

LXVII

AL-MULK

الملك

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LXVII

AL-MULK

الْمُلْك

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name *al-Mulk* from the very first sentence.

Period of Revelation

It could not be known from any authentic tradition when this Sūrah was revealed, but the subject-matter and the style indicate that it is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

In this Sūrah, on the one hand, the teachings of Islam have been introduced briefly, and, on the other, the people living in heedlessness have been aroused from their slumber in a most effective way. A characteristic of the earliest Sūrahs of the Makkan period is that they present the entire teachings of Islam and the object of the Holy Prophete's mission, not in detail, but briefly, so that they are assimilated by the people easily. Moreover, they are particularly directed to make the people shun heedlessness, to make them think, and to arouse their dormant conscience.

In the first five verses man has been made to realize that the universe in which he lives is a most well-organized and fortified kingdom in which he cannot detect any fault, any weakness or flaw, however hard he may try to probe. This kingdom has been brought from nothing into existence by Allah Almighty Himself and all the powers of controlling, administering and ruling it are also entirely in Allah's hand and His power is infinite. Besides, man has also been told that in this wise system he has not been created without a purpose, but he has been sent here for a test and in this test he can succeed only by his righteous deeds and conduct.

In vv. 6-11, dreadful consequences of disbelief which will appear in the Hereafter have been mentioned, and the people told that Allah, by sending His Prophets, has warned them of these consequences in this very world, as if to say: "Now, if you do not believe in what the Prophets say and correct your attitude and behaviour accordingly, in the Hereafter you will yourself have to admit that you really deserved the punishment that was being meted out to you."

In vv. 12-14, the truth that has been impressed on the minds is that the Creator cannot be unaware of His creation, as if to say: "He is aware of each open and hidden secret of yours, even of the innermost ideas of your hearts. Hence, the right basis of morality is that man should avoid evil, fearing the accountability of the unseen God, whether

in the world there is a power to take him to task for this or not, and whether in the world there is a possibility of being harmed by such a power or not. Those who adopt such a conduct in the world alone will deserve forgiveness and a rich reward in the Hereafter."

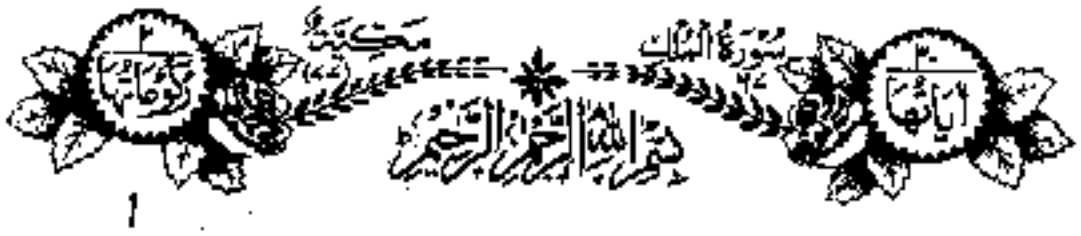
In vv. 15-23, making allusions, one after the other, to those common truths of daily occurrence, which man does not regard as worthy of much attention, he has been invited to consider them seriously. It has been said; "Look: the earth on which you move about with full satisfaction and peace of mind, and from which you obtain your sustenance has been subdued for you by Allah, otherwise this earth might at any time start shaking suddenly so as to cause your destruction, or a typhoon might occur, which may annihilate you completely. Look at the birds that fly above you; it is only Allah Who is sustaining them in the air. Look at your own means and resources: if Allah wills to inflict you with a scourge, none can save you from it; and if Allah wills to close the doors of sustenance on you, none can open them for you. These things are there to make you aware of the truth, but you see them like animals, which are unable to draw conclusions from observations, and you do not use your sight, hearing and minds which Allah has bestowed on you as men; that is why you do not see the right way."

In vv. 24-27, it has been said: "You have ultimately to appear before your God in any case. It is not for the Prophet to tell you the exact time and date of the event. His only duty is to warn you beforehand of its inevitable occurrence. Today you do not listen to him and demand that he should cause the event to occur and appear prematurely before you; but when it does occur, and you see it with your own eyes, you will then be astounded. Then, it will be said to you, 'This is the very thing you were calling to be hastened'."

In vv. 28-29 replies have been given to what the disbelievers of Makkah said against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and his Companions. They cursed the Holy Prophet and prayed for his and the believers' destruction. To this it has been said: "Whether those who call

you to the right way are destroyed, or shown mercy by Allah, how will their fate change your destiny? You should look after yourselves and consider who would save you if you were overtaken by the scourge of God? You regard those who believe in God and put their trust in Him as the misguided. A time will come when it will become evident as to who was misguided in actual truth.

In conclusion, the people have been asked this question and left to ponder over it, "If the water which has come out from the earth at some place in the desert or hill country of Arabia and upon which depends your whole life activity, should sink and vanish underground, who beside Allah can restore to you this life-giving water?"



تَبٰرَكَ الَّذِيْ بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرُ ۙ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ

الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيٰوةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ اَيُّكُمْ اَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۭ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْغَفُوْرُ ۙ

الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمٰوٰتٍ طِبَاقًا ۭ مَا تَرٰى فِيْ خَلْقِ الرَّحْمٰنِ مِنْ تَفٰوُتٍ ۭ

فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ ۙ هَلْ تَرٰى مِنْ فُطُوْرٍ ۝ ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ

اِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَّهُوَ حَسِيْرٌ ۝ وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاۗءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيْحَ وَ

جَعَلْنٰهَا رُجُوْمًا لِّلشَّيٰطِيْنِ وَاَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيْرِ ۝ وَلِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا

بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ ۭ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ۝ اِذَآ اُلْقُوْا فِيْهَا سَمِعُوْا لَهَا شَهِيْقًا

وَّهِيَ تَفُوْرُ ۝ تَكَادُ تَمَيَّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ ۭ كُلَّمَآ اُلْقِيَ فِيْهَا فَوْجٌ سَاَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَآ

اَلَمْ يَاْتِكُمْ نَذِيْرٌ ۝ قَالُوْا بَلٰى قَدْ جَاۗءَنَا نَذِيْرٌ ۙ فَكَذَّبْنَا وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ

اللّٰهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۖ اِنْ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ كَبِيْرٍ ۝ وَقَالُوْا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ اَوْ

نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِيْٓ اَصْحٰبِ السَّعِيْرِ ۝ فَاعْتَرَفُوْا بِذَنْۢبِهِمْ ۚ فَسُحْقًا لِّاَصْحٰبِ

LXVII
AL-MULK
الْمُلْك

Verses: 30

Revealed at Makkah.

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

Full of blessings is He[1] in Whose hand is the Kingdom of the Universe[2], and He has power over everything[3]; Who created death and life that He may try you to see which of you is best in deeds[4], and He is All-Mighty as well as All-Forgiving[5]; Who created seven heavens, one 1-4

above the other.[6] You will not see any fault in the creation of the Merciful.[7] Turn up your eyes: do you see any flaw[8] anywhere? Look up again and yet again: your look will return to you, disappointed, wearied.

5 And indeed We have adorned the nearest heaven[9] with magnificent lamps[10] and made them a means of driving away Satans.[11] For these satans We have prepared a blazing Fire.

6-11 For those who disbelieve in their Lord,[12] there is the torment of Hell, and it is an evil abode. When they are flung into it, they will hear its roaring;[13] and it will be boiling up, as though bursting with rage. Every time a crowd is cast into it, its keepers will ask them, "Did not a warner come to you?"[14] They will answer, "Yes, a warner did come to us, but we belied him and said, 'Allah has not sent down anything: you are in grave error'!"[15] And they will add, "Had we only listened or understood,[16] we would not now be among the dwellers of the blazing Fire." Thus will they confess their own sin.[17] Damned be the dwellers of Hell!

---

1. *Tabāraka* is a superlative from *barkat*. *Barkat* comprehends the meanings of exaltation and greatness, abundance and plentifulness, permanence and multiplicity of virtues and excellences. When the superlative *tabāraka* is formed from it, it gives the meaning that Allah is infinitely noble and great; He is superior to everything beside Himself in His essence and attributes and works; His beneficence is infinite, and His excellences are permanent and everlasting. (For further explanation, see E.N. 43 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 14 of Al-Mu'minūn E.N.'s 1 and 19 of Al-Furqān).

2. As the word al-Mulk has been used definitely, it cannot be taken in any limited meaning. Inevitably it would imply sovereignty over everything that exists in the Universe. "In Whose hand is the Kingdom" does not mean that He has physical hands, but that He is possessor of all power and authority and no one else has any share in it.

3. That is, He can do whatever He wills: nothing can frustrate or hinder Him from doing what He pleases.

4. That is, the object of giving life to men in the world and causing their death is to test them to see which of them is best in deeds. Allusion has been made in this brief sentence to a number of truths: (1) That life and death are given by Allah; no one else can grant life nor cause death; (2) that neither the life nor the death of a creation like man, which has been given the power to do both good and

evil, is purposeless; the Creator has created him in the world for the test: life is for him the period of the test and death means that the time allotted for the test has come to an end; (3) that for the sake of this very test the Creator has given every man an opportunity for action, so that he may do good or evil in the world and practically show what kind of a man he is; (4) that the Creator alone will decide who has done good or evil; it is not for us to propose a criterion for the good and the evil deeds but for Almighty Allah; therefore, whoever desires to get through the test, will have to find out what is the criterion of a good deed in His sight; the fifth point is contained in the meaning of the test itself, that is, every person will be recompensed according to his deeds, for if there was no reward or punishment the test would be meaningless.

5. This has two meanings and both are implied here: (1) That He is Almighty: in spite of being dominant over all His creatures, He is Merciful and Forgiving for them, not tyrannous and cruel; and (2) that He has full power to punish the evildoers: no one can escape His punishment; but He is forgiving for him who feels penitent, refrains from evil and asks for His forgiveness.

6. For explanation, see E.N. 34 of Al-Baqarah, E.N 2 of Ar-Ra'd, E.N. 8 of Al-Hijr, E.N. 113 of Al-Hajj, E.N. 15 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 5 of As-Sāāffāt, E.N. 90 of Al-Mu'min.

7. Literally, *tafāwut* is disproportion: two things being out of accord and agreement with each other. So, the Divine words mean: "You will not see any indiscipline, any disorder and discordance anywhere in the universe, there is nothing disjointed and out of proportion in this world created by Allah: all its parts are well connected and in perfect harmony and coordination.

8. The word *futūr* means a crack, rift, fissure, or a thing's being split and broken. The verse means to say that the whole universe is so closely well-knit and everything in it, from a particle on the earth to the huge galaxies, so well connected and coherent that the continuity of the system of the universe seems to break nowhere, however hard one may try to probe and investigate. (For further explanation, see E.N. 8 of Sūrah Qāf).

9. "The nearest heaven": the heaven the stars and planets of which can be seen with the naked eye; the objects beyond that which can be seen only through telescopes are the distant heaven; and the heavens still farther away are those which have not yet been seen even with telescopes.

10. The word *masābīh* in the original has been used as a common noun, and therefore, automatically gives the meaning of the lamp's being splendid and glorious. It means: "We have not created this universe dark, dismal and desolate,

but have decked and decorated it with stars, the glory and grandeur of which at night strike man with amazement."

11. This does not mean that the stars themselves are pelted at the Satans, nor that the meteorites shoot out only to drive away the Satans, but it means that the countless meteorites which originate from the stars and wander in space at tremendous speeds and which also fall to the earth in a continuous shower prevent the Satans of the earth from ascending to the heavens. Even if they try to ascend heavenward these meteorites drive them away. This thing has been mentioned here because the Arabs believed about the soothsayers, and this also was the claim made by the soothsayers themselves, that the Satans were under their control, or that they had a close contact with them, and through them they received news of the unseen, and thus, could foretell the destinies of the people. That is why at several places in the Qur'ān, it has been stated that there is absolutely no possibility of the Satans' ascending to the heavens and bringing news of the unseen. (For explanation, see E.N.'s 9-12 of Al-Hijr, E.N.'s 6, 7 of As-Sāāffāt).

As for the truth about meteorites, man's information in this regard is still without a scientific basis. However, the theory which seems best to account for all the facts known today and the information gathered from the examination of the meteorites fallen on the earth, is that meteorites originate from the disintegration of one or more planets and wander in space and sometimes fall to the earth under its gravitational pull. (See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. XV, under "Meteorites").

12. That is, the fate of all those, whether men or Satans, who disbelieve in their Lord. (For the explanation of the meaning of disbelieving in the Lord (*Rabb*), see E.N 161 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 178 of An-Nisā', E.N. 39 of Al-Kahf, E.N. 3 of Al-Mu'min).

13. The word *shahīq* is used for producing a cry like the ass's braying. The sentence may also mean that it could be the sound of Hell itself, as well as that it would be the sound coming from Hell, where the people already flung into it would be screaming and crying. This second meaning is supported by Sūrah Hūd: 106, where it has been said: "Therein they will pant and hiss (because of thirst)", and the first meaning is confirmed by Al-Furqān: 12, which says: "When the Hell will see them from afar, they will hear the sounds of its raging and roaring." On this basis, the correct meaning is that it would be the noise made both by Hell and by the dwellers of Hell.

14. The real nature of this question will not be of a question that the keepers of Hell would like to ask them whether a warner from Allah had come to them or not, but the object would be to make them realize that no injustice had been done to them by casting them into Hell. They would try to make them confess

that Allah had not kept them uninformed and unwarned: He had sent the Prophets to them; He had informed them of the truth and of the Right Way; He had warned them that if they followed a way other than the Right Way, it would lead them to Hell, in which they had been cast. But they had not listened to the Prophets. Hence, they rightly deserved the punishment which was being meted out to them at that time.

This thing has been pointed out over and over again in the Qur'ān that the test for which Allah has sent man in the world is not being conducted by keeping man absolutely unaware and uninformed of the requirements of the test only to see whether he found the right way by himself or not; but Allah has made the most appropriate arrangements that could possibly be made of guiding him to the Right Way, and it is that He has raised the Prophets and sent down the Books. Now the test of man lies in this whether he accepts the Prophets and the Books brought by them and adopts the straight way, or turns away from them to follow his own desires, whims and speculations. Thus, the Prophethood, in fact, is Allah's argument which He has established against man and on its acceptance or rejection depends his whole future life. No one, after the appointment of the Prophets, can present the excuse that he remained unaware of the Truth, or that he has been caught and put to the hard test unawares, or that he is being punished while he was innocent. This theme has been presented in countless different ways in the Qur'ān; for instance, see Al-Baqarah: 213, and E.N. 230 on it; An-Nisā': 41-42, 165 and E N.'s 64 and 208; Al-An'ām: 130-131, and E.N.'s 98-100; Banī Isrā'īl: 15 and E.N. 17; Ṭā Hā: 134; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 47, 59, 65 and E.N.'s 66, 83; Fāṭir: 37; Al-Mu'min: 50 and E.N. 66.

15. That is, "Not only you but the people who have believed in and followed you also are misguided and lost in grave error."

16. "Had we only listened or understood": "Had we listened to the Prophets with attention as seekers after Truth or used our intellect to understand what actually was the message they were presenting before us." Here listening has been given priority over understanding, the reason being that the pre-requisite of obtaining guidance is to listen to what the Prophet teaches (or to read if it is in the written form, like a seeker after Truth). To ponder over it in an attempt to understand the truth is secondary. Without the Prophet's guidance man cannot by himself reach the Truth directly by using his intellect and common sense.

17. The word *dhanb* (sin) has been used in the singular. It means that the real sin because of which they became worthy of Hell was to belie the Messengers and refuse to obey them; all other sins are its consequences.

السَّعِيْرِ ﴿١١﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَيْبِ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّ أَجْرٌ كَبِيْرٌ ﴿١٢﴾
وَ أَسِرُّوْا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوِ اجْهَرُوْا بِهٖ ؕ إِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿١٣﴾ أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ
خَلَقَ ؕ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيْفُ الْخَبِيْرُ ﴿١٤﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُوْلًا فَامْشُوْا
فِيْ مَنَاكِبِهَا وَ كُلُوْا مِنْ رِّزْقِهٖ ؕ وَ إِلَيْهِ النُّشُوْرُ ﴿١٥﴾ ءَأَمِنْتُمْ مَّنْ فِي السَّمَآءِ
أَنْ يَّخْسِفَ بِكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُوْرُ ﴿١٦﴾ أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مَّنْ فِي السَّمَآءِ أَنْ
يُّرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ؕ فَسَتَعْلَمُوْنَ كَيْفَ نَذِيْرِ ﴿١٧﴾ وَ لَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِيْنَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيْرِ ﴿١٨﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صٰٓفّٰتٍ وَّ
يَقْبِضْنَ ۛ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا الرَّحْمٰنُ ؕ إِنَّهٗ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍۢ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿١٩﴾ أَمَّنْ هٰذَا
الَّذِيْ هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَّكُمْ يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ الرَّحْمٰنِ ؕ إِنِ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ إِلَّا فِيْ
غُرُوْرٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَمَّنْ هٰذَا الَّذِيْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهٗ ؕ بَلْ لَّجُّوْا فِيْ عُتُوٍّ وَّ
نُفُوْرٍ ﴿٢١﴾ أَفَمَنْ يَّمْشِيْ مُكِبًّا عَلٰى وَجْهِهٖٓ أَهْدٰٓى أَمَّنْ يَّمْشِيْ سَوِيًّا عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ
مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِيْٓ أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَ الْأَبْصَارَ وَ الْأَفْـِٕدَةَ ؕ
قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِيْ ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾
وَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى هٰذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ؗ
وَ إِنَّمَآ أَنَا نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ زُلْفَةً سِيْٓـَٔتْ وُجُوْهُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَ
قِيْلَ هٰذَا الَّذِيْ كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تَدَّعُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكَنِيَ اللّٰهُ وَ مَنْ
مَّعِيَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا ۙ فَمَنْ يُّجِيْرُ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيْمٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمٰنُ
اٰمَنَّا بِهٖ وَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا ۚ فَسَتَعْلَمُوْنَ مَنْ هُوَ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ
إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَآؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَنْ يَّأْتِيْكُمْ بِمَآءٍ مَّعِيْنٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

Those who fear their Lord unseen,[18] for them is forgiveness and a rich reward.[19] Whether you speak secretly or aloud it is alike for Allah): He even knows the secrets of the hearts.[20] Would He not know, who has created?[21] He is the knower of subtleties[22] and is All-Aware. 12-14

He it is Who has subdued the earth to you. So walk about on its chest and eat of God's provisions:[23] to Him you shall return on Resurrection.[24] Do you feel secure that He Who is in the heaven[25] would not cause you to sink underground, and the earth may start rocking suddenly? Do you feel secure that He Who is in the heaven would not send a whirlwind charged with stones on you?[26] Then you shall know how terrible was My warning![27] And those who have gone before them also belied. Then see how severe was My chastisement![28] Do they not see the birds above them, spreading their wings and closing them? None is upholding them but the Merciful.[29] He it is Who watches over everything.[30] Tell, what army is there with you that can help you against the Merciful.[31] The fact is that the disbelievers are lost in utter delusion. Or tell, who is there to provide for you if the Merciful should withhold His provision? In fact, these people persist in rebellion and aversion from the Truth. Just consider: Is he who is walking prone on his face[32] better guided or he who is walking upright on a smooth road? Say to them, "Allah it is Who created you, and gave you the faculties of hearing and sight and gave you the hearts to think and understand, but you are seldom grateful."[33] 15-23

Say to them: Allah it is Who has dispersed you in the earth, and to Him you shall be gathered together.[34] They say, "When will this promise be fulfilled if what you say be true?"[35] Say, "The knowledge of it is with Allah, I am only a plain warner,"[36] Then, when they see it close at hand, the faces of all those who disbelieve, shall be distorted,[37] and at that time it will be said to them, "This is the same that you were calling for." 24-27

Say to them, "Have you ever considered that even if Allah should destroy me and those with me, or should bestow mercy upon us, who will save the disbelievers from the painful torment?"[38] Say to them, "He is the All-Merciful: In Him we have believed and in Him have we put our trust.[39] Soon you will know who is involved in grave error." Say to them, "Have you ever considered that if the water of 28-30

your wells should sink down into the earth, who would then restore to you the running springs of water?"[40]

---

18. This is the real basis of morality in religion. A person's refraining from an evil because it is an evil in his personal opinion, or because the world regards it as an evil, or because its commission is likely to bring loss in the world, or because it may entail a punishment by a worldly power, is a very flimsy basis for morality. A man's personal opinion may be wrong, he may regard a good thing as bad and a bad thing as good because of some philosophy of his own. In the first place, the worldly standards of good and evil have never been the same: they have been changing from time to time. No universal and eternal standard in the moral philosophies is found today, nor has it ever been found before. The fear of worldly loss also does not provide a firm foundation for morality. The person who avoids an evil because he fears the loss that may result from it for himself, cannot keep himself from committing it when there is no fear of incurring such a loss. Likewise, the danger of the punishment by a worldly power also is not something which can turn a person into a gentleman. Everybody knows that no worldly power is knower of both the seen and the unseen. Many crimes can be committed unseen and unobserved. Then, there are many possible devices by which one can escape the punishment of every worldly power; and the laws made by a worldly power also do not cover all evils. Most evils are such as do not come within the purview of the mundane laws, whereas they are even worse than the evils which they regard as punishable. That is why, the Religion of Truth has raised the edifice of morality on the basis that one should refrain from an evil in fear of the unseen God Who sees man under all conditions, from Whose grasp man cannot escape in any way, Who has given man an all-pervading, universal and everlasting criterion of good and evil. To forsake evil and adopt good only out of fear of Him is the real good which is commendable in religion. Apart from this, if a man refrains from committing evil for any other reason or adopts acts which in view of their external form are regarded as good acts, his these moral acts will not be worth any merit and value in the Hereafter, for they are like a building which has been built on sand.

19. That is, there are two inevitable results of fearing God unseen: (1) That whatever errors and sins one will have committed because of human weaknesses, will be forgiven provided these were not committed because of fearlessness of God; and (2) that whatever good acts a man performs on the basis of this belief, he will be rewarded richly for them.

20. The address is to all human beings, whether they are believers or unbelievers. For the believer it contains the admonition that while living his life in the world he should always remember that not only his open and hidden deeds but

even his secret intentions and innermost thoughts are not hidden from Allah; and for the unbeliever the warning that he may do whatever he may please fearless of God, but nothing that he does can remain un-noticed and unseen by Him.

21. Another translation can be: "Would He not know His own creatures?" In the original *man khalaqa* has been used, which may mean: "Who has created" as well as "whom He has created." In both cases the meaning remains the same. This is the argument for what has been said in the preceding sentence. That is, how is it possible that the Creator should be unaware of His creation? The creation may remain unaware of itself, but the Creator cannot be unaware of it. He has made every vein of your body, every fibre of your heart and brain. You breathe because He enables you to breathe, your limbs function because He enables them to function, How then can anything of yours remain hidden from Him?

22. The word *Latif* as used in the original means the One Who works in imperceptible ways as well as the One Who knows the hidden truths and realities.

23. That is, "This earth has not become subdued for you of its own accord, and the provisions also that you are eating have not become available here by themselves. but Allah has so arranged it by His wisdom and power that your life became possible here and this splendid globe became so peaceful that you are moving about on it with full peace of mind, and it has become such a vast table spread with food that it contains endless and limitless provisions for your sustenance. If you are not lost in heedlessness and look about yourself intelligently you will find how much wisdom underlies the making of this earth habitable for you and arranging in it immeasureable stores of provisions for you." (For explanation, see E.N.'s 73, 74, 81 of Sūrah An-Naml, E.N.'s 29, 32 of Ya Sīn, E.N.'s 90, 91 of Al-Mu'min, E.N. 7 of Az-Zukhruf, E,N. 7 of Al-Jāthiyah, E,N. 18 of Sūrah Qāf.)

24. That is, "While you move about on the earth and eat of what Allah has provided for you here, you should not forget that ultimately you have to appear before God one day."

25. This does not mean that Allah lives in the heavens, but it has been so said because man naturally looks up to the heaven whenever he wants to turn to Allah, raises his hands heavenward in prayer and implores Allah turning his eyes up to heaven whenever he finds himself helpless in an affliction. Then whenever a calamity befalls him suddenly, he says it has descended from heaven; whenever something unusual happens, he says it has come from heaven; and he calls the Books revealed by Allah as heavenly Books. Accordingly to a tradition in Abū Da'ūd, a person came before the Holy Prophet with a black slave-girl and said: "It has become obligatory on me to set a slave free; can I set this slave-girl free?" The

Holy Prophet asked the slave-girl, "Where is Allah?" She pointed heavenward with her finger. The Holy Prophet asked, "Who am I?" She first pointed towards him and then towards the heaven, by which she obviously meant to say: "You have come from Allah." Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "Set her free; she is a believer." (A story closely resembling this has been narrated in Mu'wattā, Muslim and Nasā'ī also). About Hadrat Khawla bint Tha'labah, Hadrat 'Umar once said to the people: "She is the lady whose complaint was heard above the seven heavens" (In E.N. 2 of Sūrah al-Mujādalah, we have given full details concerning this). All this clearly shows that it is natural with man that whenever he thinks of God, his mind turns to the heaven above and not to the earth below. In view of this very thing the words *man fis-samā'*. (He Who is in the heaven) have been used about Allah. There is no room here for any doubt that the Qur'ān regards Allah Almighty as living in the heaven. In fact, there cannot be any basis for this doubt, for in the very beginning of this Sūrah Al-Mulk, it has been stated: "He Who created seven heavens, one above the other", and in Al-Baqarah it has been said "You will face Allah in whatever direction you turn your face." (v : 115)

26. The object is to impress this: " Your very survival and well-being on the earth are at all times dependent upon Allah Almighty's grace and bounty: you are not strutting about on this earth at will by your own power: you are under obligation only to Allah's protection for each moment of your life that you are passing here, otherwise Allah at any moment may cause such an earthquake to occur as may make this very earth to become your grave instead of the cradle that it is, or may cause a windstorm to blow razing all your towns and settlements to the ground."

27. "My warning": the warning that was being given through the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and the Qur'ān to the disbelievers of Makkah to the effect: "If you do not refrain from your disbelief and polytheism and do not accept the message of *Tauhid* being given to you, you will be overtaken by the scourge of God."

28. The allusion is to the communities who had belied the Messengers, who had come to them previously and consequently been afflicted with Divine punishment.

29. That is, each bird that flies in the air, does so in the protection of the All-Merciful God. He it is Who has given to each bird the form and structure by which it became able to fly; He it is Who has taught each bird the method to fly; He it is Who has made the air obey the laws by which it became possible for the heavier than air bodies to fly in it; and He it is Who upholds every bird in the air; otherwise the moment Allah withdraws His protection from it, it drops to the ground.

