts on reading the Qur'an or only its translations, and to explain in detail the things which have been stated and mentioned only briefly in the Qur'an. In the beginning, it was not my purpose to go into the details; therefore, the notes in the first volume (Sūrah Al-Fatiḥah to Al-An'ām) remained very brief. Later, as the work progressed, I began to feel the need of writing more detailed notes. Consequently, the readers of the subsequent volumes now feel that the first volume has remained somewhat deficient. But an advantage of the repetition of themes in the Qur'an also is that since the theme whose explanation has remained deficient at one place has recurred also in the subsequent Sūrah, its further explanation becomes possible in

the notes to the subsequent Sūrahs. I hope that the people who do not remain content with reading the Qur'ān with the help of the *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* just once, would themselves feel when they read the whole book for the second time that the explanations of the later Sūrahs prove very helpful in understanding the opening Sūrahs.

LAHORE

ABUL A'LĀ

24 Rabī' ath-Thānī, 1392 A.H.

(7 June, 1972 A.D.)



# THE MEANING OF THE QUR'ĀN

Vol. XVI

Sūrah Al-A'la—Sūrah An-Nās

(ARABIC TEXT WITH TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY)

By  
S. ABUL A'LĀ MAUDŪDĪ

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'ABDUL 'AZIZ KAMĀL

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