30. That is, this is not confined only to birds, but whatever exists in the world, exists because of Allah's keeping and guardianship. He alone provides the means necessary for the existence of everything, and He alone keeps watch that everything created by Him is provided with the necessities of life.

31. Another translation can be: "Who is there beside the Merciful, who comes to your rescue as your army?" The translation that we have adopted in the text above has relevance to the following sentence, and this second to the preceding discourse.

32 "Walking prone on his face": walking with face turned down like the cattle on the same track on which someone put him.

33. That is, "Allah had made you men, not cattle. You were not meant to follow blindly whatever error and deviation you found prevailing in the world, without considering for a moment whether the way you had adopted was right or wrong. You had not been given these ears that you may refuse to listen to the one who tries to distinguish the right from the wrong for you, and may persist in whatever false notions you already had in your mind; you had not been given these eyes that you may follow others like the blind and may not bother to see whether the signs scattered around you in the world testified to the Unity of God, which the Messenger of God is preaching, or whether the system of the universe is Godless, or is being run by many gods simultaneously. Likewise, you had also not been given this knowledge and intelligence that you may give up thinking and understanding to others and may adopt every crooked way that was enforced by somebody in the world, and may not use your own intellect to see whether it was right or wrong. Allah had blessed you with knowledge and intelligence, sight and hearing, so that you may recognize the truth, but you are being ungrateful to Him in that you are employing these faculties for every other object than the one for which these had been granted." (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 72, 73 of An-Naml, E.N.'s 75, 76 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N.'s 17, 18 of As-Sajdah, E.N. 31 of Al-Ahqāf).

34. That is, "After being resurrected from death, you will be gathered together from every corner of the earth and presented before Allah."

35. They did not ask this question in order to know the time and date of Resurrection so that if they were told the year, the month, the day and time of its occurrence, they would accept it. But, in fact, they thought that Resurrection was impossible, and its occurrence remote from reason, and they asked this question in order to have an excuse for denying it. They meant to say, "When will this strange story of Resurrection and gathering together, that you are telling us, materialize? What for has it been put off? Why don't you make it appear forthwith so that we

are assured of it?" In this connection, one should understand that one can be certain of Resurrection only by rational arguments, and these have been elaborated at many places in the Qur'ān. As for the date of its occurrence only an ignorant person could raise such a question about it, for even if it is told, it does not make any difference. The unbeliever would say: "Well, when it does occur on the date you tell, I shall then believe in it; how can I believe today that it will actually occur on that very day?" (For further explanation, see E.N. 63 of Sūrah Luqmān, E.N. 116 of Al-Ahzāb? E.N.'s 5, 48 of Sabā' E.N. 45 of Yā Sīn).

36. That is, "This I know that it will certainly come, and knowing this much only is enough for warning the people before its actual occurrence. As for the question when it will actually come, the knowledge of it is with Allah, not with me, and there is no need of this knowledge for administering the warning. This can be better understood by an example. As to the exact time when a person will die, it is only known to Allah; however, all know that everyone has to die one day. Our this knowledge is enough that we may warn a heedless friend of ours that he should look after himself and his interests before death. For this warning it is not necessary to know the exact day on which he will die.

37, That is, they will be in the same agony as is suffered by the criminal who is being taken to the gallows.

38. When the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) started his mission in Makkah, and the members of the different clans of Quraish began to embrace Islam, the people of every house started cursing him and his Companions. They started practicing magic and charms on him to cause his death, even devising plots to kill him. At this, it was said: "Say to them: what will it profit you whether we perish or we live by the grace of God? You should worry for yourselves as to how you will save yourselves from the punishment of Allah?"

39. That is, "We have believed in God, and you are denying Him; we have put our trust in Him, and you have put your trust in yourself, your own resources and false deities besides Allah; therefore, only we deserve to be shown mercy by Allah, not you".

40. That is, "Has another besides Allah the power to restore these springs of water to you? If none else has this power, and you know fully well that none has it, then who is worthy of worship: God or your false deities, who do not have the power to restore them? Then ask your own selves as to who is misled and misguided: those who believe in One God, or those who believe in many gods'."

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXVIII

AL-QALAM

القَلَم

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah is called *Nūn* as well as *Al-Qalam*, the words with which it begins.

Period of Revelation

This too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah, but its subject-matter shows that it was sent down at the time when opposition to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had grown very harsh and tyrannical.


LXVIII
AL-QALAM
القَلَم

Theme and Subject-Matter

It consists of three themes: Replies to the opponents' objections, administration of warning and admonition to them, and exhortation to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to patience and constancy.

At the outset, the Holy Prophet has been addressed, to the effect: "The disbelievers call you a madman, whereas the Book that you are presenting and the sublime conduct that you practise, are by themselves sufficient to refute their false accusations. Soon they will see as to who was mad and who was sane; therefore, do not at all yield to the din of opposition being kicked up against you, for all this is actually meant to cow you and make you resort to a compromise with them."

Then, in order to enlighten the common people the character of a prominent man from among the opponents, whom the people of Makkah fully well recognized, has been presented, without naming him. At that time, the Holy Prophet's pure and sublime conduct was before them, and every discerning eye could also see what sort of character and morals were possessed by the chiefs of Makkah, who were leading the opposition against him.

Then, in vv. 17-33, the parable of the owners of a garden has been presented, who after having been blessed by Allah turned ungrateful to Him, and did not heed the admonition of the best man among them when it was given to them. Consequently, they were deprived of the blessing and they realized this, when all they had lay devastated. With this parable the people of Makkah have been warned to the effect: "With the appointment of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to Prophethood, you, O people of Makkah, too, have been put to a test similar to the one to which the owners of the garden had been put. If you do not listen to him, you too will be afflicted with a punishment in the world, and the punishment of the Hereafter is far greater."

Then, in vv. 34-47 continuously, the disbelievers have been admonished, in which the address sometimes turns to them directly and sometimes they are warned through the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). A summary of what has been said in this regard is this: Well-being in the Hereafter inevitably belongs to those who spend their lives in the world in full consciousness of God. It is utterly against reason that the obedient servants should meet in the Hereafter the same fate as the

guilty. There is absolutely no basis of the disbelievers' misunderstanding that God will treat them in the manner they choose for themselves, whereas they have no guarantee for this. Those who are being called upon to bow before God in the world and they refuse to do so, would be unable to prostrate themselves on the Day of Resurrection even if they wanted to do so, and thus would stand disgraced and condemned. Having denied the Qur'ān they cannot escape Divine punishment. The rein they are being given, has deluded them. They think that since they are not being punished in spite of their denial, they must be on the right path, whereas they are following the path of ruin. They have no reasonable ground for opposing the Messenger, for he is a preacher without any vested interest: he is not asking any reward of them for himself, and they cannot either make the claim that they knew with certainty that he is not a true Messenger, nor that what he says is false.

In conclusion, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been exhorted to the effect: "Bear with patience the hardships that you may have to face in the way of preaching the Faith till Allah's judgement arrives, and avoid the impatience which caused suffering and affliction to the Prophet Jonah (peace be on him)."

سُوْرَةُ الْقَلَمِ (٦٨) مَكِّيَّةٌ (٢) رُكُوْعَاتُهَا (١) اٰيَاتُهَا (٥٢)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

نٓ وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُوْنَ ﴿١﴾ مَآ اَنْتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ بِمَجْنُوْنٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَاِنَّ لَكَ
لَاَجْرًا غَيْرَ مَمْنُوْنٍ ﴿٣﴾ وَاِنَّكَ لَعَلٰى خُلُقٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٤﴾ فَسَتُبْصِرُ وَيُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾
بِاَيِّيْكُمُ الْمَفْتُوْنُ ﴿٦﴾ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ
بِالْمُهْتَدِيْنَ ﴿٧﴾ فَلَا تُطِعِ الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾ وَدُّوْا لَوْ تُدْهِنُ فَيُدْهِنُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَلَا
تُطِعْ كُلَّ حَلَّافٍ مَّهِيْنٍ ﴿١٠﴾ هَمَّازٍ مَّشَّآءٍ بِنَمِيْمٍ ﴿١١﴾ مَّنَّاعٍ لِّلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ اَثِيْمٍ ﴿١٢﴾
عُتُلٍّ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ زَنِيْمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ اَنْ كَانَ ذَا مَالٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ اِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِ اٰيٰتُنَا
قَالَ اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ سَنَسِمُهٗ عَلَى الْخُرْطُوْمِ ﴿١٦﴾ اِنَّا بَلَوْنٰهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَآ
اَصْحٰبَ الْجَنَّةِ اِذْ اَقْسَمُوْا لَيَصْرِمُنَّهَا مُصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا يَسْتَثْنُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَطَافَ
عَلَيْهَا طَآئِفٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ وَهُمْ نَآئِمُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ فَاَصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيْمِ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَتَنَادَوْا
مُصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ اَنِ اغْدُوْا عَلٰى حَرْثِكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰرِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَانْطَلَقُوْا وَهُمْ
يَتَخَافَتُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ اَنْ لَّا يَدْخُلَنَّهَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّسْكِيْنٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَّغَدَوْا عَلٰى حَرْدٍ
قٰدِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَلَمَّا رَاَوْهَا قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا لَضَآلُّوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُوْمُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ قَالَ
اَوْسَطُهُمْ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ لَّكُمْ لَوْلَا تُسَبِّحُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قَالُوْا سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّنَآ اِنَّا كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾
فَاَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ يَّتَلَاوَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ قَالُوْا يٰوَيْلَنَآ اِنَّا كُنَّا طٰغِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ عَسٰى
رَبُّنَآ اَنْ يُّبْدِلَنَا خَيْرًا مِّنْهَآ اِنَّآ اِلٰى رَبِّنَا رٰغِبُوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ كَذٰلِكَ الْعَذَابُ وَلَعَذَابُ
الْاٰخِرَةِ اَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ اِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنّٰتِ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٣٤﴾
اَفَنَجْعَلُ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ كَالْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ اَمْ لَكُمْ كِتٰبٌ

LXVIII

AL-QALAM

القَلَم

Verses: 52 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Nun. By the Pen and by that which the writers are writing,[1] you are not, by the grace of your Lord, mad.[2] And surely you have a reward that shall never end,[3] and surely you are exalted to a high and noble character.[4] Soon you shall see as well as they, which of you is afflicted with madness. Your Lord best knows those who have strayed from His Way and He best knows also those who are rightly guided. Therefore, do not at all yield to the beliers of the Truth. They indeed wish that you should compromise a little, then they also would compromise.[5] Do not at all yield to any mean swearer of many oaths,[6] who is a slanderer and a backbiter, a hinderer of good[7] and a transgressor, wicked and oppressive,[8] and above all, ignoble by birth,[9] only because he has abundance of wealth and children.[10] When Our Revelations are recited to him, he says, "These are tales of the ancient times." Soon We shall brand him on the snout.[11] 1-16

We have tried them (the people of Makkah) just as we had tried the owners of a certain garden,[12] when they swore that they would surely pluck the fruit of their garden next morning, and they did not make any exception.[13] But while they lay asleep at night, a calamity from your Lord visited the garden and it became as though it had already been reaped. In the morning they called out to one another, saying: "Go forth early to your tilth[14] if you would pluck fruit." So they set out, whispering to one another, "Let no needy man approach you in the garden today." They hurried off early (to their garden) with the resolve not to give away anything[15] as though they had the power (to pluck the fruit). But when they saw the garden, they said, "We have lost our way!—Nay, but we have been left 17-33

destitute!"[16] The best man among them said, "Did I not tell you, 'Why do you not glorify (Allah)"?"[17] They cried out, "Glorified is our Lord: we were indeed sinners!" Then they began to blame one another.[18] At last, they said, "Alas for us! Indeed we had become rebellious. It may well be that our Lord will give us in exchange a better garden than this: we turn to our Lord." Such is the torment, and the torment of the Hereafter is far greater. Would that they knew this!

34-36 Surely[19] for the Godfearing there are blissful Gardens with their Lord. Shall We then treat the obedient as We treat the guilty? What has happened to you: how ill you judge.[20]

---

1. The great commentator Mujāhid says that by pen here is meant the Pen with which the Qur'ān was being written down. From this it automatically follows that that which was being written implies the Holy Qur'ān itself.

2. That is for which an oath has been sworn by the Pen and by the Book. It means that this Qur'ān which is being inscribed by the hands of the writers of Revelation, is by itself enough to refute the slander of the disbelievers who say that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) is, God forbid, a madman. Before his claim to the Prophethood, the people of Makkah looked upon him as the best of their men and trusted his honesty, intelligence and sagacity. But when he started reciting the Qur'ān before them they began to call him a madman. This meant that the Qur'ān itself in their sight was the cause because of which they accused him of madness; Therefore, it was said: "The Qur'ān by itself is a sufficient proof for the refutation of this slander. The presentation of this highly eloquent Revelation which consists of sublime themes, is an argument which proves that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has been especially favoured by Allah, and not an argument which might be used to prove that he has, God forbid, gone mad." Here, one should remember that although the address apparently is directed to the Holy Prophet, yet the real object is to nail the calumny of the disbelievers. Therefore, no one should have the doubt that this verse was sent down only to assure the Holy Prophet that he was not mad. Obviously, the Holy Prophet himself had no such doubt for removing which he might have stood in need of such an assurance. The object was to tell the disbelievers, as if to say: "The Qur'ān because of which you are calling the one presenting it a madman, is by itself an argument that your accusation is false." (For further explanation' see E.N. 22 of Sūrah At-Tūr).

3. That is, "You will get an unlimited and continuous reward, for although you have to hear discouraging and disturbing things in response to the efforts that

you are making for the instruction and guidance of the people, yet you are steadfastly performing your Mission of calling them to the Right Way."

4. Here, this sentence gives two meanings: (1) "That you stand exalted to a high and noble character; that is why you are enduring all these hardships in your mission of guiding the people to the Right Way, otherwise a man of weak character could not have done so;" and (2) "that besides the Qur'ān, your high and noble character also is a clear proof that the accusation of madness that the disbelievers bring against you is absolutely false, for high morals and madness cannot co-exist in one and the same person." A madman is he whose balance of mind is upset, who has lost his temperamental equilibrium. Contrary to this, the high morals of a person testify that he is a right-minded and sound-natured person, who possesses perfect temperamental equilibrium. The people of Makkah were not unaware of the morals and character possessed by the Holy Messenger of Allah. Therefore, it was enough just to make a reference to them so that every reasonable man of Makkah was made to think how shameless were those people who were calling a man of such sublime morals and character a madman. Their absurd conduct was not at all harmful for the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) but for themselves, for maddened in their craze for opposition they were saying such a thing about him which could not be regarded as credible by any man of understanding. The same also is the case with those men of knowledge and scholarship, who in the modern time are accusing the Holy prophet (upon whom be peace) of having fits of madness and epilepsy. The Qur'ān is available everywhere in the world and the Holy Prophet's life also exists in the written form in entire detail. Every person can see it for himself what a foolish and meaningless thing is being uttered in their blind enmity by those who regard the man who brought this unique and matchless Book and who possessed such sublime morals and character as a mentally deranged person.

The best description of the Holy Prophet's character has been given by Hadrat 'Ā'ishah in her statement: *"Kāna khuluqu-hul-Qur'ān:* the Qur'ān was his character." Imām Ahmad, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd. Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Dārimī and Ibn Jarīr have cited, with a little variation in wording, this saying with several chains of transmitters. This means that the Holy Prophet had not merely presented the teaching of the Qur'ān before the world but also given its practical demonstration by his personal example. Whatever was enjoined in the Qur'ān was acted upon practically by himself in the first instance; whatever was forbidden in it was shunned and avoided by himself most of all. His own self was characterised most of all by the moral qualities which were declared as sublime by it, and his own self was most free from those qualities which were declared as abhorrent and reprehensible by it. In another tradition Hadrat 'Ā'ishah has stated: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) never hit a servant, never raised his hand on a

woman, never used his hand to kill a person outside the battlefield, never avenged himself on anyone for an injury caused unless someone violated a sanctity enjoined by Allah and he avenged it for the sake of Allah. His practice was that whenever he had to choose between two things, he would choose the easier one unless it was a sin; and if it was a sin he would keep away from it most of all." (Musnad Ahmad). Hadrat Anas says: "I served the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for ten years. He never did so much as express even a slight disgust over what I did or said: he never asked why I had done what I had done, and never inquired why I had not done what I had not done." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

5. That is, "If you slackened a little in your propagation of Islam, they also would slacken in their opposition to you. Or, if you became inclined to effect some changes in your Faith to suit these people, they too would effect a compromise with you."

6. The word *mahīn* is used for a contemptible, degraded and mean person. This is indeed a necessary quality of a person who swears many oaths. He swears an oath for every minor thing because he himself has the feeling that the people take him for a liar and would not believe him until he swore an oath. For this reason he is not only degraded in his own eyes but commands no respect in society either.

7. *Khayr* in Arabic is used both for wealth and for good. If it is taken in the meaning of wealth, the meaning would be that he is miserly and stingy; he would not even spend a farthing on anyone; and if *khayr* is taken in the meaning of goodness and virtue, it would mean that he creates a hindrance in every good work as well as that he is very active in hindering the people from accepting Islam.

8. The word *'utul* is used for a person who is stout and strong and greedy in eating and drinking and is also ill-mannered, quarrelsome and cruel at the same time.

9. The word *zanīm* is used to describe a person of illegitimate birth, who does not, in fact, belong to a family but has joined it. Sa'īd bin Jubair and Sha'bī say that this word is used for a person who is notorious among the people for his evildoing.

The views of the commentators with regard to the person who has been described in these verses are different. Some one says it was Walīd bin Mughīrah; another one says it was Aswad bin 'Abd-i Yaghūth, and still another has applied this description to Akhnas bin Shurayq, and some other people have pointed to some other persons. But the Qur'ān has only described his attributes without naming him. This shows that in Makkah the man concerned was so notorious for

his such qualities that there was no need to name him definitely. Hearing his description every person could understand who was being referred to.

10. This sentence may be connected with the preceding theme as well as with the following sentence. In the first case, it would mean: "Do not yield to the influence of such a person just because he has plenty of wealth and children." In the second: "He has become proud because he possesses abundance of wealth and children; so when Our Revelations are recited to him, he says, "These are tales of ancient times."

11. Because he thought he was a man of high prestige, his nose has been called a snout, and "branding him on the snout means disgracing him. That is, "We shall so disgrace him in the world and in the Hereafter that his mark of disgrace will become indelible."

12. Here, one should also keep Al-Kahf: 32-44 in view, in which the parable of the owners of two gardens has been cited for teaching a lesson.

13. That is, "They were so sure and confident of their power and authority that they swore they would surely pluck the fruit of their garden next morning, without feeling any need to say, "We shall do so if Allah so willed."

14. The word tilth probably has been used because in the garden there were fields of crops also in between the trees.

15. The word *hard* in Arabic is used for hindering and withholding, for a purpose and resolution, and for making haste; hence, the composite rendering adopted by us.

16. That is, on seeing the garden they didn't believe it was their own garden, and they said: "Perhaps we have lost our way and come to another place." But, when they considered it seriously and found it was their own garden, they cried out: "Alas we are undone!"

17. This means that when they were saying on oath: "We shall surely pluck the fruit of our garden tomorrow," this person had warned them at that time, saying: "Have you forgotten God? Why don't you say: If Allah so wills?" But they did not listen to him. Then, while they were making up their mind not to give away anything to the needy, he again advised them to remember Allah and to desist from their evil intention, but they persisted in what they had resolved.

18. That is, each reproached and blamed the other that because of his wrong counsel they had forgotten God and resolved upon an evil course.

[Contd. on p. 31

فِيْهِ تَدْرُسُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ اِنَّ لَكُمْ فِيْهِ لَمَا تَخَيَّرُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ اَمْ لَكُمْ اَيْمَانٌ عَلَيْنَا بَالِغَةٌ
اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۙ اِنَّ لَكُمْ لَمَا تَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ سَلْهُمْ اَيُّهُمْ بِذٰلِكَ زَعِيْمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ اَمْ
لَهُمْ شُرَكَآءُ ۚ فَلْيَاْتُوْا بِشُرَكَآئِهِمْ اِنْ كَانُوْا صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ
وَّيُدْعَوْنَ اِلَى السُّجُوْدِ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ خَاشِعَةً اَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ۭ
وَقَدْ كَانُوْا يُدْعَوْنَ اِلَى السُّجُوْدِ وَهُمْ سٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَذَرْنِيْ وَمَنْ يُّكَذِّبُ
بِهٰذَا الْحَدِيْثِ ۭ سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَاُمْلِيْ لَهُمْ ۭ اِنَّ
كَيْدِيْ مَتِيْنٌ ﴿٤٥﴾ اَمْ تَسْـَٔلُهُمْ اَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِّنْ مَّغْرَمٍ مُّثْقَلُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ اَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ
الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُنْ كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوْتِ ۘ اِذْ
نَادٰى وَهُوَ مَكْظُوْمٌ ﴿٤٨﴾ لَوْلَآ اَنْ تَدٰرَكَهٗ نِعْمَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ لَنُبِذَ بِالْعَرَآءِ وَ
هُوَ مَذْمُوْمٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَاجْتَبٰىهُ رَبُّهٗ فَجَعَلَهٗ مِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَاِنْ يَّكَادُ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا لَيُزْلِقُوْنَكَ بِاَبْصَارِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّهٗ لَمَجْنُوْنٌ ﴿٥١﴾
وَمَا هُوَ اِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾

37-41 Have you a Book[21] in which you study that you shall have there the same that you choose for yourselves? Or, have you covenants binding on Us till the Resurrection Day that you will have will have whatever you demand? Ask them which of them will guarantee this?[22] Or, have they some associate gods (who might be responsible for it)? If so, let them produce their associate gods if they are truthful.[23]

42-43 The Day the affliction befalls[24] and the people are called upon to prostrate themselves, they will not be able to prostrate themselves. Their eyes downcast, abjectness will be covering them. Yet when they were safe and sound they used to be called upon to prostrate themselves (but they refused to do so).[25]

44-45 So, O Prophet, leave to Me the case of those who belie this Revelation.[26] We shall lead them to ruin by degrees in ways they will

not perceive.[27] I am respiting them: My scheme[28] is mighty.

Are you asking them for a reward that they are being weighed down under undeserved penalties?[29] Have they the knowledge of the unseen, which they might be writing down?[30] So, wait for the issuance of your Lord's decree,[31] and do not be like the Man of the Fish (the Prophet Jonah),[32] when he cried out, overwhelmed with grief.[33] Had not the grace of his Lord reached him, he would have been cast off on the barren ground, condemned.[34] Consequently, his Lord chose him and included him among the righteous. 46-50

When the disbelievers hear the Admonition (the Qur'ān), they look at you in a way as though they would trip you up,[35] and say, "He is certainly mad", although it is an Admonition to all the people of the world. 51-52

Contd. from p. 29]

19. This is a rejoinder to the chiefs of Makkah, who argued with the Muslims, thus: "The blessings that we are enjoying in the world are a sign that we are favourites of Allah, and the miserable lives that you are living are a proof that you are under the wrath of Allah. Therefore, even if there was any life after death, as you say, we shall have good time there too, and the torment would be imposed on you, not on us!"

20. That is, "It is against reason that God should not differentiate between the obedient servant and the guilty. How do you regard this as reasonable that the Creator of the universe should, like a blind ruler, not judge which people in the world obeyed His commands and refrained from evildoing, and which people committed every sin and crime and perpetrated every cruelty fearless of His punishment? You have seen the adversity of the believers and your own prosperity, but you have not appreciated the distinction between their good morals and your own evildoing, and have given your judgement without the thought that these obedient people will be treated like culprits by God and the guilty like you will be granted Paradise."

21. That is, the Book sent down by Allah.

22. *Za'īm* in Arabic is used for a person who stands a surety on behalf of another, or is a spokesman of others. Thus, the verse means to ask: "Which of you will come forward and say that he has made such and such a covenant with Allah on your behalf?"

23. That is, "The judgement you are passing concerning yourselves has no basis whatever. It is against reason and you cannot show any such thing written in any Divine Book either. No one can make the claim that he has made Allah promise some such thing, and you cannot make any of your deities vouch that it would take the responsibility of securing Paradise for you from God. How then have you been involved in such a misunderstanding?

24. Literally: "The Day the shin shall be uncovered". A section of the Companions and their successors says that these words have been used idiomatically, for according to Arabic idiom, *kashf-i sāq* implies befalling of an affliction. Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also has given this same meaning of this and has supported it by evidence from Arabic poetry. According to another saying that has been cited from Ibn 'Abbās and Rabī' bin Anas, *kashf-i sāq* implies uncovering the facts and truths. In view of this interpretation, the meaning would be: "The Day when all truths shall be bared and the people's deeds shall become open and manifest."

25. It means: On the Resurrection Day it will be openly and publicly demonstrated as to who in the world had actually worshipped Allah and who was disinclined to do so. For this purpose the people will be called upon to prostrate themselves before Allah. Then, those who had been sincerely worshipping Allah in the world, would prostrate themselves, and those who had declined to bow before Him in the world, would be unable to do so. It will become impossible for them to put up a false show of being worshippers. Therefore, they will remain standing, degraded and downcast with shame.

26. That is, "Do not worry yourself as to how to deal with them; it is for Me to see how to chastise them."

27. A form of leading somebody to ruin in imperceptible ways is that an enemy of the Truth and wicked person may be blessed in the world, and be granted health, wealth, children and worldly successes, by which he may be deluded into believing that whatever he is doing, he is doing well and right: there is nothing wrong with his acts and deeds. Thus, he may go on getting more and more deeply involved in enmity of the truth and wickedness and rebellious conduct and may not realize that the blessings he is being favoured with are not a reward but, in fact, a means of his own ruin.

28. The word *kayd* in the original means to devise a secret scheme against another. It is an evil only in case it is devised to harm somebody unjustly, otherwise there is nothing wrong with it, especially when such a scheme is adopted against a person who has made himself worthy of it.

29. The question apparently is being asked of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), but its real audience are the people, who were crossing all limits in their opposition to him. They are being asked: "is Our Messenger asking you for a reward which makes you feel so upset? You yourself know that he is absolutely selfless in his invitation and is exerting himself only for your own benefit and well-being. If you do not want to believe in what he says, you may not, but why are you feeling so enraged at his this invitation to you? (For further explanation, see E.N. 31 of Sūrah At-Tūr).

30. This second question also appears to be directed to the Holy Prophet, but, in fact, its audience are his opponents. It means: "Have you, O people, peered behind the unseen and found that the Messenger, in fact, is not a Messenger sent by God, and the truths that he is presenting before you are also false; that is why you are being so stubborn in belying what he says?" (For explanation, see E.N. 32 of At-Ṭūr).

31. That is, "The time when Allah will issue His decree about your success and victory and your opponents' defeat, is yet far off. Till then you should go on enduring with patience whatever hardships and afflictions you may have to face in the way of preaching the Faith."

32. That is, "Do not behave impatiently as did the Prophet Jonah (peace be on him), who on account of his impatience was driven into the fish's belly." Immediately after exhorting the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to have patience until Allah issued forth His decree, to tell him not to behave like the Prophet Jonah by itself gives the meaning that the latter had shown some kind of impatience before Allah gave His decision and thus had incurred His wrath. (For explanation, see Yūnus; 98, and E.N, 99 on it; Al-Anbiyā': 87-88 and E.N.'s 82 to 85; Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 139-148 and E.N.'s 78 to 85).

33. In Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' it has been explained thus: "From inside the fish's belly and the darkness of the sea, the Prophet Jonah invoked Allah, saying: *Lā ilāha illā anta subḥānaka inni kuntu min-aẓ-ẓālimīn:* 'There is no god but You; glory be to You: I had indeed committed a wrong.' Thereupon Allah heard his prayer and delivered him from this affliction." (vv. 87-88).

34. When this verse is read with Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 142-146, one learns that at the time the Prophet Jonah was caused to be swallowed by the fish, he was blameworthy. But when he glorified Allah and confessed his fault, although he was spat up by the fish on a bare beach in a state of sickness, he was not blameworthy at that time. Allah by His mercy caused a creeper to grow over him so that its leaves should provide him shade and its fruit food and drink.

35. "Would trip you up": "Would eat you up with their eyes". For a similar expression of the Makkan disbelievers' rage and fury against the Holy Prophet, see also Banī Isrā'īl: 73-77.



LXIX

AL-ḤĀĀQQAH

الحاقّه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXIX

AL-ḤĀĀQQAH

الحاقّه

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word al-Hāāqqah with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

This too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah. Its subject-matter shows that it was sent down at the time when opposition to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had started but had not yet become tyrannical. Musnad Ahmad contains a tradition from Hadrat 'Umar, saying. "Before embracing Islam one day I came out of my house with a view to causing trouble to the Holy Prophet, but he had

entered the *Masjid al-Harām* before me. When I arrived I found that he was reciting Sūrah Al-Hāāqqah in the Prayer. I stood behind him and listened. As he recited the Qur'ān I wondered at its literary charm and beauty. Then suddenly an idea came to my mind that he must be a poet as the Quraish alleged. Just at that moment he recited the words: "This is the Word of an honourable Messenger: it is not the word of a poet." I said to myself: Then, he must be a soothsayer, if not a poet. Thereupon he recited the words: "Nor is it the word of a soothsayer: little it is that you reflect. It is a Revelation from the Lord and Sustainer of the worlds. On hearing this Islam entered deep into my heart." This tradition of Hadrat 'Umar shows that this Sūrah had been sent down long before his acceptance of Islam, for even after this event he did not believe for a long time, and he continued to be influenced in favour of Islam by different incidents from time to time, till at last in the house of his own sister he came by the experience that made him surrender and submit to the Faith completely. (For details, see Introduction to Sūrah Maryam and Introduction to Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah).

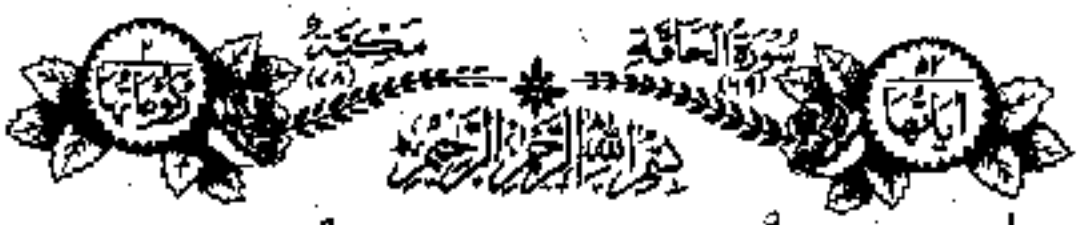
Theme and Subject-Matter

The first section (vv. 1-37) is about the Hereafter and the second (vv. 38-59) about the Qur'ān's being a Revelation from Allah and the Holy Prophet's being a true Messenger of Allah.

The first section opens with the assertion that the coming of the Resurrection and the occurrence of the Hereafter is a truth which has to take place inevitably. Then in vv. 4-12, it has been stated that the communities that denied the Hereafter in the past became worthy of Allah's scourge ultimately. In vv. 13-17 the occurrence of Resurrection has been depicted. In vv. 18-37 the real object for which Allah has destined a second life for mankind after the present worldly life has been enunciated. In it we are told that on that Day all men shall appear in the Court of their Lord, where no secret of theirs shall remain hidden; each man's record will be placed in his hand. Those who had spent lives in the world with the realization that one day they would have to render an account of their deeds before their Lord, and who had worked righteously in the world and provided beforehand for their well-being in the Hereafter, will rejoice when they would see that they have been acquitted and blessed with the eternal bliss of Paradise. On the contrary, those who neither recognized the rights of Allah, nor discharged the

rights of men, will have no one to save them from the punishment of Allah, and they will be cast into Hell.

In the second section (vv. 38-52) the disbelievers of Makkah have been addressed and told: "You think this Qur'ān is the word of a poet or soothsayer, whereas it is a Revelation sent down by Allah, which is being presented by the noble Messenger. The Messenger by himself has no power to increase or decrease a word in it. If he forges something of his own composition into it, We will cut off his neck-vein (or heart-vein). For this is the Truth absolute and pure: and those who give it a lie will have ultimately to regret and repent.



اَلْحَآقَّةُ ۙ﴿۱﴾ مَا الْحَآقَّةُ ۚ﴿۲﴾ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا الْحَآقَّةُ ۭ﴿۳﴾ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُوْدُ وَعَادٌۢ
بِالْقَارِعَةِ ۭ﴿۴﴾ فَاَمَّا ثَمُوْدُ فَاُهْلِكُوْا بِالطَّاغِيَةِ ۭ﴿۵﴾ وَاَمَّا عَادٌ فَاُهْلِكُوْا بِرِيْحٍ صَرْصَرٍ
عَاتِيَةٍ ۙ﴿۶﴾ سَخَّرَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ وَّثَمٰنِيَةَ اَيَّامٍ ۙ حُسُوْمًا ۙ فَتَرَى الْقَوْمَ
فِيْهَا صَرْعٰى ۙ كَاَنَّهُمْ اَعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ خَاوِيَةٍ ۚ﴿۷﴾ فَهَلْ تَرٰى لَهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَاقِيَةٍ ۚ﴿۸﴾
وَجَآءَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَنْ قَبْلَهٗ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكٰتُ بِالْخَاطِئَةِ ۙ﴿۹﴾ فَعَصَوْا رَسُوْلَ رَبِّهِمْ

LXIX
AL-HĀĀQQAH
الحاقّه

Verses: 52 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

The Inevitable![1] What is the Inevitable? And what do you know what the Inevitable is?[2] 1-3

Thamūd[3] and ʻĀd belied the coming of the sudden calamity:[4] Thamūd were destroyed by a violent catastrophe;[5] as for ʻĀd, they were destroyed by a furious windstorm; Allah imposed it on them for seven nights and eight days continuously. (Had you been there) you would have seen them lying prostrate as though they were hollow trunks of palm trees. Now do you see any of them still surviving? 4-8

And the same great crime did Pharaoh and the people before him and the overturned settlements[6] commit. They all disobeyed the Messenger of their Lord and He seized them with a terrible grip. 9-10

---

1. The word *al-Hāāqqah* as used in the Text means an event which has inevitably to take place and the occurrence of which in the future is so certain as to

[Contd. on p. 44

فَاَخَذْنٰهُ اَخْذَةً رَّابِيَةً ﴿١٠﴾ اِنَّا لَمَّا طَغَا الْمَآءُ حَمَلْنٰكُمْ فِى الْجَارِيَةِ ﴿١١﴾ لِنَجْعَلَهَا
لَكُمْ تَذْكِرَةً وَّتَعِيَهَآ اُذُنٌ وَّاعِيَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾ فَاِذَا نُفِخَ فِى الصُّوْرِ نَفْخَةٌ وَّاحِدَةٌ ﴿١٣﴾
وَّحُمِلَتِ الْاَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ فَدُكَّتَا دَكَّةً وَّاحِدَةً ﴿١٤﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ وَّقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ﴿١٥﴾
وَانْشَقَّتِ السَّمَآءُ فَهِىَ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَّاهِيَةٌ ﴿١٦﴾ وَّالْمَلَكُ عَلٰٓى اَرْجَآئِهَا ۚ وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ
رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمٰنِيَةٌ ﴿١٧﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُوْنَ لَا تَخْفٰى مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ ﴿١٨﴾
فَاَمَّا مَنْ اُوْتِىَ كِتٰبَهٗ بِيَمِيْنِهٖ ۙ فَيَقُوْلُ هَآؤُمُ اقْرَءُوْا كِتٰبِيَهْ ﴿١٩﴾ اِنِّىْ ظَنَنْتُ اَنِّىْ
مُلٰقٍ حِسَابِيَهْ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَهُوَ فِىْ عِيْشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ ﴿٢١﴾ فِىْ جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ قُطُوْفُهَا دَانِيَةٌ ﴿٢٣﴾
كُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا هَنِيْٓـًٔا بِمَآ اَسْلَفْتُمْ فِى الْاَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاَمَّا مَنْ اُوْتِىَ كِتٰبَهٗ بِشِمَالِهٖ ۙ
فَيَقُوْلُ يٰلَيْتَنِىْ لَمْ اُوْتَ كِتٰبِيَهْ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَمْ اَدْرِ مَا حِسَابِيَهْ ﴿٢٦﴾ يٰلَيْتَهَا كَانَتِ
الْقَاضِيَةَ ﴿٢٧﴾ مَآ اَغْنٰى عَنِّىْ مَالِيَهْ ﴿٢٨﴾ هَلَكَ عَنِّىْ سُلْطٰنِيَهْ ﴿٢٩﴾ خُذُوْهُ فَغُلُّوْهُ ﴿٣٠﴾
ثُمَّ الْجَحِيْمَ صَلُّوْهُ ﴿٣١﴾ ثُمَّ فِىْ سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُوْنَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوْهُ ﴿٣٢﴾ اِنَّهٗ
كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا يَحُضُّ عَلٰى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِيْنِ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَلَيْسَ
لَهُ الْيَوْمَ هٰهُنَا حَمِيْمٌ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَّلَا طَعَامٌ اِلَّا مِنْ غِسْلِيْنٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ لَّا يَاْكُلُهٗٓ اِلَّا
الْخَاطِـُٔوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَلَآ اُقْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَمَا لَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِنَّهٗ لَقَوْلُ
رَسُوْلٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَّمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَاعِرٍ ۭ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَلَا بِقَوْلِ
كَاهِنٍ ۭ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ تَنْزِيْلٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا
بَعْضَ الْاَقَاوِيْلِ ﴿٤٤﴾ لَاَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِيْنِ ﴿٤٥﴾ ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾
فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ اَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حٰجِزِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَتَذْكِرَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَاِنَّا
لَنَعْلَمُ اَنَّ مِنْكُمْ مُّكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَحَسْرَةٌ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَحَقُّ
الْيَقِيْنِ ﴿٥١﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٥٢﴾

When the Flood waters rose abnormally high,[7] We boarded you in the Ark,[8] that We may make the event a warning for you and that the retaining ears may retain its memory.[9] 11-12

Then,[10] when the Trumpet is blown once, and the earth and the mountains are razed and crushed into pieces with a single stroke, on that Day shall the Inevitable happen. On that Day the heaven shall split asunder, and its system shall loosen. The angels shall be on its sides and eight of them on that Day shall be upholding the Throne of your Lord, above them.[11] That will be the Day when you will be brought forth: no secret of yours will remain hidden. 13-18

Then whoso is given his record in his right hand,[12] shall say: "Look! Read my record.[13] I knew that I would certainly be getting my account,"[14] So he shall be in a state of bliss, in a high Garden, whose clusters of fruit shall be hanging within easy reach. (To such people it will be said:) "Eat and drink with relish as a reward for the deeds you did in the days gone by." 19-24

As for him whose record is given in his left hand,[15] he will say: "Would that I had not been given my record[16] nor known what my account was.[17] Would that the death (that I suffered in the world) were final.[18] Today my wealth has availed me nothing, and I am robbed of all my power."[19] (It will be ordered:) "Seize him and chain him by the neck, then cast him into Hell, then fasten him in a chain seventy cubits long. For he did not believe in Allah, the Most High, nor urged the feeding of the poor.[20] So, he has neither any true friend here today nor any food except the corruption from the washing of wounds, which none but the sinners eat. 25-37

Not so![21] I swear by those things which you see and also by those which you do not see, that this is the Word of an honourable Messenger.[22] It is not the word of a poet: little it is that you believe.[23] Nor is it the word of a soothsayer: little it is that you reflect. It is a Revelation from the Lord of the worlds.[24] And if this (Prophet) had forged something himself and ascribed it to Us, We would indeed have seized him by his right hand, and cut off his neck-vein. Then none of you could have withheld (Us) from this [25] This indeed is an Admonition for the righteous.[26] And We know that there are some among you who deny it. For such disbelievers it is indeed a cause of despair.[27] And 38-52

surely this is the absolute truth. So, glorify, O Prophet, the name of your Lord, the Great.

Contd. from p. 41]

admit of no doubt or suspicion. To use this word for Resurrection and to begin the discourse with it by itself shows that the people were denying its occurrence. They are being told: "That which you are denying is inevitable: your denial will not prevent its occurrence."

2. These two questions, one after the other, have been put to arouse the listeners, to make them understand the importance of the theme and listen to what follows with full attention.

3. As the disbelievers of Makkah denied Resurrection and took the news of its coming lightly, they have been warned at the outset, as if to say: "Resurrection is inevitable: whether you believe in it, or not, it will in any case take place. Then, they are told: "It is not a simple and ordinary thing that a person accepts the news of the coming of an event, or not, but it has a deep relationship with the morals of the nations and with their future. The history of the nations, which lived before you, testifies that the nation which refused to believe in the Hereafter and thought this worldly life only to be the real life and denied that man would have ultimately to render an account of his deeds before God, corrupted itself morally until the punishment of God overtook it and eliminated it from the world."

4. The word *al-qāri'ah* is derived from *qar'*, which means to hammer, to beat, to knock and to strike one thing upon the other. This other word for Resurrection has been used to give an idea of its terror and dread.

5. In Sūrah Al-A'rāf: 78, it has been called *ar-rajfah* (a terrible earthquake); in Sūrah Hūd: 67 *aṣ-ṣayḥah* (a violent blast); in Sūrah Hā Mīm As-Sajdah: 17, it has been said: "They were overtaken by *ṣā'iqa-tul-'adhāb* (a humiliating scourge); and here the same punishment has been described as *ar-raghiyah* (a violent catastrophe). These words describe different aspects of the same calamity.

6. The reference is to the towns and settlements of the people of the Prophet Lot, about which it has been said in Sūrah Hūd: 82 and Al-Hijr: 74: "We turned them upside down."

7. The illusion is to the Deluge of the Prophet Noah, in which a whole nation was drowned because of this very crime, and only those people were saved, who had listened to and obeyed the Messenger of Allah.

8. "We boarded you...", because the whole human race that exists today has descended from the people who were boarded in the Ark thousands of years ago and thus saved from the Deluge. It means: "You exist in the world today because in that Deluge Allah had caused only the infidels to be drowned and had saved the believers.

9. "The retaining ears,..": the ears which may hear it consciously and take it in. Although the word ear has been used, it implies the hearers who may hear the event and always remember it, take heed from it, and may never forget what dreadful fate the deniers of the Hereafter and the disbelievers of the Messenger of God would ultimately suffer.

10. While reading the following verses one should keep in mind that at some places in the Qur'ān the three stages of Resurrection which will occur one after the other at different times have been mentioned separately, and at others all the three have been combined and mentioned as a single event. For example, in Sūrah An-Naml: 87 the first blowing of the Trumpet has been mentioned, when everyone will be suddenly struck with terror. At that time they will witness the general confusion and the upsetting of the order of the universe, as described in Al-Hajj: 1-2, Yā Sīn 49-50 and At-Takvīr: 1-6. In Sūrah Az-Zumar: 67-70, mention has been made of the second and third blowing of the Trumpet. On the second blowing of it everyone will fall down dead, and when it is blown for the third time, all dead men will rise back to life and present themselves before Allah. In Tā Hā: 102-112, Al-Anbiyā': 101-103, Yā Sīn: 51-53 and Qāf: 20-22, only the third sounding of the Trumpet has been mentioned. (For explanation, see E.N. 78 of Tā Hā, E.N. 1 of Al-Hajj. E.N.'s 46, 47 of Yā Sīn). But here and at many other places in the Qur'ān all the events of Resurrection, from the blowing of the first Trumpet till the people's entry into Heaven and Hell, have been described as a single event.

11. This is an ambiguous verse the meaning of which is difficult to determine We can neither know what the Throne is nor can understand what will be the nature of the eight angels upholding it on the Day of Resurrection. It is, however, inconceivable that Allah Almighty would be sitting on the Throne and the eight angels would be upholding it along with Him. The verse also does not say that Allah at that time would be sitting on the Throne. Besides, the conception of God that the Qur'ān gives also prevents one from imagining that the Being Who is free from physical existence as to body, direction and place, should be residing somewhere and His creatures should sustain Him. Therefore, pursuing any research to determine its meaning would be tantamount to disbelief. However, one should understand that in order to give an idea of Allah Almighty's rule and sovereignty, and of the matters associated with it, the same scene has been

depicted by the Qur'ān as of worldly kingship and the same terms have been used for it as are common for kingship and its accompaniments, to enable us to understand matters pertaining to sovereignty of the universe to some extent only by means of this very scene and terms. All this is meant to bring the real Truth within human understanding; it is not, therefore, right to take it literally.

12. The record's being given in the right hand will by itself show that the concerned person's account is clear and settled and he is appearing in the Divine Court as a righteous man and not as a culprit. It is probable that at the time the records are distributed the righteous man himself will extend his right hand forward to receive his record. For on account of the good treatment that he would have received right from the moment of death till his appearance in the Plain of Assembly at Resurrection, would have given him the satisfaction that he was there to be blessed and not to be punished. At many a place in the Qur'ān it has been explicitly stated that right at death itself it becomes clear to every man whether he is entering the next World in a blessed or wretched state. Then from the moment of death till Resurrection the righteous man is treated like a guest and the evil man as a culprit under custody. After this, from the time the second life starts on the Day of Resurrection, the condition and state of the righteous is entirely different from the condition and state of the disbelievers, hypocrites and culprits. (For details, see Al-Anfāl: 50, An-Nahl: 28-32, Banī Isrā'īl: 97, Ṭā Hā: 102, 103, 124-126, Al-Anbiyā': 1-3, Al-Furqān: 24, An-Naml: 89, Sabā: 51, Yā Sīn: 26-27, Al-Mu'min: 45-46, Muḥammad: 27, Qaf: 19-23 and the corresponding Notes.

13. That is, he will be overjoyed as soon as he receives his record and will show it to his companions. In Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq: 9, it has been said "He will return to his kinsfolk rejoicing."

14. That is, "He was fortunate because he had been conscious of the Hereafter in the world and had lived his life with the belief that he would have to appear before God one day and render his account to Him.

15. In Sūrah Al-Inshiqāq it has been said: "And the one whose record is given him behind his back..." Probably it will be like this: As the culprit would already be knowing that he was a culprit, and would be aware of what his record contained, he would dejectedly extend his left hand forward to receive it, and then would immediately hide it behind his back so that no one else saw what he had received.

16. That is, "I should not have been given this record in the Plain of Assembly and thus publicly disgraced before all mankind, but should have been awarded secretly whatever punishment I deserved.

17. That is, "I should not have been told what I had done in the world." Another meaning of this verse also can be: "I never knew what an account was: I never had imagined that one day I would also have to render my account and that all my deeds would be presented before me."

18. That is, "I should have become extinct after death in the world and should have experienced no other life after death."

19. The word *sulṭān* of the Text is used both for an argument and for power and authority. If it is taken in the sense of an argument, the meaning would be: "The arguments that I used to give would not work here: here, I have no argument which I can present in self-defence." And if it is taken in the sense of power, it would imply: "The power of which I was so proud in the world is no more: I have no army here and there is none to obey me: I stand as a miserable, helpless creature, who can do nothing to defend himself."

20. That is, not to speak of feeding a poor man himself, he did not even like to say others that they should feed the hungry."

21. That is, the truth is not as you think it to be.

22. Here, "an honourable Messenger" implies the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and in Sūrah At-Takvīr: 19. the angel Gabriel (peace be on him), the argument being that after describing the Qur'ān as the Word of an honourable Messenger, it has been said: "It is not the word of a poet ... nor of a soothsayer," and obviously the disbelievers of Makkah branded the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and not Gabriel as a poet and soothsayer. On the contrary, in Sūrah At-Takvīr, after describing the Qur'ān as the word of "a noble messenger" it has been said: "That Messenger has great power, and has high ranks with the Owner of the Throne: there he is obeyed and held as trustworthy ... And Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has seen him on the bright horizon." (vv. 20-23). Almost the same thing has been stated in An-Najm: 5-10 about Gabriel.

Here, the question arises; In what sense has the Qur'ān been described as the Word of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings! and of Gabriel? The answer is: the people were hearing it being recited by the tongue of the Holy Prophet and the Holy Prophet by the tongue of Gabriel. Thereupon, in one way it was the word of the Holy Prophet and in another way of Gabriel, but a little below it has been explicitly stated: "It is indeed a Revelation from the Lord of the worlds,' which is being presented before Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) by the tongue of Gabriel (peace he on him) and before the people by the tongue of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

The word Messenger itself points to the truth that the Word belongs to neither of them but they have presented it as Messengers of the One Who has sent it down.

23. One meaning of "little it is that you believe", according to Arabic idiom, can be: "You do not believe it at all." Another meaning also can be: "Hearing the Qur'ān your heart sometimes itself cries out: 'This cannot be mortal word'. Yet you behave stubbornly and refuse to believe in it.

24. In short: "I swear by whatever you see and by whatever you do not see, that this Qur'an is not the word of a poet or a soothsayer, but it is a Revelation from the Lord of the worlds, which is being presented by the Messenger who is noble and gentle." Let us now consider in what sense this oath has been sworn. That which was visible to the people was:

(1) This Word was being presented by a person who being noble and gentle was not hidden from anybody in the society of Makkah. Everyone knew that he was the best man of their nation in conduct. It could not be expected of such a man that he would forge a lie and attribute it to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

(2) They also saw clearly that he had no selfish motive in presenting that word before the people, but had rather sacrificed all His personal interests to it: had ruined his business, had abandoned every ease and comfort, was being cursed and abused by the same people who had shown him the highest veneration and esteem and had caused even his family and children to be subjected to these agonies besides himself. A person having selfish motives could not have submitted himself to such tribulations.

(3) They could also see that the lives of the people in their own society, who believed in him, underwent a sudden transformation. The word of no poet or soothsayer has been known to have brought about such a wonderful moral change in the people that his follower should become ready to face every hardship and bear up against every persecution for his sake.

(4) They were also not unaware of the language of poetry and the diction of the soothsayers. Apart from stubborn disbelievers, no one could say that the language of the Qur'ān was the language of poetry or sorcery. (For a detailed discussion of this, see E.N. 7 of Al-Anbiyā', E.N.'s 142-145 of Ash-Shu'arā', E.N.22 of Aṭ-Ṭūr).

(5) This also was before their eyes that no one in entire Arabia was so eloquent of speech that his word could be brought to match with the Qur'ān. Not to speak of equalling it, not even the greatest poet's eloquence could even approach anywhere near the Qur'ān's.

(6) This also was not hidden from them that the language used by Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) himself was very different in

its literary beauty and merit from the language of the Qur'an. No Arabic speaking person could, after hearing the Holy Prophet's own speech, and the Qur'ān, say that both emanated from one and the same person.

(7) The people of Makkah had never heard even until a day before Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) made the claim to Prophethood anything relating to the themes that the Qur'an consisted of, nor they knew that he had any means of obtaining that knowledge and information. That is why even if his opponents alleged that he obtained that information secretly from somewhere, no one in Makkah was prepared to believe it. (For explanation, see E.N 107 of An-Nahl and E.N. 12 of Al-Furqān).

(8) They could also see the wonderful workshop of existence, from the earth to the heavens, which was functioning before their eyes, and in which they could see a supreme, wise law and, an all-pervading order and system at work. In it they could see no sign and evidence of the polytheism and denial of the Hereafter, which the Arabs had adopted as their creed, but there were signs and proofs of the existence of One God and of the truth of the Hereafter which the Qur'ān was presenting.

All this they could see, and what they did not see was: Allah Almighty alone is the Creator and Master and Ruler of this universe: all others are only creatures: none beside Him is God! Resurrection has to take place inevitably; Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has really been appointed a Messenger by Allah Himself Who is sending down the Qur'ān to him. An oath has been sworn by both truths to affirm that which has been stated in the preceding verses.

25. The object is to impress the point that the Prophet has no authority whatever to make any change in the Revelation. If he did so, he would be severely punished. The style depicts the prompt and quick action of a king who strikes off the head of an official, holding him by the hand, if he commits a forgery in his name. Some people have misconstrued this verse to mean that if the heart-vein or neck-vein of an impostor is not immediately severed by Allah, it would be a proof that he was a true prophet, whereas in this verse what has been said is about a true prophet and not about the impostors. Some impostors have even claimed to be God and have thrived and lived long lives in the world, so it could not be a proof of the truth of their claim. For a full discussion of this question, see E.N. 23 of Sūrah Yūnus.

26. That is, the Qur'ān is an admonition for those who wish to avoid wrongdoing and its evil consequences. (For explanation, see E.N. 3 of Al-Baqarah).

27. That is, they will ultimately have to despair and regret as to why they had rejected this Qur'ān.



LXX

AL-MA'ĀRIJ

المعَارِج

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LXX
AL-MA'ĀRIJ

المَعَارِج

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *dhil-Ma'ārij* in verse 3.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter bears evidence that this Sūrah too was sent down in conditions closely resembling those under which Sūrah Al-Hāāqqah was sent down.

Theme and Subject-Matter

It admonishes and gives warning to the disbelievers who made fun of the news about Resurrection and the Hereafter, and Hell and Heaven, and challenged the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to cause Resurrection with which he threatened them to take place if what he said was true and they had become worthy of the punishment in Hell by denying it. The whole Sūrah is meant to answer this denial.

The Sūrah opens with words to the effect: "A demander has demanded a torment, the torment which must befall the deniers; and when it takes place, there will be none to prevent it, but it will take place at its own appointed time. Allah has His own way of doing things, but He is not unjust. Therefore, have patience, O Prophet, at what they say. They think it is far off, but We see it as near at hand."

Then it is said: "Resurrections which they desire to be hastened out of jest and fun, is terrible, and when it comes, it will cause great distress to the culprits. At that time they will even be prepared to give away their wives and children and their nearest kinsfolk in ransom to escape the punishment, but they will not be able to escape it."

Then the people have been warned to the effect: "On that Day the destinies of men will be decided strictly on the basis of their belief and their conduct. Those who turn away from the Truth in the world and amass wealth and withhold it from the needy, will be doomed to hell: and those who fear the punishment of God here, believe in the Hereafter, keep up the Prayer, discharge the rights of the needy out of their wealth, strictly avoid immoral and wicked deeds, practise honesty in all their dealings, fulfil their pledges and trusts and bear true witness, will have a place of honour in Paradise."

In conclusion, the disbelievers of Makkah who rushed in upon the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) from every side as soon as they saw him, in order to make fun of him, have been warned to the effect: "If you do not believe, Allah will replace you by other people who will

be better than you", and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been consoled, so as to say: "Do not take to heart their mockery and jesting: leave them to indulge in their idle talk and foolish conduct if they are bent upon experiencing the disgrace and humiliation of the Resurrection; they will themselves see their evil end."

سُوْرَةُ الْمَعَارِج مَكِّيَّة

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

سَاَلَ سَآئِلٌۢ بِعَذَابٍ وَّاقِعٍ ۙ لِّلْكٰفِرِيْنَ لَيْسَ لَهٗ دَافِعٌ ۙ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ذِى
الْمَعَارِجِ ۚ تَعْرُجُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَالرُّوْحُ اِلَيْهِ فِىْ يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهٗ خَمْسِيْنَ
اَلْفَ سَنَةٍ ۚ فَاصْبِرْ صَبْرًا جَمِيْلًا ۚ اِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهٗ بَعِيْدًا ۙ وَّنَرٰىهُ قَرِيْبًا ۙ
يَوْمَ تَكُوْنُ السَّمَآءُ كَالْمُهْلِ ۙ وَتَكُوْنُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ ۙ وَلَا يَسْـَٔلُ حَمِيْمٌ
حَمِيْمًا ۙ يُّبَصَّرُوْنَهُمْ ۚ يَوَدُّ الْمُجْرِمُ لَوْ يَفْتَدِىْ مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِئِذٍۢ بِبَنِيْهِ ۙ
وَصَاحِبَتِهٖ وَاَخِيْهِ ۙ وَفَصِيْلَتِهِ الَّتِىْ تُـْٔوِيْهِ ۙ وَمَنْ فِى الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا
ثُمَّ يُنْجِيْهِ ۙ كَلَّا ۚ اِنَّهَا لَظٰى ۙ نَزَّاعَةً لِّلشَّوٰى ۚ تَدْعُوْا مَنْ اَدْبَرَ وَتَوَلّٰى ۙ
وَجَمَعَ فَاَوْعٰى ۙ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوْعًا ۙ اِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوْعًا ۙ وَّاِذَا
مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوْعًا ۙ اِلَّا الْمُصَلِّيْنَ ۙ الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَآئِمُوْنَ ۙ
وَالَّذِيْنَ فِىْٓ اَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُوْمٌ ۙ لِّلسَّآئِلِ وَالْمَحْرُوْمِ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ
يُصَدِّقُوْنَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ مُّشْفِقُوْنَ ۙ
اِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَاْمُوْنٍ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِفُرُوْجِهِمْ حٰفِظُوْنَ ۙ اِلَّا
عَلٰٓى اَزْوَاجِهِمْ اَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ فَاِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُوْمِيْنَ ۙ فَمَنِ ابْتَغٰى
وَرَآءَ ذٰلِكَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْعٰدُوْنَ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِاَمٰنٰتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ
رٰعُوْنَ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِشَهٰدٰتِهِمْ قَآئِمُوْنَ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَاتِهِمْ
يُحَافِظُوْنَ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ فِىْ جَنّٰتٍ مُّكْرَمُوْنَ ۙ فَمَالِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا قِبَلَكَ

LXX

AL-MA'ĀRIJ

المَعَارِج

Verses: 44 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

A demander has demanded a torment,[1] (the torment) which must befall. It is for the disbelievers. There is none to avert it. It will come from that God Who is the Owner of the Steps of Ascent.[2] The angels and the Spirit[3] ascend to His Presence[4] in a day whose measure is fifty thousand years.[5] So, have patience, O Prophet, a graceful patience.[6] They think it is far off, but We see it as near at hand.[7] (The torment shall befall on the Day)[8] when the heavens shall be like molten silver,[9] and the mountains like carded wool of different colours[10] And no close friend shall ask after his close friend, though they will be shown to each other.[11] To save himself from the torment of that Day, the culprit shall wish to give his children, his wife, his brother, his kins-folk who gave him shelter, and all the people of the earth, in ransom that this device might rescue him. No, never! It will be the flame of the blazing Fire, that will eat up the very flesh. It shall summon to itself every such person who drew away and turned his back and amassed wealth and guarded it jealously.[12] 1-18

Indeed, man has been created impatient.[13] When affliction befalls him, he becomes fretful, and when good fortune falls to his lot he becomes stingy. But those people (are an exception) who are the performers of *ṣalāt*,[14] who are steadfast and ever constant in regard to their *ṣalāt*;[15] in whose wealth there is a due share of the beggar and the needy;[16] who believe in the reality of the Day of Recompense;[17] who dread the torment of their Lord,[18] for from the torment of their Lord none can feel secure; who guard their private parts[19]—except with regard to their wives and those women who are legally in their possession, for in their case they are not blameworthy, but those who 19-35

go beyond this are indeed transgressors;[20]—who keep their trusts and honour their promises;[21] who bear true witnesses;[22] and who strictly guard their *salāt*.[23] These are they who shall live with honour in the Gardens of Paradise.

---

1. Some commentators have taken the verb *sa'ala* in the Text in the meaning of asking, and have interpreted the verse to mean: "The asker has asked: whom will the torment with which we are being threatened befall?" And Allah has answered it, saying: "It will befall the disbelievers." But most of the commentators have taken *sa'ala* here in the meaning of demanding. Nasā'ī and other traditionists have related a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās, and Hākim holds it as authentic, that Nadr bin al-Hārith Kaladah had said "O God, if it is really the Truth sent down by You, then rain down stones on us from the heavens, or send down any other painful torment on us." (Al-Anfāl: 32). Apart from this, at several places in the Qur'ān the disbelievers' this challenge has been related: "Why don't you bring down on us the torment that you threaten us with?" For instance, see Yūnus: 46-48, Al-Anbiya': 36-41, An-Naml: 67 72, Sabā: 26-30, Yā Sīn: 45-52, Al-Mulk: 24-27.

2. *Ma'ārij* is plural of *mi'raj*, which means a stairway, or a ladder, or something by which one may go up. To call Allah *dhil-Ma'ārij* (Owner of the Steps of Ascent) means that He is Most High and in order to go up into His Presence the angels have to ascend many heights, one above the other, as has been stated in the following verses,

3. "The Spirit": the Angel Gabriel (peace be on him), who has been mentioned separately from the angels in order to impress his unique glory and greatness. In Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā' it has been said: "The trustworthy Spirit has come down with this Qur'ān upon your heart", (v. 193), and in Sūrah Al-Baqarah "Say to them: whoever is an enemy to Gabriel, should understand that he has, by Allah's command, revealed upon your heart this Qur'ān." (v. 97). These verses when read together show that Ar-Rūh (the Spirit) implies the Angel Gabriel.

4. This is an ambiguous theme the meaning of which cannot be determined precisely. We neither have any knowledge of the reality of the angels, nor can understand the nature of their ascent, nor can conceive the stairways on which they ascend. Besides, about Allah also it cannot be imagined that He lives in a particular place, for He is exalted and free from the restrictions of space and time.

5. In Al-Hajj: 47, it has been said: "These people are demanding of you to hasten the torment; Allah will never fail to fulfil His threat, but a day with your Lord is equal to a thousand years as you reckon." In Sūrah As-Sajdah: 5, it has been said: "He administers the affairs of the world from the heavens to the earth,

and the report of this administration ascends (to be presented) before Him in a Day whose length, according to your reckoning, is a thousand years". And here, in response to the demand for the torment, the measure of Allah's one day has been stated to be fifty thousand years. Then the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been consoled, saying: "Have patience at the demand for the torment which the people make out of jest and fun," and then it is said: "They think it is far off, but We see it as near at hand." When all these verses are read together, what becomes obvious is: "The people, because of their narrow and restricted outlook, measure the time of Allah's decrees by their own scales of time and, therefore, consider a hundred years or so to be a very lengthy period, whereas in the Divine conduct of affairs there are schemes spreading over a thousand years each, or fifty thousand years each, as you reckon, and this measure also is only by way of example; otherwise schemes in the universe may extend over millions and billions of years as well. Of these one is the scheme under which Mankind has been created on the earth, and a time limit has been set during which it has been allowed to function here. No man can know when this scheme began, what time-limit has been decreed for its completion, what Hour has been appointed for bringing it to an end, when Resurrection will take place, and what time has been fixed for raising all men, born since the beginning of creation till Resurrection, from death simultaneously and calling them to account for their deeds. We only know to some extent that part of the scheme which is passing before us, or a partial history of the past ages which exists with us. As for its beginning and end, to say nothing of knowing it, we do not even have the power to understand it, not to speak of understanding the wisdom which works behind and underlies it. Now the people who demand that the scheme be cut short and its conclusion be brought immediately before them, and if this is not done, they use it for an argument to prove that the universe has no end and conclusion, in fact, present a proof of their own ignorance and folly. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 92, 93 of Surah Al-Hajj, E.N. 9 of As-Sajdah).

6. "A goodly patience": "A kind of patience that behoves a magnanimous person like you."

7. This can have two meanings: (1) "That these people think it cannot possibly take place, and in Our view it is going to take place very soon"; and (2) "that these people think Resurrection is yet remote and far off, and in Our sight it is close at hand and may occur any moment."

8. A section of the commentators regard this sentence as related to "a day whose measure is fifty thousand years"; they say that the day whose measure has been stated to be fifty thousand years is the Day of Resurrection. In Musnad Ahmad and in the *Tafsīr* by Ibn Jarir, a tradition has been related on the authority

of Hadrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī, saying: "When wonder and amazement was expressed before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) about the length of this Day with reference to this verse, he replied: 'By Him in Whose hand is my life, the believer will find the Day even lighter (of shorter duration) than the time he takes in performing an obligatory Prayer in the world'." Had this tradition been reported through authentic channels, this verse could not be interpreted in any other way, but two of its transmitters, Darrāj and his teacher Abul-Haytham, are both weak and untrustworthy.

9. That is, it will change its colour over and over again.

10. As the colours of the mountains are different, when they are uprooted and they drift about weightless, they will appear like flakes of carded wool of different colours.

11. Not so that they will not see each other, therefore they will not ask after each other's welfare, but each will be seeing the other in agony and distress, yet will ignore him, being wholly preoccupied with his own torment.

12. Here also, as in Al-Hāāqqah: 33-34, two causes have been mentioned of a person's evil end in the Hereafter: (1) His repudiation of the Truth and refusal to affirm faith; and (2) his worship of the world and stinginess because of which he amasses wealth and refuses to spend it on any good cause.

13. "Man has been created impatient": It is man's nature, or his natural weakness, to be impatient. Here, one should keep in view that at many places in the Qur'ān, after making mention of mankind's common moral weaknesses, those who believe and adopted righteousness have been made an exception; the same theme is being expressed in the following verses. This by itself explains the truth that these hereditary weaknesses are not unalterable; if man accepts the guidance sent down by God and tries to reform himself practically, he can remove them, and if he gives a free rope to his self these become ingrained in him deeply. (For further explanation, see E.N. 41 of Al-Anbiyā', E.N.'s 23-28 of Az-Zumar, E.N. 75 of Ash-Shūrā).

14. A person's performing the *salāt* necessarily implies that he believes in Allah, His Messenger, His Book and the Hereafter as well as tries to act according to his belief.

15. That is, no laziness, or love of ease and comfort, no occupation, or interest, hinders them from being punctual and regular at the prayer. When the Prayer time comes, they abandon every occupation and activity and stand up to perform worship of their God. Another meaning which Hadrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir has given of *'alā salāt-i-him dāā'imūn* is that they perform the Prayer with full peace of mind, tranquillity and humility; they do not try to offer the Prayer in a

hurry in order to get rid of it somehow, nor think irrelevant things during the Prayer.

16. In Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyāt: 19, it has been said: "In their wealth there is a right of the beggar and the needy", and here: "In their wealth there is a due share of the beggar and the needy." Some people have understood this to mean that the "due share" implies the obligatory *zakāt*, for in the *zakāt* both the exemption limit and the rate have been fixed. But this commentary cannot be accepted on the ground that the Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij is unanimously a Makkan Revelation, and the *zakāt* with its specific exemption limit and rate was enjoined at Madīnah. Therefore, the correct meaning of the "due share" is that they have of their own accord set aside a share in their possessions of the beggar and needy, which they discharge regularly and honestly. This same meaning of this verse has been given by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Mujāhid, Sha'bī and Ibrāhim Nakha'ī.

Here, *sā'il* does not imply a beggar but a needy person, who asks someone for help, and *maḥrūm* implies a person who is jobless, or the one who tries to earn a living but does not earn enough to meet his needs, or the one who has become disabled because of an accident or calamity, and is unable to make a living. About such people when it becomes known that they are destitute, a God - worshipper does not wait that they should ask for help, but helps them of his own accord as soon as he comes to know that they are needy and stand in need of help. (For further explanation, see E.N. 17 of Sūrah Adh-Dhāriyat).

17. "Who believe ... Day of Recompense": who do not think they are irresponsible but believe that one Day they will have to appear before their God and render to Him an account of their deeds.

18. In other words, they are not like the disbelievers, who do not fear God even after they have committed every heinous sin and crime and perpetrated every cruelty in the world, but they, in spite of having adopted a righteous attitude in morals and deeds as best as they could, fear God and continue to remain in constant awe lest their shortcomings should exceed their good works before Him and they should be declared as worthy of punishment. (For further explanation, see E.N. 54 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 19 of Adh-Dhāriyāt).

19. "Who guard their private parts": who abstain from adultery as well as from nudity and exposing their private parts before others. (For explanation, see E.N 6 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N.'s 30, 32 of An-Nūr E.N. 62 of Al-Ahzāb).

20. For explanation, see E.N. 7 of Al-Mu'minūn.

[Contd. on p. 62

مُهْطِعِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ عِزِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَيَطْمَعُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ
مِّنْهُمْ أَن يُدْخَلَ جَنَّةَ نَعِيمٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ كَلَّا ۖ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُم مِّمَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَلَا
أُقْسِمُ بِرَبِّ الْمَشَارِقِ وَالْمَغَارِبِ إِنَّا لَقَادِرُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ عَلَىٰ أَن نُّبَدِّلَ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ
وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ ﴿٤١﴾ فَذَرْهُمْ يَخُوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي
يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ يَوْمَ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ سِرَاعًا كَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ نُصُبٍ يُوفِضُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾
خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

36-44 So, O prophet, what is the matter with the disbelievers that they are rushing in towards you, from the right and from the left, in groups?[24] Does everyone of them cherish the desire that he will be admitted into the Garden of Bliss?[25] No, never! They themselves know of what We have created them.[26] Not so![27] I swear by the Owner of the Easts and the Wests[28] that We have the power to replace them by better people than they, and there is none to outstrip Us.[29] Hence, leave them engrossed in their vain talk and sport until they encounter that Day of theirs which they are being promised, when they shall be rushing out of their graves as though racing towards the shrines of their deities.[30] Their eyes shall be downcast and abasement shall be covering them. That is the Day which they are being promised.

Contd. from p.61

21. "Trusts" imply those trusts which Allah has entrusted to men as well as those which one man entrusts to another because of faith and confidence. Likewise, "promises" imply those promises which man makes with his God as well as those which one man makes with another. Keeping and fulfilling both these kinds of trusts and promises is a necessary characteristic of a believer. In a *Ḥadīth* Hadrat Anas (may Allah bless him) has reported that when ever the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) addressed his Companions, he would always give them the instruction: "Beware, the one who does not keep his trust has no faith, and one who does not fulfil his pledges, has no religion." (Baihaqi. *Ash-Shu'ab al-Imān).*

22. That is, they neither conceal evidence nor change it in any way for selfish motives.

23. This gives an idea of the importance of the Prayer *(salāt)*. The description of the merits of the high and sublime character of those who have been declared as worthy of Paradise, began with the Prayer and has been concluded with it. To be a performer of the Prayer is their first characteristic, to be steadfast and ever constant with regard to the Prayer is their second characteristic, and to guard their Prayer is their last characteristic. "Guarding the Prayer" implies many things: to perform the Prayer at its right time, to make sure before the Prayer that one's body and clothes are clean and pure, to have performed the ablutions and to have washed the limbs well, to perform the basic elements of the Prayer with its obligatory and desirable parts with due care and attention, to observe the requisite rites of the Prayer carefully, to avoid disobedience of God, which is destructive of the Prayer; all these are included in the guarding of the Prayer.

24. This refers to those disbelievers who would rush in towards the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) from every side to mock and ridicule him when they heard him preach Islam and recite the Qur'ān.

25. It means that God's Paradise is only for those righteous people whose characteristics have just been described above, Now, can these people who are not at all inclined to listen to the truth and who are rushing in towards the Prophet in order to suppress every invitation to the truth, be candidates for Paradise? Has God prepared His Paradise only for such people as they? Here, one should also keep in view vv. 34-41 of Sūrah Al-Qalam in which an answer has been given to this saying of the disbelievers of Makkah: "Even if there is any life after death, we shall have good time there too, as we are having in the world, and the torment would befall Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and his followers and not us."

26. Here, this sentence can have two meanings: (1) If it is taken to be related to the preceding theme, it will mean: As for the substance these people have been created from, all men are equal. For if the substance itself be the cause of man's entry into Paradise, then the good and the bad, the wicked and the just, the guilty and the innocent, all should go to Paradise. But a little common sense is enough to decide that man's qualifications for Paradise are created not on the basis of the substance of his creation but only on the basis of his merit and excellence. (2) If this sentence is regarded as an introduction to the following theme, it would mean: "These people think they are secure from Our torment and mock the one who warns them of Our punishment, whereas We can punish them even in this world as and when We please, as well as resurrect them after death as and when We like. They themselves know that We began their creation from an insignificant

sperm-drop and developed them into a living man. If they had only considered this mode of their creation, they would never have been involved in the misunderstanding that they now have escaped Our grasp, or that We have no power to create them over again."

27. That is, the truth is not that which these people think it is.

28. Here, Allah has sworn an oath by Himself. The words Easts and Wests have been used because the sun rises and sets at a new angle every day during the year, and goes on rising and setting successively at different times around the globe. Thus considered the Easts and the Wests are not one but many. From another point of view as against the north and the south there is a direction of east and a direction of west. On this basis in Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā': 28 and Al-Muzzammil:19 the words *Rabb-ul-mashriqi wal-maghrib* have been used. From still another view-point the earth has two easts and two wests, for when the sun sets on one hemisphere, it rises on the other. On this basis the words *Rabb-ul-mashriqayn wa Rabb-ul-maghribayn* (Lord of two easts and two wests) have been used in Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān: 17. (For further explanation, see E.N. 17 of Ar-Raḥmān).

29. This is that for which Allah Almighty has sworn an oath of His being Lord of the Easts and Wests. It means: "As We are Owners of the Easts and Wests, the whole earth is under Our control and power, and you have no power to escape Our punishment: We can destroy you as and when We like and can create another people that may be better than you."

30. There is a difference of opinion among the commentators about the meaning of the word *nuṣub*. Some have interpreted it to mean idols, according to which the meaning would be: "They would be racing towards the place appointed by the Lord of Resurrection as they race today towards the shrines of their idols"; and some others have taken *nuṣub* to mean the goal signs which are set for the competitors in a race, so that each tries to reach and touch the appointed post before the other.



LXXI

NŪḤ

نُوح

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LXXI
NŪḤ
نُوح

INTRODUCTION

Name

"Nūḥ" is the name of this Sūrah as well as the title of its subject-matter, for in it, from beginning to the end, the story of the Prophet Noah has been related.

Period of Revelation

This also is one of the earliest Sūrahs o bc revealed at Makkah, but the internal evidence of its subject-matter shows that it was sent down in the period when opposition to the Holy Prophet's message of Islam by the disbelievers of Makkah had grown very strong and active.

Theme and Subject

In this Sūrah the story of the Prophet Noah has not been related only for the sake of story-telling, but its object is to warn the disbelievers of Makkah, so as to say: "You, O people of Makkah, are adopting towards Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) the same attitude as the people of the Prophet Noah had adopted towards him; if you do not change this attitude, you too would meet with the same end." This has not been said in so many words anywhere in the Sūrah, but in the background of the conditions under which this story was narrated to the people of Makkah, this subject itself became obvious.

Vv. 2-4 briefly explain how he began his mission and what he preached.

Then after suffering hardships and troubles in the way of preaching his mission for ages the report that he made to his Lord has been given in vv. 5-20. In it he states how he had been trying to bring his people to the right path and how his people had stubbornly opposed him.

After this, the Prophet Noah's final submission has been recorded in vv. 21-24, in which he prays to his Lord, saying: "These people have rejected my invitation: they are blindly following their chiefs, who have devised a tremendous plot of deceit and cunning. Time now has come when these people should be deprived of every grace to accept guidance." This was not an expression of impatience by the Prophet Noah, but when after having preached his message under extremely trying circumstances for centuries he became utterly disappointed with his people, he formed the opinion that no chance whatever was left of their coming to the right path. His this opinion fully conformed to Allah's own decision. Thus, in the next verse (25), it has been said: "The torment of Allah descended on those people because of their misdeeds."

In the concluding verse, the Prophet Noah's supplication that he made to his Lord, right at the time the torment descended, has been recorded. In it he prays for his own and for all the believers' forgiveness, and makes a submission to Allah to the effect: "Do not leave any of the disbelievers alive on the earth, for they have become

utterly devoid of every good: they will not beget any but disbelieving and wicked descendents."

While studying this Sūrah one should keep in view the details of the Prophet Noah's story which have been given in the Qur'ān above. For this see Al-A'rāf: 59-64, Yūnus: 71, 73, Hūd: 25-49, Al-Mu'minūn: 23-31, Ash-Shu'arā': 105-122, Al-'Ankabūt: 14, 15, Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 75-82, Al-Qamar: 9-16.



إِنَّآ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِۦٓ أَنْ أَنذِرْ قَوْمَكَ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
أَلِيمٌ ﴿١﴾ قَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ إِنِّى لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢﴾ أَنِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱتَّقُوهُ وَ
أَطِيعُونِ ﴿٣﴾ يَغْفِرْ لَكُم مِّن ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخِّرْكُمْ إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ أَجَلَ
ٱللَّهِ إِذَا جَآءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ ۖ لَوْ كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّى دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِى لَيْلًا
وَنَهَارًا ﴿٥﴾ فَلَمْ يَزِدْهُمْ دُعَآءِىٓ إِلَّا فِرَارًا ﴿٦﴾ وَإِنِّى كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ
جَعَلُوٓا۟ أَصَٰبِعَهُمْ فِىٓ ءَاذَانِهِمْ وَٱسْتَغْشَوْا۟ ثِيَابَهُمْ وَأَصَرُّوا۟ وَٱسْتَكْبَرُوا۟
ٱسْتِكْبَارًا ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ إِنِّى دَعَوْتُهُمْ جِهَارًا ﴿٨﴾ ثُمَّ إِنِّىٓ أَعْلَنتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُ لَهُمْ
إِسْرَارًا ﴿٩﴾ فَقُلْتُ ٱسْتَغْفِرُوا۟ رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ﴿١٠﴾ يُرْسِلِ ٱلسَّمَآءَ عَلَيْكُم
مِّدْرَارًا ﴿١١﴾ وَيُمْدِدْكُم بِأَمْوَٰلٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ
أَنْهَٰرًا ﴿١٢﴾ مَّا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا ﴿١٤﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَوْا۟ كَيْفَ
خَلَقَ ٱللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَٰوَٰتٍ طِبَاقًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَجَعَلَ ٱلْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ ٱلشَّمْسَ

LXXI

NŪH

Verses: 28 نوح *Revealed at Makkah*

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

We sent Noah to his people (as a Messenger, with the instruction): "Warn your people before there comes upon them a painful torment."[1] 1

He said, "O my people, I am a plain warner to you. (I warn you) that you should worship Allah, and fear Him and obey me.[2] Allah will forgive you your sins,[3] and will give you respite till an appointed time.[4] The fact is that when the appointed time of Allah comes, it 2-4

cannot be deferred.[5] Would that you know it."[6]

5-20 Noah submitted,[7] "O my Lord, I called my people night and day, but my calling has only increased their aversion.[8] And whenever I called them that You might pardon them,[9] they thrust their fingers into their ears and covered their faces with their garments,[10] and grew obstinate and showed great arrogance.[11] Then I invited them openly and preached to them in public as well as in private. I said, 'Seek forgiveness from your Lord: indeed He is All-Forgiving. He will send abundant rains for you from heaven, will help you with wealth and children, will create gardens for you, and provide flowing rivers for you.[12] What is the matter with you that you do not expect for Allah any dignity,[13] although He has created you in successive stages?[14] Do you not see how Allah has created seven heavens, one above the other and made the moon a light in them and the sun a lamp? And Allah has caused you to grow out of the earth in a strange way,[15] then He will restore you to the same earth, and will raise you up from it suddenly. And Allah has spread out the earth as a carpet for you that you may walk in its open paths'."

---

1 "Warn your people ... ": Warn them that the errors and moral evils that they were involved in, would only earn them Allah's punishment, if they did not desist from them, and tell them what way they should adopt in order to ward off that punishment.

2. The three things which the Prophet Noah presented before his people at the outset of his mission of Prophethood were: (1) Worship of Allah, (2) adoption of piety (*taqwā*), and (3) obedience of the Messenger. Worship of Allah meant that they should give up worship and service of all others and should acknowledge Allah alone as their Deity and should worship and carry out His commands alone. *Taqwā* (piety) meant that they should refrain from all those works which caused Allah's anger and displeasure, and should instead adopt such attitude in their lives as the God fearing people should adopt. As for "obey me", it meant that they should obey the commands that he gave them as Allah's Messenger.

3. The sentence *yaghfir la-kum min dhunūb-i-kum* in the original does not mean that Allah will forgive some of their sins, but its correct meaning is: "If you accept and acknowledge the three things which are being presented before you, He will forgive all the sins that you have committed in the past."

4. That is, "If you accepted these three things, you would be given respite to live in the world until the time that Allah has appointed for your natural death."

5. "The appointed time of Allah .. ": the time fixed by Allah for sending down a torment on a people. In this regard the Qur'ān has at several places stated explicitly that when Allah's torment has been decreed for a certain people, they are not pardoned even if they affirm the faith after it.

6. That is, "If you come to know fully well that the time which is now passing after you have received Allah's message through me, is, in fact, a period of respite that has been granted to you for affirming the faith—and there is no chance of escape from Allah's torment after the term of respite has elapsed—you would testify to the faith without delay and would not like to postpone it until the torment actually started descending on you."

7. Omitting the history of a long period of preaching, now the Prophet Noah's petition that he made to Allah in the last stage of his worldly mission is being related.

8. That is, "As I went on calling them towards You, they went on fleeing farther and farther away from You."

9. "That you might pardon them": that they might give up their attitude of disobedience and beg forgiveness of Allah, for in that way alone they could be forgiven by Allah.

10. They covered their faces either because they did not even like to have a look at the Prophet Noah's face, not to speak of listening to what he said, or they did so in order to hide their own faces from him as they passed by him so that he could not recognize and address them. This precisely was the attitude and conduct which the disbelievers of Makkah were adopting towards the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). In Sūrah Hūd: 5, their attitude has been described thus: "Behold, they turn aside their chests in order to hide themselves from him. Beware, even when they cover themselves up with their garments, Allah knows alike what they hide and what they show; He indeed knows even the secrets they conceal in their breasts." (For explanation, see E.N, 5, 6 of Hūd).

11. "Arrogance" implies that they thought it was below their dignity to bow before the Truth and accept the admonition of Allah's Messenger. As for example, if a gentlmen admonishes a perverted person and he, in response, shakes his head and walks away haughtily, this would amount to rejecting the admonition with arrogance.

12. This theme has been expressed at several places in the Qur'ān that the rebellious attitude against God causes man to lead a wretched life not only in the Hereafter but also in this world. Contrary to this, if a nation adopts the way of faith and piety and obedience to Divine Commands, instead of disobedience, it benefits it not only in the Hereafter but also in the world; it is favoured with every

kind of blessing. In Sūrah Tā Hā it has been said: "And whoever turns away from My Admonition, will have a wretched life in the world, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection." (v. 124). In Sūrah Al-Mā'idah it has been said: "Had the people of the Book observed the Torah and the Gospel and the other Books which had been sent down by their Lord, abundance of provisions would have been given to them from above and from beneath." (v. 66). In Al-A'rāf: "Had the people of the settlements believed and adopted the way of piety, We would have opened on them doors of blessings from the heavens and the earth." (v. 96). In Sūrah Hūd, the Prophet Hūd addressed his people, saying: "And O my people, beg forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him in penitence, and He will open the gates of heavens for you and add more strength to your present strength." (v. 52). Through the Holy Prophet himself in this very Sūrah Hūd, the people of Makkah have been admonished to the effect: "And you should beg forgiveness of your Lord, then return to Him, and He will provide you with good provisions of life till an appointed term." (v. 3). According to the *Ḥadīth*, the Holy Prophet said to the Quraish: "There is a word which, if you accept, would enable you to rule over the Arab as well as the non-Arab world." (For explanation, see E.N. 96 of Al-Mā'idah, E.N.'s 3, 57 of Hūd, E.N. 105 of Ṭā Ḥā; Introduction to Sūrah Ṣuad).

Acting on this same instruction from the Qur'ān, once during a famine Ḥaḍrat 'Umar came out to invoke Allah for the rain and begged only forgiveness of Him. The people said: "O Commander of the Faithful, you have not prayed for the rain." He replied: "I have knocked at the doors of heaven wherefrom the rain is sent down", and then he recited these verses of Sūrah Nūḥ to them. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathīr). Likewise, when in the assembly of Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī, a person complained of drought, he said to him "Beg forgiveness of Allah." Another person complained of poverty, a third one said that he was not being blessed with children, a fourth one said that his harvest had failed, and he continued to remind everyone to beg forgiveness of Allah. The people asked: "How is it that you have suggested to all the people one and the same cure for the different complaints? He in response recited these verses of Sūrah Nūḥ to them" (Al-Kashshaf).

13. It means: "As for the petty chiefs of the world, you think it would be dangerous to do anything against their dignity, but as for the Creator and Lord of the universe, you do not expect that He would also be a Being endowed with dignity. You rebel against Him, associate others in His Divinity, disobey His Commands, and yet you are not at all afraid that He would punish you for your misconduct."

14. That is, "He has brought you to the present stage after passing you through different stages of creation and phases of development. In the beginning you lay in the form of sperm and ovum separately in the loins of your father and

mother. Then the two were combined by the power of Allah and you were conceived. Then for nine months in the womb of the mother you were gradually formed into a perfect human form and were endowed with all those capabilities which you needed to function as a man in the world. Then you came out as a child from the mother's womb, and you were developed from one state to another constantly until you attained to full youth and then old age. While passing through all these stages you lay wholly in the power of Allah at all times. Had He so willed He would not have allowed you to be conceived but allowed another person to be conceived in your place. Had He so pleased He would have made you blind, deaf, dumb, or a cripple, in the mother's womb itself, or made you mentally deficient. Had He so liked you would not have been born as a living child. Even after your birth He could have destroyed you any time by causing you to fall a victim to one or other accident suddenly. About that God under Whose power you are so powerless, how could you have taken it into your head that you could commit any insolence against Him, could regard Him with every treachery and ingratitude, could rebel against Him as and when you pleased, and could do all this with impunity?

15. Here, the creation of man out of the substances of the earth has been compared to the growth of vegetation. Just as at one time there was no vegetation on the earth, then Allah caused it to grow, so at one time man did not exist, then Allah created him.

سِرَاجًا ﴿١٦﴾ وَاللّٰهُ اَنْۢبَتَكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ نَبَاتًا ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُكُمْ فِيْهَا وَيُخْرِجُكُمْ
اِخْرَاجًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَرْضَ بِسَاطًا ﴿١٩﴾ لِّتَسْلُكُوْا مِنْهَا سُبُلًا فِجَاجًا ﴿٢٠﴾
قَالَ نُوْحٌ رَّبِّ اِنَّهُمْ عَصَوْنِيْ وَاتَّبَعُوْا مَنْ لَّمْ يَزِدْهُ مَالُهٗ وَوَلَدُهٗۤ اِلَّا
خَسَارًا ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَكَرُوْا مَكْرًا كُبَّارًا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَقَالُوْا لَا تَذَرُنَّ اٰلِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا
وَّلَا سُوَاعًا ۙ وَّلَا يَغُوْثَ وَيَعُوْقَ وَنَسْرًا ﴿٢٣﴾ وَقَدْ اَضَلُّوْا كَثِيْرًا ۚ وَلَا تَزِدِ
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ اِلَّا ضَلٰلًا ﴿٢٤﴾ مِمَّا خَطِيْٓـٰٔتِهِمْ اُغْرِقُوْا فَاُدْخِلُوْا نَارًا ۙ فَلَمْ يَجِدُوْا لَهُمْ
مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اَنْصَارًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَقَالَ نُوْحٌ رَّبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَى الْاَرْضِ مِنَ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ دَيَّارًا ﴿٢٦﴾ اِنَّكَ اِنْ تَذَرْهُمْ يُضِلُّوْا عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوْٓا اِلَّا فَاجِرًا
كَفَّارًا ﴿٢٧﴾ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِمَنْ دَخَلَ بَيْتِيَ مُؤْمِنًا وَّلِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ ۗ وَلَا تَزِدِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ اِلَّا تَبَارًا ﴿٢٨﴾

21-24 Noah said, "O my Lord, they have disobeyed me and followed those (chiefs) whose wealth and children have increased them only in loss. They have devised a mighty plot;[16] they said, 'Do not at all abandon your gods, and do not abandon *Wadd* nor *Suwā'*, nor *Yaghūth* and *Ya'ūq* and *Nasr*.[17] They have led many people astray, and so (O Lord), increase not the wrongdoers in anything but deviation'."[18]

25-28 Only because of their sins they were drowned and were cast into Fire.[19] Then they found no helper to save them from Allah.[20] And Noah prayed: "My Lord, leave not on the earth any dweller from among the disbelievers. If you leave them, they would lead Your servants astray, and would beget none but sinners and disbelievers. My Lord, forgive me and my parents and whoever has entered my house as a believer, and all believing men and all believing women, and increase not the wrongdoers in anything but ruin."

---

16. "Mighty plot": All those deceits, deceptions and frauds which the chiefs and religious guides were employing in an attempt to mislead the common people against the teachings of the Prophet Noah. For example, they said: "Noah is no more than a mere man like yourselves. How can one believe that Allah sends down Revelations to him?. (Al-A'rāf: 63, Hūd: 27). "We also see that only the

meanest of us have become his followers without due thought. Had there been some weight in what he says, the elders of the people would have believed in him." (Hūd: 27). "Had Allah willed, He would have sent down angels." (Al-Mu'minūn: 24). "Had he been sent by Allah, he would possess treasures, he would know the un-seen, and he would be free from all human needs, like the angels." (Hūd: 31). "We find nothing in him that might give him superiority over us." (Hūd: 27). "He merely intends to obtain superiority over you." (Al-Mu'minūn: 24). "Obviously, this man is possessed." (Al-Mu'minūn: 25). Similar were the things that the Quraish chiefs said to mislead the people against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace).

17. Of the gods of the Prophet Noah's people only those gods have been mentioned, whom later the people of Arabia also had started worshipping and whose shrines were found all over the country at the advent of Islam. It is not impossible that the later generations heard the names of the ancient gods of Noah's people from the people who were saved from the flood, and when ignorance once again spread among their children, they made idols of the same gods and started worshipping them again.

Wadd was the god of the Banī Kalb bin Wabarah, a branch of the Qudā'ah tribe, whose shrine had been built at Daumat al-Jandal. In the ancient Arabian inscriptions he has been named as *Waddam ibam (father Wadd)*. Kalbī has stated that the image built to him was of a man of enormous size. The Quraish also acknowledged him as god and called him *Wudd*. It is after him that a person has been named 'Abd-i Wudd (slave of Wudd) in history.

Suwā' was the goddess of the Hudhayl tribe and her idol was a female figure. Her temple was situated at Ruhāṭ near Yanbū'.

Yaghūth was the god of An'um, a branch of the Ṭay tribe, and of some branches of the Madhjiḥ tribe. The people of Madhjiḥ had installed its idol, the image of a lion, at Jurash, a place between Yaman and Ḥijāz. Among the Quraish also some people had been named 'Abd-i Yaghūth.

Ya'ūq was the god of Khaywān, a branch of the Hamdān tribe, in the territory of Hamdān in Yaman; its idol was of the horse's figure.

Nasr was the god of Āl-i dhul-Kulā', a branch of the Himyar tribe, in the territory of Himyar; it had its idol installed at Balkha' and had the image of the vulture. In the ancient inscriptions of Sabā its name has been written as Nasor. Its temple was called *bayt Nasor* (house of Nasor) and its devotees *ahl Nasor* (people of Nasor). The ruins of the ancient temples that are found in Arabia and in the adjoining lands have the image of the vulture made on the doors of most of them.

18. As we have explained in the introduction to this Sūrah, the Prophe Noah did not invoke this curse out of impatience but he invoked it when, afte doing full justice to the preaching of his mission for many centuries, he became totally despaired of any success with his people. Similar were the conditions under which the Prophet Moses also had cursed Pharaoh and his people, thus: "Lord, destroy their wealth and harden their hearts in a manner so that they do not believe until they see the painful torment." And Allah, in response, had said: "The prayer of you both has been granted" Yūnus: 88-89). Like the Prophet Moses', the Prophet Noah's curse also was in complete conformity with Divine Will. Thus, in Sūrah Hūd it has been said: "And it was revealed to Noah: No more of your people will believe in you now than those who have already believed. So, do not grieve at their misdeeds." (v. 36).

19. That is, "Drowning was not their end, but after death their souls were immediately subjected to the punishment of the Fire." This precisely was the treatment that was meted out to Pharaoh and his people, as has been stated in Sūrah Al-Mu'min: 45-46. (For explanation, see F.N. 63 of Al-Mu'min). This verse also is of those verses which prove the punishment of *barzakh* (intermediary stage between death and Resurrection).

20. That is, "None of the gods whom they looked upon as their supporters and helpers came to their rescue." This, in fact, was a warning to the people of Makkah, as if to say: "If you too are subjected to the torment of Allah, these gods on whom you have placed all your reliance, will avail you absolutely nothing."



LXXII

AL-JINN

الجنّ

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXII
AL-JINN

الجنّ

INTRODUCTION

Name

"Al-Jinn" is the name of this Sūrah as well as the title of its subject-matter, for in it the event of the Jinn's hearing the Qur'ān and returning to their people to preach Islam to them has been related in detail.

Period of Revelation

According to a tradition related in Bukhārī and Muslim, on the authority of Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, once the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was going to visit the Fair of 'Ukāz with some of his

Companions. On the way he led the Fajr Prayer at Nakhlah. At that time a company of the jinn happened to pass that way. When they heard the Qur'ān being recited, they tarried and listened to it attentively. This very event has been described in this Sūrah.

Most of the commentators, on the basis of this tradition, believe that this relates to the Holy Prophet's well-known journey to Ṭā'if, which had taken place three years before the Hijrah in the 10th year of the Prophethood. But this is not correct for several reasons. The jinn's hearing the Qur'ān during the journey to Ṭā'if has been related in Al-Ahqāf: 29-32. A cursory reading of those verses shows that the jinn who had believed after hearing the Qur'ān on that occasion were already believers in the Prophet Moses and the previous scriptures. On the contrary, vv. 2-7 of this Sūrah clearly show that the jinn who heard the Qur'ān on this occasion were polytheists and deniers of the Hereafter and Prophethood. Then, it is confirmed historically that in his journey to Ṭā'if none accompanied the Holy Prophet except Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Ḥārithah. On the contrary, concerning this journey Ibn 'Abbās says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was accompanied by some of his Companions. Furthermore, the traditions also agree that in that journey the jinn heard the Qur'ān when the Holy Prophet had stopped at Nakhlah on his return journey from Ṭā'if to Makkah, and in this journey, according to the traditions of Ibn 'Abbās, the event of the jinn's hearing the Qur'ān occurred when the Holy Prophet was going to 'Ukāẓ from Makkah. Therefore, in view of these reasons what seems to be correct is that in Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf and Sūrah Al-Jinn, one and the same event has not been narrated, but these were two separate events, which took place during two separate journeys.

As far as Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf is concerned, it is agreed that the event mentioned in it occurred on the return journey from Ṭā'if in the 10th year of Prophethood. As for the question, when this second event took place, its answer is not given by the tradition of Ibn 'Abbās, nor any other historical tradition shows as to when the Holy Prophet had gone to the Fair of 'Ukāẓ along with some of his Companions. However, a little consideration of vv, 8-10 of this Sūrah shows that this could only be an event of the earliest stage of Prophethood. In these verses it has been stated that before the appointment of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to Divine Mission the jinn used to have one or another

opportunity to eavesdrop in the heavens in order to hear news of the unseen, but after it they suddenly found that angels had been set as guards and meteorites were being shot on every side so that they could find no place of safety from where they could hear the secret news. Thereupon they had set about searching for the unusual thing that had occurred on the earth, or was going to occur, because of which the security measures had been tightened up. Probably since then many companies of the jinn must have been moving about in search of the unusual occurrence and one of them after having heard the Qur'ān from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) must have formed the opinion that this was the very thing for the sake of which all the gates of the heavens had been shut against the jinn.

Reality of Jinn

Before one starts the study of this Sūrah one must clearly know what is the reality of the jinn so as to avoid any possible mental confusion. Many people of the modern times are involved in the misunderstanding that the jinn are not real, but only a figment of the ancient superstition and myths. They have not formed this opinion on the basis that they have known all the realities and truths about the universe and have thus discovered that the jinn do not exist. They cannot claim to possess any such knowledge either. But they have assumed without reason and proof that nothing exists in the universe except what they can see, whereas the sphere of human perceptions as against the vastness of this great universe is not even comparable to a drop of water as against the ocean. Here, the person who thinks that what he does not perceive, does not exist, and what exists must necessarily be perceived, in fact, provides a proof of the narrowness of his own mind. With this mode of thought, not to speak of the jinn, man cannot even accept and acknowledge any reality, which he cannot directly experience and observe, and he cannot even admit the existence of God, to say nothing of admitting any other unseen reality.

Those of the Muslims who have been influenced by modernism, but cannot deny the Qur'ān either, have given strange interpretations of the clear statements of the Qur'ān about the jinn, Iblīs and Satan. They say that this does not refer to any hidden creation which may have its own independent existence, but it sometimes implies man's own animal forces, which have been called Satan, and sometimes it implies savage

and wild mountain tribes, and sometimes the people who used to listen to the Qur'ān secretly. But the statements of the Qur'ān in this regard are so clear and explicit that these interpretations bear no relevance to them whatever.

The Qur'ān frequently mentions the jinn and the men in a manner as to indicate that they are two separate creations. For this, see Al-A'rāf: 38. Hūd: 119, Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah: 25, 29, Ahqāf: 18, Adh-Dhāriyāt: 56, and the entire Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān, which bears such clear evidence as to leave no room to regard the jinn as a human species.

In Sūrah Al-A'rāf: 12, Al-Ḥijr: 26-27 and Ar-Rahmān: 14-15, it has been expressly stated that man was created out of clay and jinn out of fire.

In Sūrah Al-Hijr: 27, it has been said that the jinn had been created before man. The same thing is testified by the story of Adam and Iblīs, which has been told at seven different places in the Qur'ān, and at every place it confirms that Iblis was already there at the creation of man. Moreover, in Sūrah Al-Kahf: 50 it has been stated that Iblīs belonged to the jinn.

In Sūrah Al-A'rāf: 27, it has been stated in clear words that the jinn see the human beings but the human beings do not see them.

In Sūrah Al-Ḥijr: 16-18, Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāāffāt: 6-10 and Sūrah Al-Mulk: 15, it has been said that although the jinn can ascend to the heavens, they cannot exceed a certain limit; if they try to ascend beyond that limit and try to hear what goes on in the heavens, they are not allowed to do so, and if they try to eavesdrop they are driven away by meteorites. By this the belief of the polytheistic Arabs that the jinn possess the knowledge of the unseen, or have access to Divine secrets, has been refuted. The same error has also been refuted in Sabā: 14.

Al-Baqarah: 30-34 and Al-Kahf: 50 show that Allah has entrusted man with the vicegerency of the earth and the men are superior to the jinn. Although the jinn also have been given certain extraordinary powers and abilities an example of which is found in An-Naml: 39, yet the animals likewise have been given some powers greater than man, but these are no argument that the animals are superior to man.

The Qur'ān also explains that the jinn, like men, are a creation possessed of power and authority, and they, just like them, can choose between obedience and disobedience, faith and disbelief. This is confirmed by the story of Satan and the event of the jinn affirming the faith as found in Sūrahs Al-Ahqāf and Al-Jinn.

At scores of places in the Qur'ān, it has also been stated that Iblīs at the very creation of Adam had resolved to misguide mankind, and since then the Satanic jinn have been persistently trying to mislead man, but they do not have the power to overwhelm him and make him do something forcibly. However, they inspire him with evil suggestions, beguile him and make evil seem good to him. For this, see An-Nisā: 117-120, Al-A'rāf: 11-17, Ibrāhim: 22, Al-Ḥijr: 30-42, An-Nahl: 98-100, Banī Isrā'īl: 61-65.

The Qur'ān also tells us that in the pre-Islamic ignorance the polytheistic Arabs regarded the jinn as associates of God, worshipped them and thought they were descended from God. For this, see Al-An'ām: 100, Sabā: 40-41, Aṣ-Ṣāāffāt: 158.

From these details, it becomes abundantly clear that the jinn have their own objective existence and are a concealed creation of an entirely different species from man. Because of their mysterious qualities, ignorant people have formed exaggerated notions and concepts about them and their powers, and have even worshipped them, but the Qur'ān has explained the whole truth about them, which shows what they are and what they are not.

Theme and Topics

In this Sūrah in vv. 1-15, it has been told what was the impact of the Qur'ān on the company of the jinn when they heard it and what they said to their fellow jinn when they returned to them. Allah, in this connection, has not cited their whole conversation but only those particular things which were worthy of mention. That is why the style is not that of a continuous speech but sentences have been cited so as to indicate that they said this and this. If one studies these sentences spoken by the jinn carefully, one can easily understand the real object of the narration of this event of their affirming the faith and of mentioning this conversation of theirs with their people in the Qur'ān. The explanations

that we have given of their statements in our Notes will be of further help in understanding this object.

After this, in vv. 16-18, the people have been admonished to the effect: "If you refrain from polytheism and follow the way of righteousness firmly, you will be blessed; otherwise if you turn away from the admonition sent down by Allah, you will meet with a severe punishment." Then, in vv. 19-23, the disbelievers of Makkah have been reproached, as if to say: "When the Messenger of Allah calls you towards Allah, you surround and mob him from every side, whereas the only duty of the Messenger is to convey the messages of Allah. He does not claim to have any power to bring any gain or cause any harm to the people." Then, in vv. 24-25 the disbelievers have been warned to the effect: "Today you are trying to overpower and suppress the Messenger seeing that he is helpless and friendless, but a time will come when you will know who in actual fact is helpless and friendless. Whether that time is yet far off, or near at hand, the Messenger has no knowledge thereof, but it will come to pass in any case." In conclusion, the people have been told: The Knower of the unseen is Allah alone. The Messenger receives only that knowledge which Allah is pleased to give him This knowledge pertains to matters connected with the performance of the duties of Prophethood, and it is delivered to him in such security which does not admit of any external interference whatever.



قُلْ اُوْحِيَ اِلَيَّ اَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْاٰنًا عَجَبًا ۙ﴿۱﴾
يَّهْدِيْٓ اِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَاٰمَنَّا بِهٖ ۭ وَلَنْ نُّشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَآ اَحَدًا ۙ﴿۲﴾ وَّاَنَّهٗ تَعٰلٰى جَدُّ
رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَّلَا وَلَدًا ۙ﴿۳﴾ وَّاَنَّهٗ كَانَ يَقُوْلُ سَفِيْهُنَا عَلَي اللّٰهِ
شَطَطًا ۙ﴿۴﴾ وَّاَنَّا ظَنَنَّآ اَنْ لَّنْ تَقُوْلَ الْاِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَي اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا ۙ﴿۵﴾ وَّاَنَّهٗ
كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْاِنْسِ يَعُوْذُوْنَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوْهُمْ رَهَقًا ۙ﴿۶﴾ وَّ
اَنَّهُمْ ظَنُّوْا كَمَا ظَنَنْتُمْ اَنْ لَّنْ يَّبْعَثَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدًا ۙ﴿۷﴾ وَّاَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاۗءَ
فَوَجَدْنٰهَا مُلِئَتْ حَرَسًا شَدِيْدًا وَّشُهُبًا ۙ﴿۸﴾ وَّاَنَّا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ

LXXII

AL-JINN

الجنّ

Verse: 28 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

O Prophet, say: It has been revealed to me that a company of 1-9
the jinn listened,[1] then (returnig to their folks) they said, "We have indeed heard a wonderful Qur'ān[2] which guides to the right way, so we have believed in it, and now we shall never associate anyone with our Lord."[3] And that: "Our Lord's majesty is exalted: He has neither taken a wife nor a son."[4] And that: "The foolish among us[5] have been uttering falsehood against Allah." And that: "We thought that the men and the jinn could never utter a lie against God."[6] And that: "Some people from among the men used to seek refuge with some people from among the jinn, so they caused the jinn to become even more arrogant."[7] And that: "Men thought, even as you thought, that Allah would not send anyone as a Messenger."[8] And that: " We searched the

heavens and found it filled with guards and shooting-stars." And that: "Before this we used to find a seat in heaven for eavesdropping, but now if some one tries to eavesdrop, he finds a shooting-star lying in ambush for him."[9]

---

1. This shows that the jinn at that time were not visible to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), nor he knew that they were hearing the Qur'ān being recited, but Allah informed him of the incident afterwards by Revelation. Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās also has, in connection with this incident, stated: "The Holy Messenger of Allah had not recited the Qur'ān before the jinn, nor did he see them." (Muslim, Tirmidhī, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarīr).

2. The words in the original are: *Qur'ān-an 'ajabā. Qur'ān* means "something which is read again and again", and the jinn probably used this word in this very meaning, for they were introduced to this Divine Revelation for the first time, and they did not perhaps know then that what they were hearing, was the Qur'ān itself. *'Ajab* is a superlative, which is used in Arabic for a wonderful thing. So, what the jinn said means: "We have heard such a wonderful recital which is unique both in its language and in its subject-matter."

This also shows that the jinn not only hear what human beings say but also understand their language fully, although it is not necessary that all the jinn might know all the human languages. It is possible that those of them who live in a particular region of the earth might know the language of the people of that region. But in any case this statement of the Qur'ān clearly shows that the jinn who listened to the Qur'ān at that time were so conversant with the Arabic language that they not only appreciated the matchless eloquence of the Divine Word but also understood its sublime subject-matter fully well.

3. This throws light on several things: (1) That the jinn do not deny Allah's existence and His being Lord and Sustainer; (2) that among them also there are polytheists, who like polytheistic human beings ascribe divinity to others than Allah; thus, the community of the jinn whose members heard the Qur'ān was polytheistic; (3) that the Prophethood and revelation of Divine scriptures does not exist among the jinn, but whoever of them believe, they believe in the Prophets raised among human beings and in the Books brought by them. This same thing is confirmed by Al-Ahqāf: 29-30, where it has been stated that the jinn who had then heard the Qur'ān, were from among the followers of the Prophet Moses, and they after having heard the Qur'ān, had invited their people to believe in the Revelation that had been sent down by God confirming the previous scriptures. Sūrah Ar-Rahmān also points to the same, for its whole subject-matter shows that the audience of the Holy Prophet's invitation are both the men and the jinn.

4. From this we know two things; (1) That these jinn were either from among the Christian jinn, or they were followers of a different religion in which Allah was regarded as having children and families. (2) That at that time the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was reciting some such part of the Qur'ān hearing which they realized the error of their creed and knew that it was sheer ignorance and impudence to ascribe wife and children to the High and Exalted Being of Allah.

5. The word *safīhunā* as used in the Text can be spoken for an individual as well as for a group. If it is taken for a foolish individual, it would imply *Iblīs*, and if for a group, it would imply a group of foolish jinn who said such things.

6. That is, "We were misled by those falsehoods because we could never think that the men or the jinn could ever dare forge a lie about Allah, but having heard this Qur'ān we now know that they were, in fact, liars."

7. Ibn 'Abbās says that in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance when the Arabs had to spend a night in some un-inhabited, desolate valley, they would shout out: "We seek refuge of the jinn, who is owner of this valley." In other traditions of the pre-Islamic ignorance also the same thing has been reported frequently. For example, if in a place they ran short of water and fodder, the wandering bedouins would send one of their men to some other place to see if water and fodder were available; and when they reached the new site under his direction, they would shout out before they halted to pitch the camp: "We seek refuge of the sustainer of this valley so that we may live here in peace from every calamity." They believed that every un-inhabited place was under the control of one or another jinn, and if someone stayed there without seeking his refuge, the jinn would either himself trouble the settlers, or would let others trouble them. These believing jinn are referring to this very thing. They meant that when man, the vicegerent of the earth, started fearing them without any reason, and started seeking their refuge instead of God's, it caused their people to become even more arrogant, haughty and wicked, and they became even more fearless and bold in adopting error and disbelief.

8. Another meaning of this sentence can be: "Allah will not resurrect anyone after death." As the words are comprehensive they can be taken to mean that, as among human beings, so among the jinn too there were the people who denied both the Prophethood and the Hereafter. However, in view of the theme that follows, the meaning that we have given in the text above is preferable, for according to it these believing jinn tell the people of their community: "Your view is proved wrong that Allah will not appoint anyone as a Messenger. In fact, the gates of heavens have been closed on us only because Allah has already appointed a Messenger."

[Contd. on p. 92

لِلسَّمْعِ ۚ فَمَنْ يَّسْتَمِعِ الْاٰنَ يَجِدْ لَهٗ شِهَابًا رَّصَدًا ۙ﴿۹﴾ وَّاَنَّا لَا نَدْرِيْٓ اَشَرٌّ اُرِيْدَ
بِمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ اَمْ اَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا ﴿۱۰﴾ وَاَنَّا مِنَّا الصّٰلِحُوْنَ وَمِنَّا دُوْنَ
ذٰلِكَ ۭ كُنَّا طَرَاۗىِٕقَ قِدَدًا ﴿۱۱﴾ وَّاَنَّا ظَنَنَّآ اَنْ لَّنْ نُّعْجِزَ اللّٰهَ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَنْ
نُّعْجِزَهٗ هَرَبًا ﴿۱۲﴾ وَّاَنَّا لَمَّا سَمِعْنَا الْهُدٰٓى اٰمَنَّا بِهٖ ۭ فَمَنْ يُّؤْمِنْۢ بِرَبِّهٖ فَلَا
يَخَافُ بَخْسًا وَّلَا رَهَقًا ﴿۱۳﴾ وَّاَنَّا مِنَّا الْمُسْلِمُوْنَ وَمِنَّا الْقٰسِطُوْنَ ۭ فَمَنْ اَسْلَمَ
فَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا ﴿۱۴﴾ وَاَمَّا الْقٰسِطُوْنَ فَكَانُوْا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَبًا ﴿۱۵﴾ وَاَنْ لَّوِ
اسْتَقَامُوْا عَلَي الطَّرِيْقَةِ لَاَسْقَيْنٰهُمْ مَّاۗءً غَدَقًا ﴿۱۶﴾ لِّنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيْهِ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّعْرِضْ
عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهٖ يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا ﴿۱۷﴾ وَاَنَّ الْمَسٰجِدَ لِلّٰهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوْا مَعَ اللّٰهِ
اَحَدًا ﴿۱۸﴾ وَّاَنَّهٗ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللّٰهِ يَدْعُوْهُ كَادُوْا يَكُوْنُوْنَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا ﴿۱۹﴾ قُلْ
اِنَّمَآ اَدْعُوْا رَبِّيْ وَلَآ اُشْرِكُ بِهٖٓ اَحَدًا ﴿۲۰﴾ قُلْ اِنِّىْ لَآ اَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَّلَا رَشَدًا ﴿۲۱﴾
قُلْ اِنِّىْ لَنْ يُّجِيْرَنِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ اَحَدٌ ۙ وَّلَنْ اَجِدَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مُلْتَحَدًا ﴿۲۲﴾ اِلَّا
بَلٰغًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِسٰلٰتِهٖ ۭ وَمَنْ يَّعْصِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ فَاِنَّ لَهٗ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ
خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَبَدًا ﴿۲۳﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا رَاَوْا مَا يُوْعَدُوْنَ فَسَيَعْلَمُوْنَ مَنْ اَضْعَفُ نَاصِرًا
وَّاَقَلُّ عَدَدًا ﴿۲۴﴾ قُلْ اِنْ اَدْرِيْٓ اَقَرِيْبٌ مَّا تُوْعَدُوْنَ اَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهٗ رَبِّيْٓ اَمَدًا ﴿۲۵﴾
عٰلِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلٰي غَيْبِهٖٓ اَحَدًا ﴿۲۶﴾ اِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضٰى مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ فَاِنَّهٗ
يَسْلُكُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهٖ رَصَدًا ﴿۲۷﴾ لِّيَعْلَمَ اَنْ قَدْ اَبْلَغُوْا رِسٰلٰتِ
رَبِّهِمْ وَاَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَاَحْصٰى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا ﴿۲۸﴾

And that: "We did not know whether some evil was intended for the dwellers of the earth or their Lord wanted to show them the right way."[10] And that: "Some of us are righteous, while some are otherwise. We follow different ways."[11] And that: "We thought that we could neither frustrate Allah in the earth nor frustrate Him by flight."[12] And that: "As soon as we heard the message of guidance, we believed in it. Now whoever believes in his Lord, will have neither fear of loss nor of injustice."[13] And that: "Some of us are Muslims (submissive to Allah) and some deviators from the Truth. Those who have adopted Islam (the way of submission) have found the way to salvation, and those who have deviated from the Truth, will become fuel for Hell."[14] 10-15

And[15] (O Prophe, say: it has been revealed to me:) "If the people had steadfastly pursued the right way, We would have given them abundant waters to drink[16] that We might try them by that blessing.[17] And he who turns away from his Lord's remembrance,[18] his Lord shall punish him with a severe torment. And that the mosques are for Allah; therefore, do not call upon anyone else in them along with Allah.[19] And that when the servant of Allah[20]" stood up to invoke Him, the people were ready to assault him." O Prophet, say; "I call upon my Lord alone, and I do not associate anyone with Him."[21] Say, "I have no control over any harm or good for you." Say, "None can protect me from Allah, nor can I find any refuge apart from Him. My mission is only to convey what I receive from Him and His messages.[22] Now whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger for him awaits the fire of Hell: such people shall dwell in it for ever."[23] 16-23

(These people shall not change their ways) until when they see that what they are being promised, they shall come to know whose helpers are weaker and whose supporters are fewer in number.[24] Say, "I do not know whether that which you are being promised, is near at hand, or whether my Lord appoints a lengthy term for it.[25] He alone is the Knower of the unseen: He does not reveal His secrets to anyone[26] except to the Messenger whom He may choose[27] (for the purpose)* Then He appoints before him and behind him guards[28] that He may know that they have truly delivered the messages of their Lord;[29] and 24-28

He encompasses all their surroundings and keeps a count of each and every thing.[30]

Contd. from p. 89]

9. This is the reason why these jinn were now out searching as to what particularly had happened, or was going to happen, on the earth, which had necessitated strict security measures against eavesdropping so that they were driven away from wherever they tried to eavesdrop in any way.

10. This shows that such extraordinary measures were adopted in the heavens only on two kinds of occasions: first, when Allah might decide to inflict the dwellers of the earth with a torment, and the Divine will might be that before it was actually inflicted the jinn might not know and convey its news to warn their friendly human beings of the impending disaster. Second, that Allah might appoint a Messenger on the earth, and strict security measures might be adopted so that neither the messages being conveyed to him be interfered with by the satans nor should they be able to know beforehand what instructions were being given to the Messenger. Thus, the saying of the jinn means: "When we noticed that strict security measures had been adopted in the heavens for the safeguard of the news, and the meteorites were being showered profusely, we wanted to know which of the two things had happened: whether Allah had caused a torment to descend suddenly on some people of the earth, or a Messenger had been raised somewhere on the earth. We were on the lookout for the same when we heard the wonderful Revelation, which guides to the Right Path, and we came to know that Allah had not sent down a torment but had raised a Messenger to show the Right Way to the people." For further explanation, see I N.'s 8 to 12 of Al-Ḥijr, E.N. 7 of Aṣ-Ṣāāffāt, E.N. 11 of Al-Mulk).

11. That is, "Morally also there are good and bad jinn among us, and from the viewpoint of creed as well all do not follow one and the same religion, but we are divided into different groups." With these words the believing jinn want to convince the other jinn of their community that they certainly stood in need of finding out the right way and could not dispense with this need.

12. That is, "We were led by this very idea to the way of success. As we were not fearless of Allah and we believed that we would not be able to avoid His punishment if we disobeyed Him, so when we heard the Divine Revelation that had been sent to show the right way, we could not have the courage and boldness to persist in the beliefs that our foolish people had spread among us, after we had known the truth."

13. "Fear of loss": fear of being given a lesser reward than what one actually deserves for one's good deeds, and "injustice" that one may be deprived

of the reward for the good deeds done but duly punished for the errors committed, or punished innocent; no believer has any fear of such an injustice from Allah.

14. Here, one may ask: when, according to the Qur'ān, the jinn have been created from the fire, what harm can the fire of Hell do them? The answer is: Even according to the Qur'ān, man has been created out of the earth; why does then man feel hurt when a clod of earth is thrown at him? The truth is that although the whole body of man has been made from the earthly substances, when a living man of flesh and blood is moulded from them he becomes an entirely different thing from those substances; then other things made from the same substances become a means of causing harm to him. Likewise, although the jinn also have been created from the fire, when a living and sentient creation has been made from it, the same fire becomes a means of causing harm and hurt for it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 15 of Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān).

15. The conversation of the jinn having come to an end, with this begins the speech of Allah.

16. This is the same thing as has been said above in Sūrah Nūh: 10-11. "Seek forgiveness of Allah...He will send abundant rains for you from heaven." (For explanation, see E.N. 12 of Sūrah Nūḥ). Abundance of water has been used for abundance of blessings metaphorically for human life and habitation depend on water. Without water there can be no human settlement, nor can man's basic needs be fulfilled, nor his industries work and prosper.

17. "We might try them by that blessing": "We might see whether they remain grateful after having received the blessing or not, and whether they put Our blessing to right use or not."

18. "To turn away from Allah's remembrance" means that one may reject the advice and admonition sent down by Allah, or one may disdain giving ear to Allah's remembrance, or one may turn away from the worship of Allah.

19. The commentators generally have taken "mosques" to mean the places of worship. Accordingly, the verse means: "None should be associated in the worship of Allah in the places of worship. Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī says: The entire earth is a place of worship, and the verse means to say: polytheism ought not to be committed anywhere on God's earth." He has reasoned out this meaning from the Holy Prophet's *Ḥadīth*: "For me the entire earth has been made a place of worship and a means of obtaining purity." Ḥaḍrat Sa'īd bin Jubair has interpreted *masājid* to imply the parts of the body on which one prostrates oneself, i.e. the hands, the knees, toes and forehead. According to this explanation, the verse means: These limbs have been made by Allah; no one should prostrate oneself on these before anyone other than Allah.

20. "Servant of Allah": the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace).

21. That is, to call upon Allah is no objectionable thing, which may so provoke the people. The evil thing, however, is that one should associate another with Allah in His divinity, and this I never do; this is done by those who mob and surround me when they hear God mentioned by me.

22. That is, "I do not claim to have any share or role in the Godhead of Allah, nor that I possess any power in making or marring the people's destinies. I am only a Messenger and the mission that has been entrusted to me is no more than that I should convey the messages of Allah to you. As for the powers of Godhead, they wholly belong to Allah. Not to speak of benefiting or harming others, I do not have the power to cause good or harm even to myself. If I disobey Allah, I cannot seek and have refuge anywhere from His punishment, and I have no helper and protector beside Allah." (For further explanation, see E.N. 7 of Ash-Shūrā).

23. This does not mean that every sin and act of disobedience will cause one to live in Hell for ever, but in view of the context in which this thing has been said, the verse means: the one who does not accept the invitation to *Tauhid* given by Allah and His Messenger and does not refrain from polytheism will suffer in Hell for ever.

24. The background of this verse is that those of the Quraish who used to mob and surround the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as soon as they heard his invitation calling to Allah, were under the delusion that they had a strong band at their back and that the Holy Prophet had only a handful of men with him, and therefore, they would easily overwhelm him. At this it is being said: Today these people find the Messenger helpless and friendless and themselves supported and strengthened by great hosts and, therefore, feel encouraged and emboldened to suppress the invitation to the Truth. But when the evil time with which they are being threatened comes, they will know who in actual fact is helpless and friendless.

25. The style itself shows that this is an answer which has been given without citing the question. Probably, hearing what has been said above, the opponents might have asked mockingly and tauntingly: "When will the time with which you are threatening us come?" In response, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was commanded to say: "The time will certainly come, but I have not been told the date of its coming. Allah alone knows whether it will come soon, or whether a distant term has been set for it."

26. That is, the knowledge of the unseen wholly rests with Allah: He does not give the whole of this knowledge to anyone.

27. That is, the Messenger by himself is no knower of the unseen, but when Allah chooses him to perform the mission of Prophethood, He grants him the knowledge of those of the unseen truths which He is pleased to grant.

28. "Guards": Angels. That is, when Allah sends down the knowledge of the unseen realities to the Messenger by revelation, He appoints angels on every side to safeguard it so that the knowledge reaches the Messenger in a safe condition, free from every kind of adulteration. This is the same thing which has been expressed in vv. 8-9 above, saying: After the appointment of the Holy Messenger the jinn found that all the doors to the heavens had been closed, and they noticed that strict security measures had been adopted because of which no room had been left for them to eavesdrop.

29. This can have three meanings:(1) That the Messenger may know that the angels have delivered the messages of Allah to him precisely and accurately; (2) that Allah may know that the angels have conveyed the messages of their Lord to His Messenger precisely and accurately; and (3) that Allah may know that the Messenger has conveyed the messages of his Lord to His servants precisely and accurately. The words of the verse are comprehensive and may possibly imply all the three meanings. Besides, the verse also points out two other things: first, that the Messenger is given that knowledge of the unseen, which is necessary for him to perform his mission of Prophethood; second, that the angels keep watch that the Revelation reaches the Messenger safely and also that the Messenger conveys the messages of his Lord to His servants precisely and accurately.

30. That is, Allah's power so encompasses the Messenger as well as the angels that if they swerve even a little from His will, they can be detected immediately. Moreover, a complete record has been kept of each letter of the mesages sent down by Allah. The Messengers and the angels cannot dare add or subtract even a letter from them.



LXXIII
AL
MUZZAMMIL

المزّمّل

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXIII

AL-MUZZAMMIL

المزّمّل

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been so designated after the word *al-muzzammil* occurring in the very first verse. This is only a name and not a title of its subject-matter.

Period of Revelation

The two sections of this Sūrah were revealed in two separate periods.

The first section (vv. 1-19) is unanimously a Makki Revelation, and this is supported both by its subject - matter and by the traditions of the *Ḥadīth*. As for the question, in which specific period of the life at Makkah it was revealed, it is not answered by the tradition, but the internal evidence of the subject-matter of this section helps to determine the period of its revelation.

First, in it the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been instructed to the effect: "Arise during the night and worship Allah so that you may develop the capability to shoulder the heavy burden of Prophethood and to discharge its responsibilities." This shows that this Command must have been given in the earliest period of the Prophethood, when training was being imparted to the Holy Prophet by Allah for this office.

Secondly, a Command has been given in it that the Qur'ān be recited in the Tahajjud Prayer for half the night, or thereabout. This Command by itself points out that by that time at least so much of the Qur'ān had been revealed as could be recited for that long.

Thirdly, in this section the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been exhorted to have patience at the excesses being committed by his opponents, and the disbelievers of Makkah have been threatened with the torment. This shows that this section was revealed at a time when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had openly started preaching Islam and the opposition to him at Makkah had grown active and strong

About the second section (v. 20) although many of the commentators have expressed the opinion that this too was sent down at Makkah, yet some other commentators regard it as a Madani Revelation, and this same opinion is confirmed by the subject-matter of this section, for it mentions fighting in the way of Allah, and obviously, there could be no question of it at Makkah; it also contains the Command to pay the obligatory *zakāt*, and it is fully confirmed that the *zakāt* at a specific rate and with an exemption limit (*nisāb*) was enjoined at Madīnah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

In the first seven verses the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been commanded to the effect: "Prepare yourself to shoulder the responsibilities of the great Mission that has been entrusted to you; its

practical form is that you should rise during the hours of night and stand up in Prayer for half the night, or for a little more or less of it."

In vv 8-14, he has been exhorted to the effect: "Devote yourself exclusively to that God Who is the Owner of the whole universe. Entrust all your affairs to Him with full satisfaction of the heart. Bear with patience whatever your opponents may utter against you. Do not be intimate with them. Leave their affair to God: He Himself will deal with them."

Then, in vv. 15-19, those of the people of Makkah, who were opposing the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) have been warned, so as to say: "We have sent a Messenger to you just as We sent a Messenger to the Pharaoh. Just consider what fate the Pharaoh met when he did not accept the invitation of the Messenger of Allah. Supposing that you are not punished by a torment in this world, how will you save yourselves from the punishment for disbelief on the Day of Resurrection.

This is the subject-matter of the first section. The second section, according to a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Sa'īd bin Jubair, was sent down ten years later, and in it the initial Command given in connection with the Tahajjud Prayer, in the beginning of the first section, was curtailed. The new Command enjoined; Offer as much of the Tahajjud Prayer as you easily can, but what the Muslims should particularly mind and attend to is the five times obligatory Prayer a day: they should establish it regularly and punctually; they should discharge their *zakāt* dues accurately; and they should spend their wealth with sincere intentions for the sake of Allah. In conclusion, the Muslims have been exhorted, saying: "Whatever good works you do in the world, will not go waste, but they are like the provision which a traveller sends up in advance to his permanent place of residence. Whatever good you send up from the world, you will find it with Allah, and the provision thus sent up is much better than what you will have to leave behind in the world, and with Allah you will also get a much better and richer reward than what you have actually sent up before."

سُوْرَةُ الْمُزَّمِّل مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

يَاَيُّهَا الْمُزَّمِّلُ ۙ﴿۱﴾ قُمِ الَّيْلَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ۙ﴿۲﴾ نِّصْفَهٗۤ اَوِ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيْلًا ۙ﴿۳﴾ اَوْ زِدْ
عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْاٰنَ تَرْتِيْلًا ۙ﴿۴﴾ اِنَّا سَنُلْقِيْ عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيْلًا ۙ﴿۵﴾ اِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ الَّيْلِ
هِيَ اَشَدُّ وَطْاً وَّ اَقْوَمُ قِيْلًا ۙ﴿۶﴾ اِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيْلًا ۙ﴿۷﴾ وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ
رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ اِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيْلًا ۙ﴿۸﴾ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ
وَكِيْلًا ۙ﴿۹﴾ وَاصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيْلًا ۙ﴿۱۰﴾ وَذَرْنِيْ وَ
الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ اُولِي النَّعْمَةِ وَمَهِّلْهُمْ قَلِيْلًا ۙ﴿۱۱﴾ اِنَّ لَدَيْنَاۤ اَنْكَالًا وَّ جَحِيْمًا ۙ﴿۱۲﴾ وَّ
طَعَامًا ذَا غُصَّةٍ وَّعَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ۙ﴿۱۳﴾ يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الْاَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَكَانَتِ
الْجِبَالُ كَثِيْبًا مَّهِيْلًا ۙ﴿۱۴﴾ اِنَّاۤ اَرْسَلْنَاۤ اِلَيْكُمْ رَسُوْلًا شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَاۤ اَرْسَلْنَاۤ
اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُوْلًا ۙ﴿۱۵﴾ فَعَصٰى فِرْعَوْنُ الرَّسُوْلَ فَاَخَذْنٰهُ اَخْذًا وَّبِيْلًا ۙ﴿۱۶﴾
فَكَيْفَ تَتَّقُوْنَ اِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا يَّجْعَلُ الْوِلْدَانَ شِيْبًا ۙ﴿۱۷﴾ السَّمَآءُ مُنْفَطِرٌ بِهٖ كَانَ
وَعْدُهٗ مَفْعُوْلًا ۙ﴿۱۸﴾ اِنَّ هٰذِهٖ تَذْكِرَةٌ فَمَنْ شَآءَ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰى رَبِّهٖ سَبِيْلًا ۙ﴿۱۹﴾ اِنَّ
رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ اَنَّكَ تَقُوْمُ اَدْنٰى مِنْ ثُلُثَيِ الَّيْلِ وَنِصْفَهٗ وَثُلُثَهٗ وَطَآئِفَةٌ
مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ مَعَكَ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يُقَدِّرُ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ؕ عَلِمَ اَنْ لَّنْ تُحْصُوْهُ فَتَابَ
عَلَيْكُمْ فَاقْرَءُوْا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْاٰنِ ؕ عَلِمَ اَنْ سَيَكُوْنُ مِنْكُمْ مَّرْضٰى ۙ وَاٰخَرُوْنَ
يَضْرِبُوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ يَبْتَغُوْنَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللّٰهِ ۙ وَاٰخَرُوْنَ يُقَاتِلُوْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ
اللّٰهِ ؗ فَاقْرَءُوْا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنْهُ ۙ وَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَاَقْرِضُوا اللّٰهَ
قَرْضًا حَسَنًا ؕ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوْا لِاَنْفُسِكُمْ مِّنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوْهُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا وَّ
اَعْظَمَ اَجْرًا ؕ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿۲۰﴾

LXXIII
AL-MUZZAMMIL
المزّمّل

Verses: 20 *Revealed at Makkah and Madinah*

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

O you who sleeps covered up,[1] keep standing in Prayer at night 1-14
but a little:[2] half the night, or lessen it a little, or add to it a little;[3] and recite the Qur'ān calmly in a measured tone.[4] Indeed, We are about to send down on you a weighty Word.[5] In fact, the rising by night[6] is most effective for controlling the self[7] and most suitable for reciting the Qur'ān well,[8] for in the day time you have many an occupations. Remember the name of your Lord[9] and devote yourself to Him exclusively. He is the Owner of the East and the West; there is no god but He; therefore, take Him alone as your Guardian.[10] And bear with patience what they utter, and depart from them gracefully.[11] Leave it to Me to deal with those prosperous people who deny[12] (the Truth) and leave them as they are for a while. We have heavy fetters (for them)[13] and a blazing Fire, and a choking food and a painful torment. This will happen on the Day when the earth and the mountains shall become as heaps of scattering sand.[14]

To you [15] We have sent a Messenger to be a witness over you,[16] 15-19
even as We had sent a Messenger to the Pharaoh. (Then behold when) the Pharaoh disobeyed the Messenger, We seized him with a firm grip. If you too, refuse to believe, then how will you protect yourselves on the Day that will make the children old,[17] and whose severity shall cause the heavens to split? Allah's promise has to be fulfilled in any case. This is an Admonition; so, whoever wills, let him take a path to his Lord.

O Prophet,[18] your Lord knows that you sometimes stand in the 20
Prayer nearly two-thirds of the night and sometimes half the night, and sometimes one-third of the night,[19] and so does a group of your Companions.[20] Allah alone keeps an account of the time of the day and

night. He knows that you cannot compute the time precisely; so He has shown kindness to you. Now you may read as much of the Qur'ān as you easily can.[21] He knows that there will be sick men among you, and some others who travel to seek Allah's bounty[22] and yet others who fight in Allah's Way.[23] Therefore, read as much of the Qur'ān as you may do with ease. Establish the *salāt* and pay the *zakāt*,[24] and give to Allah a goodly loan.[25] Whatever good you may send forward for yourselves, you shall find it with Allah. That is best and richest in reward.[26] Seek forgiveness from Allah: indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.

---

1. To address the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) with these words and then to command him to rise and keep standing in the Prayer at night, shows that at the time he either lay asleep, or had wrapped himself up in a sheet in order to go to sleep. Here, to address him with "O you who sleeps covered up" instead of with "O Prophet, or O Messenger", is a fine way of address, which by itself gives the meaning: "Gone is the time when you used to enjoy peaceful sleep at will; now you lie under the burden of a great mission, whose demands and duties are different as well as onerous.

2. This can have two meanings: (1) "Pass the night standing up in the Prayer and spend only a little of it in sleep"; and (2)"there is no demand from you to pass the whole night in the Prayer, but have rest as well and spend a little part of the night in worship too." But in view of the theme that follows the first meaning seems to be more relevant, and the same is supported by Ad-Dahr: 26, in which it has been said: "Prostrate yourself before Him in the night and glorify Him during the long hours of night."

3. This is an explanation of the duration of time commanded to be spent in worship. In it the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was given the option to spend half of the night in the Prayer, or a little less than that, or a little more than that. But the style shows that half the night has been regarded as preferable, for the measure is the same, which may be decreased or increased, as the people may like and choose.

4. "Recite the Qur'ān .....": Do not recite it quickly and in haste, but slowly and distinctly: pause at every verse so that the mind understands the meaning and purport of Divine Revelation well and takes effect from it. if it contains the mention of Allah's Being and Attributes, it may awe-inspire the heart with His glory and majesty; if it expresses His mercy, the heart may be filled with feelings of gratitude to Him; if it mentions His wrath and His punishment, the heart may be overwhelmed by fear of Him; if it enjoins something or forbids

something, one may understand what has been enjoined and what has been forbidden. In short, the recital does not only consist in uttering the words with the tongue, but it should involve thoughtful consideration of the meaning. When Hadrat Anas was asked about the Holy Prophet's method of reciting the Qur'ān, he replied: The Holy Messenger stretched the words when reciting them. For example, when he recited *Bismillah ir-Rahmān ir-Rahīm* he would stretch and prolong the sound of *Allāh*, *Rahmān* and *Rahim* (Bukhārī). When Ḥadrat Umm Salamah was asked the same question, she replied that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) recited every verse separately and distinctly and observed a pause at the end of every verse. For instance, he recited *Al-ḥamdu-lillāh-i Rabb-il-'ālamīn*, and paused, then recited *ar-Rahmān ir-Rahīm*, and paused, and then recited *Mālik-i yaum id-dīn."* (Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī). In another tradition, Ḥadrat Umm Salamah has stated that the Holy Prophet recited each word distinctly and clearly. (Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī). Ḥadrat Ḥudhaifah bin Yamān says: "Once I stood beside the Holy Prophet in the Night Prayer to see how he recited the Qur'ān. I noticed that he glorified Allah where He should be glorified, invoked and supplicated Allah where He should be invoked and supplicated, and sought refuge of Allah where His refuge should be sought." (Muslim, Nasā'ī). Hadrat Abu Dharr has stated that once during the Night Prayer when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) came to the sentence: *In tu'adhdhib-hum* ... (If You punish them, then they are Your servants; and if You forgive them, then You are Almighty, All-Wise), he went on repeating it over and over again until it became dawn." (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhārī).

5. That is, "You are being commanded to stand up in the Night Prayer because We are going to send down on you a weighty word, to bear the burden of which you must develop necessary power in yourself, and you can develop this power only by abandoning your ease and comfort of the night and by standing up in the Prayer and passing half the night or thereabout in the worship of your Lord. "The Qur'ān has been called a weighty Word also for the reason that acting on its commands, demonstrating its teaching practically, extending its invitation in the face of the whole world, and bringing about a revolution in the entire system of belief and thought, morals and manners, civilization and social life, according to it, is indeed the weightiest task any human being ever has been charged with. It has been called a weighty Word also because bearing the burden of its revelation was a difficult and heavy duty. Ḥadrat Zaid bin Thābit says: "Once Revelation came down upon the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in a state when he was resting his head upon my knee. I felt such a pressure of the weight on my knee that I thought it would break." Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah says: "I have seen the state of the Holy Prophet's receiving Revelation during intense cold, drops of perspiration started falling from his forehead." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Mālik, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī). In

another tradition Hadrat 'Ā'ishah has stated: "Whenever Revelation came down on the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) while he was riding on his she-camel, the she-camel would be forced to rest her chest on the ground and could not move until the Revelation was over." (Musnad Ahmad. Hâkim, Ibn Jarīr).

6. About the meaning of the word *nāshi'at al-lail,* as used in the original, the commentators and lexicographers have expressed four different viewpoints: (1) That *nāshi'at* implies the person himself who rises at night; (2) that it implies the hours of night; (3) that it means the rising by night; and (4) that it does not only apply to the rising in the night but rising after having had some sleep, Hadrat 'Ā'ishah and Mujāhid have adopted this fourth viewpoint.

7. The word *ashaddu wat'an* as used in the Text is so vast in meaning that it cannot be explained in any one sentence. Its one meaning is: As the rising for worship by night and standing up for a long time in the Prayer is against human nature and the self of man seeks ease and comfort at that time. this act is an exercise which is most effective in controlling and disciplining the self. The person who governs himself by this method and gains dominance over his body and mind becomes able to use his power in the way of God, can work more efficiently and firmly to make the message of true Faith prevail in the world. The second meaning is: This is a very effective means of producing harmony and concord between the heart and the tongue, for during these hours of the night none else intervenes between the servant and his God, and whatever man utters with his tongue in this state, is the very voice of his heart. The third meaning is: This is a very efficacious means of bringing about conformity between the exterior and the interior of man, for the person who in the solitude of the night would abandon his comfort and ease and arise for worship, would do so only out of sincerity: there can be no tinge of display and hypocrisy in this. The fourth meaning is: As this worship is harder on man than the worship of the daytime, it develops steadfastness in him: he is enabled to walk in the path of God more firmly and can face and endure the hardships of that way with greater constancy and determination.

8. Literally: "Makes the speech most upright and sound." But the purport is to say that at that time man can read the Qur'ān with greater peace of mind, attention and understanding. Ibn 'Abbās has explained it thus: "That it is the most suitable time for man to ponder over the Qur'ān well." (Abū Da'ūd).

9. After making mention of the occupation of the daytime, the exhortation to "remember the name of your Lord" by itself gives the meaning: "Never be heedless of the remembrance of your Lord even when you are deeply involved in your worldly occupations, and continue to commemorate His name in one way or another at all times." (For explanation, see E.N. 63 of Sūrah Al-Ahzāb).

10. "*Wakīl*" is a person in whom one has complete faith; so much so that one can entrust all one's affairs to him with full satisfaction of the heart. Thus, the verse means: "Do not feel distressed at the hardships that you are experiencing at the storm of opposition that has been provoked by your invitation to true Faith. Your Lord is He Who is the Owner of the East and the West, (i.e. of the whole universe) besides Whom no one else possesses the powers of Godhead. Entrust your affair to Him and be satisfied that He will fight your case, He will deal with your opponents, and He will look after all your interests well."

11. "Depart from them" does not mean "Break off all ties with them and stop preaching to them", but it means; "Do not have intimate and friendly relations with them: disregard their foolish behaviour and their nonsense." However, you should do so without showing any grief, anger or temper but gracefully like a noble person, who would disregard the abusive remarks of a mean person without minding them at all. This should not create the misunderstanding that the Holy Prophet's conduct was any different from it; therefore, Allah gave him this instruction. As a matter of fact, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was already following this very mode of conduct; this instruction was given in the Qur'ān so as to tell the disbelievers: "It is not due to any weakness on the part of the Prophet that he is not responding to what you are saying against him, but Allah Himself has taught His Messenger to adopt this noble way of conduct in response to your foolish behaviour."

12. These words clearly contain the sense that the people who were actually denying the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in Makkah and were inciting the common people to oppose and resist him by stirring up prejudices and by deceit and fraud were the well-to-do, prosperous and affluent people, for it was their interests, which were being hit by Islam's message of reform. The Qur'ān tells us that this was not peculiar only to the Holy Prophet's case but in every age this very class of the people have been the main obstacle to every movement of reform. For example, see Al-A'rāf; 60, 66, 75, 88; Al-Mu'minūn: 33; Saba; 34-35; Az-Zukhruf: 23.

13. Heavy fetters in Hell will not be put on the criminals' feet to stop them from escape but in order that they are not able to stand up and move; these will not be used to prevent their escape but as an instrument of their torment.

14. Since at that time the cohesive force to bind the parts of the mountains together will cease to work, first they will become like crumbling dunes of fine sand, then because of the earthquake which will be shaking the earth; the sand will scatter and shift and the whole earth will turn into an empty level plain. This last state has been described in Tā Hā: 105-107, thus: "They ask you: where will the mountains go on that Day? Say: My Lord will reduce them to fine dust and scatter

it away. He will turn the earth into an empty level plain, wherein you will neither see any curve no crease."

15. The address now turns to the disbelievers of Makkah, who were denying the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and persecuting him relentlessly.

16. Sending the Holy Prophet to be a witness over the people also means that he should testify to the Truth by his word and deed before them in the world and also that in the Hereafter when Allah's Court is established, he will testify that he had presented the whole Truth before the people in the world. (For further explanation, see E.N. 144 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 64 of An-Nisā', An-Nahl: 84, 89, E.N. 82 of Al-Aḥzāb, E.N. 14 of Al-Fath).

17. That is, "In the first place, you should be afraid that if you do not accept the invitation of the Messenger sent by Us, you will have to meet the same evil end in this world, which the Pharaoh has already met in consequence of this very crime. But even if no torment is sent on you in the world, how will you save yourselves from the punishment of the Day of Resurrection?"

18. About this verse in which reduction has been made in the injunction concerning the Tahajjud Prayer, there are different traditions. Musnad Aḥmad, Muslim and Abū Da'ūd have related a tradition, on the authority of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, saying that this second command was sent down one year after the first command, and the standing up in the Prayer at night was made voluntary instead of obligatory. Another tradition which Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have related, again on the authority of Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah, says that this command came down 8 months after the first command, and a third tradition which Ibn Abī Ḥātim has related again from her, says that it came down 16 months later. Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have cited the period of one year from Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās. But Ḥadrat Sa'id bin Jubair has stated that it was sent down ten years later. (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abi Ḥātim). In our opinion this last view is most sound, for the subject-matter of the first section clearly shows that it was sent down in Makkah and that too in the earliest stage when at the most four years might have passed since the advent of Prophethood. Contrary to this, this second section, in view of the express evidence of its subject-matter, seems to have been revealed at Madīnah when fighting had started with the disbelievers and the *zakāt* also had been enjoined as an obligatory duty. On this basis inevitably the two sections should have been sent down at an interval of at least ten years between them.

19. Although the initial command to the Holy Prophet was to keep standing up in the Prayer for half the night, or thereabout, it was difficult to compute the time precisely in the absorption of the Prayer, especially when there

were no watches either to measure time accurately; therefore, sometimes two-thirds of the night passed in the prayer and sometimes only one-third of it.

20. In the initial command only the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was addressed and only he was instructed to stand up in the Prayer by night. But since the Muslims at that time were ardently desirous of following him in everything he did and of earning more and more good and virtues, many of the Companions also performed this Night Prayer regularly.

21. As the Prayer is prolonged due mainly to a lengthy recital of the Qur'ān, it is said: "You may recite as much of the Qur'ān as you easily can in the Tahajjud Prayer This would automatically cause the Prayer to be shortened". Although the words here are apparently in the imperative mood, it is agreed by all that Tahajjud is not an obligatory but a voluntary Prayer. In the *Hadīth* also it has been explained that on an enquiry by a person the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) replied: "Five times Prayer in the day and night is obligatory on you. He asked: Is anything besides this also binding on me? The Holy Prophet said: No, unless you may like to offer something of your own accord." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

This verse also shows another thing. Just as the bowing (*rukū'*) and prostration (*sajdah*) are obligatory in the Prayer, so is the recital of the Qur'ān. For just as Allah at other places has used the words *rukū'* and *sajdah* for the prayer, so here He has mentioned recital of the Qur'ān, which implies its recital in the Prayer. If somebody objects to this conclusion, saying: When the Tahajjud Prayer itself is voluntary, how can recital of the Qur'ān in it be obligatory? The answer is: Even in case of the voluntary Prayer it is incumbent on one to fulfil all the pre-requisites of the Prayer and to perform all its basic elements and obligatory parts. No one can say that in case of the voluntary Prayer, purity of the garments and body, ablutions and concealment of the *satar* (minimal part of the body to be covered) are not obligatory, and the standing up and sitting and performance of *rukū'* and *sajdah* also in it are only voluntary.

22. Travelling to earn one's living by lawful and permissible methods has been described in many places in the Qur'ān as the seeking of Allah's bounty.

23. Here, the way Allah has made mention of seeking pure livelihood and fighting in the Way of Allah together and declared these two, besides the compulsion on account of illness, as reasons for exemption from the Tahajjud Prayer, or concession in it, shows how meritorious it is in Islam to earn one's livelihood by lawful methods. In the *Hadīth*, Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has reported that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "The person who came to a city of the Muslims with foodgrains and sold it at the rate of the day, will attain to a place nearest to Allah, and then the Holy Prophet recited this very

verse." (Ibn Mardūyah), Hadrat 'Umar once said: "Except for fighting in the way of Allah, the state in which I would love to be overtaken by death, is the state when I am overtaken by it while passing through a mountain pass in search of livelihood and then he recited this very verse." (Baihaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*).

24. Commentators are agreed that this implies observance of the obligatory Prayer five times a day and giving away of the obligatory *zakāt*.

25. Ibn Zaid says this implies spending one's wealth in the cause of Allah besides the *zakāt*, whether it is in the cause of fighting in the way of Allah, or for helping the needy, or for public utilities, or other good works. The meaning of giving to Allah a good loan has been explained at several places above. See E.N 267 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 33 of Al-Mā'idah, E.N. 16 of Al-Hadīd).

26. It means: "Whatever you have sent forward for the good of your Hereafter is more beneficial for you than that you withheld in the world and did not spend in any good cause for the pleasure of Allah. According to a *Hadīth* reported by Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) once asked: "Which of you has a greater love for his own wealth than for the wealth of his heir? The people said: There is none among us, O Messenger of Allah, who would not have greater love for his own wealth than for the wealth of his heir. He said: Consider well what you are saying. The people submitted: This indeed is our considered opinion, O Messenger of Allah. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: Your own property is only that which you have sent forward (for the good of your Hereafter), and whatever you held back indeed belongs to the heir." (Bukhārī, Nasā'ī, Musnad Abū Ya'lā).



LXXIV

AL-MUDDATHTHIR

المدّثّر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXIV
AL-MUDDATHTHIR
المُدَّثِّر

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *al-muddaththir* in the first verse. This also is only a name, not a title of its subject-matter.

Period of Revelation

The first seven verses of this Sūrah belong to the earliest period at Makkah. Even according to some traditions which have been related in Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Musnad Ahmad, etc., on the authority of Hadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, these are the very earliest verses of the Qur'ān to be revealed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), But the Muslim *Ummah* is almost unanimously agreed that the earliest Revelation to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) consisted of the

first five verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq (XCVI). However, what is established by authentic traditions is that after this first Revelation, no Revelation came down to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for quite some time. Then, when it was resumed, it started with these verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir. Imām Zuhrī has given the following details of it:

"Revelation to the Holy Prophet remained suspended for quite some time, and it was such a period of deep grief and distress for him that he started going early to the tops of the mountains to throw himself down from them. But whenever he stood on the edge of a peak, the Angel Gabriel would appear and tell him that he was Allah's Prophet This would console him and restore to him full peace of mind," (Ibn Jarīr).

After this Imām Zuhrī relates the following tradition on the authority of Hadrat Jabir bin 'Abdullah:

"The Holy Messenger of Allah describing the period of *fatrat al-wahī* (break in revelation) said: One day when I was passing on the way, I suddenly heard a call from heaven I raised my head and saw that the same Angel who had visited me in the Cave of Hirā' was sitting on a throne between heaven and earth. This struck terror in my heart, and reaching home quickly, I said: 'Cover me up, cover me up'. So the people of the house covered me up with a quilt (or blanket). At that time Allah sent down the Revelation: *Yā ayyuhal-Muddaththiru*...From then on revelation became intense and continuous." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarīr).

The rest of the Sūrah (vv. 8-56) was revealed when the first Hajj season came after public preaching of Islam had begun in Makkah. This has been fully well described in the Sūrah by Ibn Hishām and we shall cite it below.

Theme and Subject-Matter

As has been explained above, the earliest Revelation to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) consisted of the first five verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq, in which it had been said: "Read (O Prophet), in the name of your Lord, Who created: created man from a clot of congealed blood.

Read: and your Lord is Most Generous, Who taught knowledge by the pen, taught man what he did not know.

This was the first experience of Revelation met with suddenly by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). In this message it was not told what great mission he had been entrusted with and what duties he had to perform in future. He was only initiated into it and then left alone for a time so that the great strain this experience had caused should pass away and he should mentally become prepared to receive the Revelation and perform the prophetic mission in the future. After this intermission when Revelation was resumed, the first seven verses of this Sūrah were revealed. In these he was for the first time commanded to arise and warn the people of the consequences of the way of life they were following and to proclaim the greatness of God in the world where others were being magnified without any right. Along with that he was given this instruction: The demand of the unique mission that you have to perform now is that your life should be pure in every respect and you should carry out the duty of reforming your people sincerely irrespective of any worldly gain. Then, in the last sentence, he was exhorted to endure with patience, for the sake of his Lord, all the hardships and troubles that he might have to face while performining his mission.

In the implementation of this Divine Command when the Holy Messenger of Allah began to preach Islam and recite the Qur'ānic Sūrahs revealed successively, the people of Makkah felt alarmed, and it provoked a great storm of opposition and hostility. A few months passed in this state until the Hajj season approached. The people of Makkah feared that if Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) started visiting the caravans of the pilgrims coming from all over Arabia at their halting places and reciting the spell-binding and unique Revelations of the Qur'ān in their assemblies on the occasion of Hajj, his message would reach every part of Arabia and influence countless people. Therefore, the Quraish chiefs held a conference and settled that they would start a propaganda campaign against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) among the pilgrims as soon as they arrived. After they had agreed on this, Walīd bin al-Mughīrah said to the assembled people: "If you said contradictory things about Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), we all would lose our trust among the people. Therefore, let us agree upon one opinion which we should all say without dispute.

Some people said that they would call Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) a soothsayer. Walid said: No, by God, he is not a soothsayer. We have seen the soothsayers; what they murmur and what they utter has no remote resemblance with the Qur'ān. Some other people said; Then we say he is possessed: Walīd said He is not a possessed one: we have seen mad and insane people: the way one talks disjointedly and behaves foolishly in that state is known to all: who would believe that what Muhammad (upon whom be peace) presented was the incoherent speech of a madman? The people said: Then we say he is a poet. Walīd said: No, he is not a poet, for we know poetry in all its forms, and what he presents conforms to no form of it. The people said: Then he is a sorcerer. Walīd said: He is no sorcerer either: we have seen sorcerers and we also know what methods they adopt for their sorcery. This also does not apply to Muhammad. Then he said; Whichever of these things you said about Muhammad, it would be known to be a false accusation. By God, his speech is sweet, his root is deep and his branches are fruitful. At this Abū Jahl urging on Walīd said: Your people will never be pleased with you unless you say something about Muhammad. He said: Let me think over it awhile. Then, after prolonged thought and consideration, he said: The nearest thing to the truth is that you tell the Arabs that he is a sorcerer, who has brought a message by which he separates a man from his father, and from his brother, and from his wife and children, and from his family. They all agreed on what Walīd had proposed. Then, according to a scheme the men of Quraish spread among the pilgrims in the Hajj season and they warned everyone they met of the sorcery of Muhammad (upon whom be peace) and of his stirring up divisions in the families by it." But the result was that by their this plan the Quraish chiefs themselves made the name of the Holy Messenger known throughout Arabia. (Ibn Hishām, pp. 288-289. That Walīd had made this proposal on the insistence of Abū Jahl has been related by Ibn Jarīr in his *Tafsīr* on the authority of 'Ikrimah).

This same event has been reviewed and commented upon in the second section of this Sūrah. The sequence of its contents is as follows;

In vv. 8-10 the deniers of Truth have been warned, saying: "You will see the evil result of what you are doing today on the Resurrection Day."

In vv. 11-26, without naming Walīd bin al-Mughīrah, it has been told how Allah had blessed him and how inimical he proved to be to true Faith. In this connection, his mental conflict has been portrayed, telling that on the one hand, he was fully convinced of the truth of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and the Qur'ān, but, on the other, he did not want to risk his leadership and position among his people. Therefore, not only he did not believe himself but after a long-drawn-out conflict with his conscience he also came out with the proposal that in order to restrain the people from believing the Qur'ān should be branded as magic. After exposing his evil nature, it has been said, "Notwithstanding such evil inclinations and misdeeds, this person desires that he should be further blessed, whereas he has now become worthy of Hell, and never of further blessings."

In vv. 27-48, the dreadfulness of Hell has been depicted and it has been explained as to people of what character and morals really deserve it.

In vv. 49-53, the root cause of the disbelievers' aversion has been pointed out, saying: "Since they are fearless of the Hereafter, and look upon this worldly life as an end in itself, they flee from the Qur'ān as though they were wild asses fleeing away from the lion: therefore, they propose unreasonable conditions for believing, whereas even if each and every condition of theirs was fulfilled, they could not advance even an inch on the way of Faith with their denial of the Hereafter."

In conclusion, it has been explicitly stated: Allah does not stand in need of anybody's faith that He may fulfil his conditions. The Qur'ān is an admonition that has been presented before the people openly; now whoever wills may accept it. Allah has a right that the people should fear His disobedience and He alone has the power to forgive the one who adopts piety and an attitude of God-consciousness even though one may have committed many acts of disobedience in the past.



يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ۝١ قُمْ فَاَنْذِرْ ۝٢ وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ ۝٣ وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ ۝٤ وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ ۝٥
وَلَا تَمْنُنْ تَسْتَكْثِرُ ۝٦ وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ ۝٧ فَاِذَا نُقِرَ فِي النَّاقُوْرِ ۝٨ فَذٰلِكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ
يَّوْمٌ عَسِيْرٌ ۝٩ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ غَيْرُ يَسِيْرٍ ۝١٠ ذَرْنِيْ وَمَنْ خَلَقْتُ وَحِيْدًا ۝١١ وَّجَعَلْتُ
لَهٗ مَالًا مَّمْدُوْدًا ۝١٢ وَّبَنِيْنَ شُهُوْدًا ۝١٣ وَّمَهَّدْتُّ لَهٗ تَمْهِيْدًا ۝١٤ ثُمَّ يَطْمَعُ اَنْ
اَزِيْدَ ۝١٥ كَلَّا ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ لِاٰيٰتِنَا عَنِيْدًا ۝١٦ سَاُرْهِقُهٗ صَعُوْدًا ۝١٧ اِنَّهٗ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ ۝١٨
فَقُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ۝١٩ ثُمَّ قُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ۝٢٠ ثُمَّ نَظَرَ ۝٢١ ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ ۝٢٢ ثُمَّ
اَدْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ ۝٢٣ فَقَالَ اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُّؤْثَرُ ۝٢٤ اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ ۝٢٥
سَاُصْلِيْهِ سَقَرَ ۝٢٦ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا سَقَرُ ۝٢٧ لَا تُبْقِيْ وَلَا تَذَرُ ۝٢٨ لَوَّاحَةٌ لِّلْبَشَرِ ۝٢٩
عَلَيْهَا تِسْعَةَ عَشَرَ ۝٣٠ وَمَا جَعَلْنَآ اَصْحٰبَ النَّارِ اِلَّا مَلٰٓئِكَةً ۙ وَّمَا جَعَلْنَا عِدَّتَهُمْ
اِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۙ لِيَسْتَيْقِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ وَيَزْدَادَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا
اِيْمَانًا ۙ وَّلَا يَرْتَابَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۙ وَلِيَقُوْلَ الَّذِيْنَ فِيْ
قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ وَّالْكٰفِرُوْنَ مَاذَآ اَرَادَ اللّٰهُ بِهٰذَا مَثَلًا ۭ كَذٰلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ
مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ وَيَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ ۭ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُوْدَ رَبِّكَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۭ وَمَا هِيَ اِلَّا ذِكْرٰى
لِلْبَشَرِ ۝٣١ كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرِ ۝٣٢ وَالَّيْلِ اِذْ اَدْبَرَ ۝٣٣ وَالصُّبْحِ اِذَآ اَسْفَرَ ۝٣٤ اِنَّهَا لَاِحْدَى
الْكُبَرِ ۝٣٥ نَذِيْرًا لِّلْبَشَرِ ۝٣٦ لِمَنْ شَاۗءَ مِنْكُمْ اَنْ يَّتَقَدَّمَ اَوْ يَتَاَخَّرَ ۝٣٧ كُلُّ نَفْسٍۢ بِمَا
كَسَبَتْ رَهِيْنَةٌ ۝٣٨ اِلَّآ اَصْحٰبَ الْيَمِيْنِ ۝٣٩ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ ۛ يَتَسَاۗءَلُوْنَ ۝٤٠ عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ۝٤١ مع

LXXIV
AL-MUDDATHTHIR
المُدَّثِّر

Verses: 56 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

1-7 O you who lies enwrapped up,[1] arise and warn;[2] and proclaim the greatness of your Lord;[3] and keep your garments pure,[4] and avoid filth,[5] and do not favour (others) expecting to get more,[6] and be patient for the sake of your Lord.[7]

8-37 When the Trumpet is blown, it shall be a very hard Day,[8] not easy for the disbelievers.[9] Leave Me and the person[10] whom I created alone:[11] I gave him ample wealth and sons to be present by his side,[12] and smoothed for him the way to his leadership (and prosperity). Yet he desires that I should give him more.[13] No, never! He is hostile to Our Revelations. I shall soon make him ascend a hard ascent. He pondered and tried to devise a plan. May God destroy him: what he tried to devise! Yes, may God destroy him: what he tried to devise! Then he looked around: then he frowned and scowled; then he turned his back and showed arrogance. At last, he said, "This is nothing but magic, handed down from the past; nothing but the word of a mere mortal."[14] Very soon I shall cast him into Hell. And what do you know what Hell is? It leaves nothing and it spares none.[15] It scorches the skin.[16] Nineteen keepers are appointed over it. We[17] have appointed only angels as the keepers of Hell,[18] and have made their number a trial for the disbelievers,[19] so that the people of the Book are convinced[20] and the believers are increased in their faith;[21] and the people of the Book and the believers may have no doubts, and the sick of the heart[22] and the disbelievers may say, "What could Allah mean by this strange parable?"[23] In this way Allah leads astray whom He wills and gives guidance to whom He wills,[24] and none knows the hosts of your Lord but He Himself.[25]—And Hell has been mentioned so that the people may take heed.[26] No, never![27] By the moon and by the night when it

withdraws, and by the morning when it dawns, this Hell too, is one of the mighty things:[28] a warning to mankind, a warning to every one of you, who desires to go forward, or to lag behind.[29]

---

1. A study of the background of the revelation of these verses given in the introduction above can help one understand why the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) on this occasion has been addressed with *Yā ayyuhal-Muddaththir* instead of *Yā ayyuhar-Rasūlu* (O Messenger), or *Yā ayyuhan-Nabiyyu* (O Prophet). As the Holy Prophet had been terrified when he had suddenly seen the Angel Gabriel (on whom be peace), sitting on a throne between heaven and earth, and had returned hastily home and asked the people of the house to cover him up, so Allah addressed him with *Ya ayyuhal-Muddaththiru*. From this fine way of address the meaning which automatically follows is: "O My dear Servant, why have you lain down thus enwrapped? You have been put under the. burden of a great mission: you must now arise from your solitude to perform this mission with resolution and courage."

2. A command of this very nature had been given to the prophet Noah (peace be on him) while appointing him to the office of Prophethood; "Warn the people of your nation before they are overtaken by a painful torment." (Nūh: 1) The verse means: "O you who lies enwrapped, stand up and arouse the people who live in heedlessness around you: warn them of the fate which would certainly overtake them if they remained involved in the same heedlessness. Warn them that they are not living in a lawless kingdom where they are free to conduct themselves as they like and where they can do whatever they please without any fear or being called to account for it."

3. This is the primary duty of a Prophet, which he has to perform in this world. His foremost duty is to refute the greatness of all those whom the ignorant people might be holding as great, and publicly proclaim that true greatness in this universe belongs to none but Allah alone. For this very reason the phrase *Allahu Akbar* has been held as of supreme importance in Islam. The *adhān* (call to prayer) begins with the proclamation of *Allahu Akbar*. The Muslim enters the Prayer itself with Allahu Akbar and repeats Allahu Akbar every time he sits or stands, He pronounces *Bismillāhi Allahu Akbar* also when slaughtering an animal. The slogan of *Allahu Akbar* has become a most distinctive and prominent emblem of Muslims throughout the world today, for the Prophet of this *Ummah* himself had embarked on his mission with the magnification and glorification of Almighty Allah.

Here, there is another fine point, which must be understood well. As we have learnt from the background of the revelation of these verses, this was the first occasion when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had been commanded to

arise for performing the duties of the great mission of Prophethood, and it was obvious that the city and society in which he was commanded to perform this mission, was the centre of polytheism. Not only were the people around him polytheistic like the common Arabs but, more than that, the city of Makkah had become the most sacred place of pilgrimage for the polytheistic Arabs, and the Quraish were its attendants. Arising of a person in such a place all by himself and proclaiming the Oneness of God in the face of polytheism was full of risks. That is why the exhortation to "proclaim the greatness of your Lord" just after "arise and warn" contains this meaning also: "Do not at all mind the terrifying and dreadful forces that seem to be obstructing and impeding your work and proclaim publicly that your Lord is the greatest of all those who can hinder and resist you from giving your message. This is indeed the greatest encouragement for a person who embarks on a Divine mission. The one who has Allah's greatness and majesty deeply embedded in his heart will feel no hesitation at all in facing and fighting the entire world by himself for the sake of Allah.

4. These are very comprehensive words, which are full of meaning.

They mean this: "Keep your garments free from every filth and impurity, for the purity of the body and garments and the purity of the spirit are inter-linked and inter-dependent." A pure spirit and an impure body with impure garments cannot live together. The society in which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had arisen with the invitation to Islam, was not only steeped in the evils of unbelief and immorality, but was also devoid of even the most elementary concepts of purity and cleanliness, and the Holy Prophet's task was to teach its members cleanliness in every way of life. Therefore he was instructed to establish and present a high standard of purity in his external life as well. Thus, it is the result of the same instruction that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) gave mankind such detailed teaching about the cleanliness of the body and garments as is not possessed even by the most civilized nations of today, not to speak of the Arabs of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. So much so that in most of the languages of the world there is no word synonymous with *"tahārat"*. On the contrary, in Islam every book of the *Hadīth* and *Fiqh* begins with injunctions and instructions on *tahārat* (purity), which distinguishes between purity and impurity and gives minute details about the methods and means of obtaining purity.

The second meaning of these words is: "Keep your garments neat and clean." The criterion of religiosity given to the world by the monastic concepts was that a man was holy to the extent he was unclean. If a person happened to put on neat clothes, he was looked upon as a worldly man, whereas the fact is that human nature abhors filth and uncleanness and even a person of ordinary fine taste loves to be associated only with a neat and clean person. On this very basis, for the

one calling the people to Allah it was made imperative that externally also he should look so neat and clean that the people should regard him with esteem and his personality should not be stained in any way so as to repel others.

The third meaning of this Divine Command is: "Keep your garments free from moral evils: your dress should be neat and clean but it should bear no tinge of vanity and pride, display and exhibition, pomp and show." The dress is the first thing that introduces the personality of a person to others. The kind of dress a person wears makes the people judge at first sight what kind of a man he is. The dresses of the rulers and princes, the dresses of the religious functionaries, the dresses of the vain and conceited people, the dresses of the mean and shallow people, the dresses of the evil-natured and characterless people, all represent the tastes and tempers of those who wear them. The temper of the one calling to Allah is naturally different from all such people. Therefore, his dress also should necessarily be different from all of them. He should wear such a dress as should make everyone else feel that he is a noble and refined person, who is not involved in any evil of the self.

Its fourth meaning is: Keep away from moral evils. Ibn 'Abbās, Ibrāhīm Nakha'i, Sha'bī, 'Atā', Mujāhid, Qatādah, Sa'id bin Jubair, Hasan Basrī and other major commentators have given this very meaning to this verse: keep yourself morally pure and avoid all that is blameworthy. In Arabic usage also when it is said: "So and so is clean in his garments", it implies that he is morally good and pure; on the contrary, when it is said: "He is filthy in his garments", it means that he is dishonest and fraudulent in his dealings: he is unreliable.

5. "Filth" implies every kind of filth, whether of belief and thought, of morals and deeds, of the body, dress or mode of life. The versemeans: "Keep yourself free from the filth of evils which are prevalent in society around you: no one should ever impute to you the blame that your own life itself is stained in some degree with the evils that you tell others to avoid."

6. The words *wa lā tamnun tastakthir* in the original are so vast in meaning that no one sentence can convey their full sense in translation.

Their one meaning is: "Whomever you favour, you should favour him without any selfish motive. Your bestowal of an endowment and donation, your generosity and good treatment should be only for the sake of Allah: there should be no trace in it of the desire that you should receive any worldly gains in return for the favour done. In other words, do good to others for the sake of Allah, not for seeking any benefits."

The second meaning is: "Although the mission of Prophethood that you are performing is a great favour in itself, for the people are obtaining true

guidance because of it, do not remind the people of this favour, nor try to obtain any personal benefits from it."

The third meaning is: "Although you are performing a great service, you should never gloat over it, nor should ever have the idea that by performing your prophetic duties, at the risk of life, you are doing any favour to your Lord."

7. That is, "The task that is being entrusted to you is full of hazards: you will meet with great hardships and difficulties and troubles on this way: even your own people will turn hostile to you and the whole of Arabia will become your enemy. Yet you should endure with patience, for the sake of your Lord, whatever you may have to face in this way, and carry out all your duties firmly and resolutely. Fear, greed, friendship, enmity, love, all these will hinder your way, but you should stand your ground firmly and steadfastly."

These were the very preliminary instructions which Allah gave His Messenger (upon whom be peace) at the time when He commanded him to arise and start the work of Prophethood. If a person ponders over these brief sentences and their meaning his heart will testify that no better instructions could be given to a Prophet at the commencement of his prophetic mission. In these he was told what he was required to do, what kind of life, morals and dealings he should adopt, and taught with what intention, mentality and mode of thought he should go about his mission and also forewarned what kind of conditions he would meet with in the performance of his mission and how he would have to face and overcome them. Today the people who, blinded by their prejudices, say that these words were, God forbid, uttered by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) during epileptic fits, should study these sentences carefully and judge for themselves whether these are the product of any epileptic fits, or the instructions of a God, which He gave to His Servant while appointing him to the mission of Apostleship.

8. As already explained in the introduction, this part of the Sūrah was sent down a few months after the initial verses when at the beginning of the first ever Ḥajj season, after the advent of Islam, the Quraish chiefs decided in a conference to start a powerful propaganda campaign to dissuade the outsiders, who came to visit the Ka'bah, from the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). In these verses, this very scheming of the Quraish has been reviewed, and the review has begun with the words, as if to say: "You may act as you please, but even if you succeed in achieving your object by these devices in the world, how will you save yourselves from your evil end on the Day when the Trumpet will be sounded and Resurrection established?" (For explanation of the Trumpet, see E.N. 47 of Al-An'ām, E.N. 57 of Ibrāhīm, E.N. 78 of Ṭā Hā, E.N. 1 of Al-Ḥajj, E.N.'s 46, 47 of Yā Sīn, E.N. 79 of Az-Zumar, E.N. 52 of Qāf).

9. These words by themselves support the conclusion that that Day will be light for the believers, and its hardships will be specially intended only for the deniers of the Truth. Moreover, these words also contain the meaning that the severity of that Day will be of an enduring and permanent nature for disbelievers it will not be a severity which might be expected to become mild with the passage of time.

10. The address is directed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and it means: "O Prophet, leave the case of the person (Walīd bin al-Mughīrah) to Me, who in the disbelievers' conference proposed that you should be branded as a sorcerer among the pilgrims coming from different parts of Arabia; it is now for Me to deal with him; you need not bother yourself about it at all."

11. This sentence can have two meanings and both are correct: (1) "That when I created him, he was not at that time born with any wealth and children and position of authority and chieftainship;" and (2) "that I alone was his Creator: those other gods whose godhead he is so ardently trying to keep established and is opposing your invitation to One God for the same object, were not My associates in creating him."

12. Walīd bin al-Mughīrah had ten or twelve' sons of whom Hadrat Khālid bin Walīd became most famous. For these sons the word *shuhūd* has been used, which can have several meanings: (1) That they do not have to run about and go abroad in search of their livelihood; they have enough provisions at home; therefore, they can always remain at the beck and call of their father; (2) that all his sons are prominent and influential people: they sit in assemblies and conferences with him; and (3) that they are the people of high rank and position and their testimony is accepted in all matters of life.

13. Its one meaning is that there is still no end to his greed. In spite of having all this he still desires that he should be granted every good thing of the world. Another meaning which Hadrat Hasan Basrī, and some other scholars have given is: "He used to say: If what Muhmmad (upon whom be peace) says is really true that there is another life after death, and there will be a Paradise also in it, then that Paradise too has been prepared for me."

14. The reference is to what happened in the conference of the disbelievers of Makkah. From the details of it that we have given in the Introduction, it becomes obvious that this man in his heart had become fully convinced of the Qur'ān's being Divine Word, but in order to save his position as a chief of his people, he was not prepared to affirm faith. When in the conference he himself turned down all the accusations that the Quraish chiefs were proposing against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), he was compelled to devise an

accusation from himself, which could be spread among the Arabs in order to bring a bad name to the Holy Prophet. Then, the way he struggled against his conscience, and the way he devised an accusation at last after a prolonged mental conflict, has been vividly depicted here.

15. This can have two meanings: first, that it will burn to ashes whoever is cast into it, but even after death he will not escape from punishment: he will be given life once again and burnt once again, This very subject has been treated at another place thus: He will neither die in it nor live." (Al-A'lā: 13) Another meaning also can be: "It will leave none who has deserved the punishment and it will spare none from being punished."

16. After saying that it will leave nothing of the body unconsumed, making mention of "scorching of the skin" separately seems to be somewhat unnecessary. But this form of the punishment has been mentioned separately in particular because it is the skin of a man's face and body which actually makes his personality prominent, and it is its ugliness which makes him feel most ill at ease. He is not so grieved at the internal troubles of his body as, for instance, at his face being ugly, or that there should be spots on the skin of the exposed parts of his body, abhorrent to others. That is why it has been said: If the people who feel proud of their personalities in the world because of having handsome faces and splendid bodies, treat the Revelations of Allah mockingly, as did Walīd bin al-Mughīrah, their faces will be scorched and their skins burnt black.

17. The whole passage from here to "none knows the hosts of your Lord but He Himself", is a parenthetical sentence, which has been inserted here to answer an objection of the disbelievers, who had started mocking it when they heard the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) say that 19 keepers had been appointed over Hell. Their objection was: "How strange that, on the one hand, we are told that all human beings, from the time of the Prophet Adam till Resurrection, who disbelieved and committed evil, will be cast into Hell. and, on the other, that there will be only 19 keepers, who will administer punishment to the countless numbers of men in such a huge Hell." This caused a huge laughter among the chiefs of Quraish. Abu Jahl said: "Brothers, are you so powerless that even as many as ten of you at a time will not be able to overpower a single policeman of Hell?" At this a wrestler of the Banī Jumha said: ' Well I will deal with and overpower at least 17 of them by myself; as for the remaining two, you all together can tackle them." In response these sentences have been inserted as a parenthetical clause.

18. That is, "It is foolish on your part to compare the angelic powers to human powers. They will be angels, not men, and you cannot imagine what tremendous powers Allah has granted to the angels He has created."

19. That is, "Although apparently there was no need to mention the number of the keepers of Hell, yet We have mentioned it so that it becomes a trial for every such person who may be concealing any kind of unbelief in his heart. Such a man may be making a great display of his faith but if he conceals even a tinge of the doubt about the Godhead and supreme powers of God, or about Revelation and Prophethood, anywhere in his heart, his disbelief would immediately be exposed as soon as he would hear that only 19 policemen would control countless numbers of the culprits from among the jinn and men in such a huge jail and would also administer punishment to each of them individually."

20. Some commentators have explained it thus: "As in the scriptures of the Jews and Christians themselves also the same number of the angels has been mentioned as keepers of Hell, they would be convinced of this thing's being truly from Allah as soon as they heard it." But in our opinion this commentary is not correct for two reasons. First, we have not been able to see anywhere in the existing scriptures of the Jews and Christians in spite of search that the number of the angels appointed over Hell is 19. Second, there are many things in the Qur'ān, which also have been mentioned in the scriptures of the Jews and Christians, yet they explain them away, saying that the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has plagiarized these from their books. For these reasons the correct meaning of this statement in our opinion is: The Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) knew fully well that he would be ridiculed as soon as the disbelievers heard that 19 angels had been appointed over Hell, but in spite of this, he presented without the least hesitation and fear publicly before the people what had been revealed to him from Allah, and did not at all mind the jesting and mocking by the people. The pagans of Arabia were unaware of the unique distinction of the Prophets, but the followers of the earlier scriptures were fully aware that the Prophets in every age used to convey to their people intact whatever they received from God, whether it pleased them or displeased them. On this very basis it was to be expected of the Jews and the Christians that they would be convinced of the Prophet Muhammad's truth for only a Prophet could present an apparently strange thing without any hesitation before the people in an environment charged with antagonism and hostility. This also is evident that such a thing was shown by the Holy Prophet on many other occasions. Its most prominent example is the event of the *mi'rāj* (ascension) which he related openly before a general assembly of the disbelievers and did not at all care how his opponents would behave and react after they had heard the story of the wonderful event.

21. It has been explained at several places in the Qur'ān above that on the occasion of every trial when a believer remains steadfast to his faith, and forsaking the way of doubt and denial, disobedience or disloyalty to the faith, adopts the way

of faith, obedience and loyalty to it, it increases and strengthens him all the more in faith and resignation (For explanation, see 'Āl-Imrān: 173, Al-Anfāl: 2, At-Taubah: 124-125, Al-Aḥzāb: 22, Al-Fatḥ: 4 and the corresponding E.N.'s).

22. As "sickness of the heart" in the Qur'ān is generally understood to imply hypocrisy, seeing this word here some commentators have expressed the view that this verse was revealed at Madīnah, for the hypocrites appeared at Madīnah. But this view is not correct for several reasons. In the first place, the assertion itself that there were no hypocrites at Makkah is false, and its false-hood has been exposed in the Introduction to the Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt and in its vv. 10-11. Secondly, in our opinion it is not a correct way of writing commentary that in respect of a certain sentence occurring in a particular discourse which was revealed on a particular occasion, under particular circumstances, one should declare that it had been sent down on another occasion but has been inserted here without any relevance. The historical background of this part of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir is fully well known to us from authentic traditions. This was revealed in connection with a particular event of the earliest period of the life at Makkah. The whole context bears full relevance to the event. What could, therefore, be the occasion in this context that this one sentence, if it was revealed many years later at Madīnah, should have been inserted here? As for the question what is implied by the disease of the heart here, its answer is that it implies the disease of doubt. Not only in Makkah but in the entire world also there have been, and are, very few such people, who might deny God, Hereafter, Revelation, Prophethood, Heaven, Hell, etc. absolutely. In every age the greater majority by far has been of those people, who have been involved in the doubt whether there is God, or no God, Hereafter or no Hereafter, whether Heaven and Hell really exist, or are mere figments of the imagination, and whether the Messengers did really come and receive Revelation or not. This same doubt has led most people to unbelief, otherwise the number of such people in the world who denied these truths absolutely has never been great. For a person who has any common sense knows that there is no rational ground whatever for denying the possibility of the existence of these things, or of declaring them absolutely impossible.

23. This does not mean that they accepted it as Divine word but wondered why Allah had said such a thing. But what they actually meant was: "A discourse which contained such an irrational and impossible thing could not be a Revelation from Allah."

24. That is, Allah in this very way sometimes sends down in the course of His Revelations and Commandments such things as become a means of test and

trial for the people. It is one and the same thing which a truth-loving, good-natured and right-minded person hears and understanding its right meaning in the right way, adopts the straight path, but which when heard by an obstinate, perverse and wilful wrongdoer, makes him to misconstrue it and make it a new excuse for fleeing from the truth. Since the first man is himself a lover of the truth, Allah grants him guidance, for it is not the way of Allah to lead the seekers after truth forcibly astray; and since the second man himself does not want guidance, but chooses only error for himself, Allah also pushes him on to the way of error and deviation, for it is also not the way of Allah to forcibly pull to the way of the truth him who has an aversion to the truth. (The question of Allah's granting guidance and misguidance has been fully explained at many places for example, see E.N.'s 10, 16, 19, 20 of Al-Baqarah; E.N. 173 of An-Nisā', E.N.'s 17, 28, 90 of Al-An'ām, E.N. 13 of Yūnus, E.N. 54 of Al-Kahf, E..N. 71 of Al-Qasas)

25. That is, none knows but Allah what different kinds and how many of the creatures He has created in the universe, what powers He has granted them, and what services He is taking from them. If the man clinging to the tiny globe of the earth seeing the tiny world around himself with his limited sight, is involved in the misunderstanding that the universe of God contains nothing but what he can perceive by his senses, or by his instruments, this would only be his own short-sightedness, otherwise this universe is so vast and limitless that it is not in the power of man to obtain full knowledge about any of the things here, not to speak of comprehending mentally the concept of all its vastnesses.

26. "The people may take heed" the people may recover their senses and wake up before they make themselves worthy of Hell and suffer its punishment, and should think of saving themselves from it.

27. That is, it is not a hollow thing which may be mocked like that.

28. That is, "Just as the moon and the night and the day are the great signs of the powers of Allah, so also is Hell a great sign of His powers. If the existence of the moon and the alternation of the night and day so regularly were not impossible, why should the existence of Hell be impossible as you think it is? You see these phenomena day and night; therefore, they do not surprise you: otherwise these things in themselves also are great marvels of the powers of Allah. If you had not observed them and somebody were to tell you that there is also such a thing as the moon in the world, or, there is a sun which leaves the world dark when it hides and makes the world shine forth with light when it appears,

[Contd. on p. 129

مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِيْ سَقَرَ ﴿٤٢﴾ قَالُوْا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّيْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمُ الْمِسْكِيْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾
وَكُنَّا نَخُوْضُ مَعَ الْخَآئِضِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَكُنَّا نُكَذِّبُ بِيَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ﴿٤٦﴾ حَتّٰى اَتٰىنَا
الْيَقِيْنُ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَمَا تَنْفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشّٰفِعِيْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكِرَةِ مُعْرِضِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾
كَاَنَّهُمْ حُمُرٌ مُّسْتَنْفِرَةٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ ﴿٥١﴾ بَلْ يُرِيْدُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ اَنْ
يُّؤْتٰى صُحُفًا مُّنَشَّرَةً ﴿٥٢﴾ كَلَّا ۭ بَلْ لَّا يَخَافُوْنَ الْاٰخِرَةَ ﴿٥٣﴾ كَلَّآ اِنَّهٗ تَذْكِرَةٌ ﴿٥٤﴾
فَمَنْ شَآءَ ذَكَرَهُ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمَا يَذْكُرُوْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ ۭ هُوَ اَهْلُ التَّقْوٰى
وَاَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ﴿٥٦﴾

Every person is a pledge for his own deeds,[30] except the people of the right hand, who shall be in Gardens,[31] There they will ask the culprits,[32] "what has brought you into Hell?" They will reply, "We were not of those who offered the *salāt*,[33] and we did not feed the poor,[34] and we used to join with those who indulged in idle talk against the Truth, and we used to belie the Day of Recompense, till the inevitable overtook us."[35] At that time, no intercession of the intercessors shall avail them anything.[36] 38-48

What then is the matter with these people that they are turning away from this Admonition as though they were wild asses fleeing away from a lion?[37] Nay, each one of them desires that he should be sent open letters.[38] No, never! The fact is that they do not fear the Hereafter.[39] No, never![40] This indeed is an Admonition. So, let him who wills, take heed. But they will never take heed unless Allah so wills.[41] He alone is worthy that he should be feared,[42] and He alone is worthy to forgive (those who fear Him).[43] 49-56

Contd. from p.128]

then the people like you would have made jests of it too as you make jests of Hell."

29. That is, the people have been warned to this effect. Now, let him who heeds the warning go forward on the right way, and let him who wills still lag behind.

30. For explanation, see E.N. 16 of Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭūr.

31. In other words, the people of the left hand will be seized in consequence of their misdeeds, but the people of the right hand will have their debts settled. (For explanation of the people of the right hand and the left hand, see E.N.'s 5, 6 of Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah).

32. At several places in the Qur'ān above, it has been stated that the dwellers of Paradise and the dwellers of Hell will be able to see and commune with each other directly without the agency of any instrument whenever they will so desire, although they will be living hundreds of thousands of miles away from each other. For instance, see Al-A'rāf: 44-50 and E.N. 35, Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 50-57 and E.N. 32 on it.

33. That is, "We were not of those who after having believed in Allah and His Messenger and His Boo , performed the foremost duty imposed by Allah, i.e. the Prayer. " Here, it should be understood well that unless a person has believed he cannot offer the Prayer at all. Therefore, one's being of those who performed the Prayer, by itself implies that one is a believer. But by attributing one's going to Hell to one's not being of those who performed their Prayer, it has been made explicit that one cannot escape Hell even after having believed if one does not perform one's Prayers regularly.

34. This shows how grave a sin it is in Islam to see a hungry man and fail to feed him even if one can, for this has been particularly mentioned as one of the causes of one's going to Hell.

35. "Till the inevitable overtoo us": till death came upon us. Here, "the inevitable" implies death as well as the Hereafter.

36. That is, "Even if an intercessor interceded for a person who persisted in this way of life till death, he would not be forgiven." The question of intercession has been so fully explained at so many places in the Qur'an that no one can have any difficulty in nowing and understanding as to who can intercede and who cannot, when one can intercede and when one cannot, for whom one can intercede and for whom one cannot, and for whom intercession is beneficial and for whom it is not. As one of the major causes of the people's deviation in the world, is their false concept about intercession, it has been explained at such length in the Qur'ān as to leave no room for any doubt and ambiguity. For example, see Al-Baqarah; 255, Al-An'ām: 94, Al-A'rāf: 53. Yūnus: 3-18, Maryam: 87, Ṭā Hā:

109, Al-Anbiyā': 28, Sabā: 23, Az-Zumar: 43-44, Al-Mu'min: 18, Ad-Dukhān: 86, An-Najm: 26, An-Nabā: 37-38.

37. This is an idiomatic expression in Arabic which depicts the character of wild asses who flee stupefied and stunned as soon as they smell a lion or hear a hunter.

38. That is, they desire that if Allah really has appointed Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) as His Prophet, He should send a letter to each one of the chiefs and elders of Makkah telling him that Muhammad is Allah's Prophet; therefore he should obey and follow him. And these letters should be such as may convince them that they have been written by Allah Himself. At another place in the Qur'ān, this saying of the disbelievers of Makkah has been cited: "We will not believe in it unless we are given the like of what has been given to the Messengers of Allah." (Al-An'ām: 124). At still another place their this demand has been cited: "Or you ascend the sky ... and bring down to us a writing that we may read." (Banī Isrā'īl: 93).

39. That is, the real cause of their failure to affirm the faith is not that their demands are not fulfilled, but the real cause is that they are fearless of the Hereafter. They think that this world is an end in itself and they do not have any idea that there is another life after this worldly life in which they will have to render an account of their deeds. This very thing has made them careless and irresponsible in the world. They regard the question of truth and falsehood as utterly meaningless, for they do not see any truth following which may have necessarily led to a good result in the world, nor do they see any falsehood which might have always led to an evil result in the world. Therefore, they think it is useless merely to consider as to what is really true and what is false. This question can be worthy of serious consideration only for the person who regards the present life of the world as transitory and admits that the real and everlasting life is the life hereafter, where the truth will necessarily lead to a good result and falsehood necessarily to an evil result. Such a person will certainly believe when he sees the rational arguments and the pure teachings presented in the Qur'ān and will use his common sense to understand what is actually wrong with the beliefs and deeds which the Qur'ān calls wrong. But the denier of the Hereafter who is not at all serious in his search for the truth, will present ever new demands every day for not believing, and will present a new excuse for his denial even if all his demands are fulfilled. This same thing has been expressed in Sūrah Al-An'ām: 7 thus: "O Prophet, even if We had sent down to you a Book written in paper, and even if they had touched it with their own hands, the disbelievers would have said: 'This is nothing but manifest sorcery'."

40. That is, no such demand of theirs will ever be fulfilled.

41. That is, a person's taking heed does not wholly depend upon his own will, but he takes heed only when Allah also wills to grant him the grace to take heed. In other words, the truth that has been expressed here is that no act of man takes a concrete shape solely by his own will, but each act is implemented only when the will of God combines with the will of the man. This is a very delicate question, failure to understand which has often made human thought falter. Briefly it can be understood thus: If in this world every man had the power to accomplish whatever he wanted to accomplish, the system of the world would be disturbed. This system continues to hold only because the will of Allah is dominant over all other wills. Man can accomplish whatever he wants to accomplish only when Allah also wills that he be allowed to accomplish it. The same is also the case with guidance and error. Only man's own desiring to have guidance is not enough for him to have guidance; he receives guidance only when Allah also takes a decision to fulfil his desire. Likewise, only man's desiring to go astray by itself is also not enough, but when Allah in view of his desire decides that he be allowed to wander into evil ways, then he wanders into the evil ways in which Allah allows him to wander. As for example, if a person wants to become a thief, only his desire is not enough that he may enter into any house he likes and make away with whatever he likes, but he can fulfil his desire only at the time and to the extent and in the form that Allah allows him to fulfil it, according to His supreme wisdom and expedience.

42. That is, "The admonition being given to you to avoid Allah's displeasure is not for the reason that Allah needs it, and if you did not take it, Allah would be harmed, but you are being so admonished because it is Allah's right that His servants should seek His pleasure and good will and should avoid doing anything against His will."

43. That is, "It behoves only Allah that He should receive into His mercy whoever desists from evil no matter how many acts of disobedience he might have committed in the past. Allah is not vengeful to His servants so that He may refuse to forgive their errors and be bent upon punishing them in any case."


LXXV
AL-QIYĀMAH
اَلقِيٰمَة

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXV

AL-QIYĀMAH

اَلْقِيٰمَة

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been so named after the word *al-Qiyāmah* in the first verse. This is not only the name but also the title of this Sūrah, for it is devoted to Resurrection itself.

Period of Revelation

Although there is no tradition to indicate its period of revelation, yet there is in the subject-matter of this Sūrah an internal evidence, which shows that it is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be sent down at Makkah. After verse 15 the discourse is suddenly interrupted and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) told: "Do not move your tongue to

remember this Revelation hastily. It is Our responsibility to have it remembered and read. Therefore, when We are reciting it, listen to its recital carefully. Again, it is Our responsibility to explain its meaning." Then, from verse 20 onward the same theme which was interrupted at verse 15, is resumed. This parenthetical passage, according to both the context and the traditions, has been interposed here for the reason that when the Angel Gabriel was reciting this Sūrah to the Holy Prophet, the Holy Prophet, lest he should forget its words later, was repeating them at the same moment. This in fact happened at the time when the coming down and receipt of Revelation was yet a new experience for him and he was not yet fully used to receiving it calmly. There are two other instances also of this in the Qur'ān. First, in Sūrah Tā Hā the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been told: "And see that you do not hasten to recite the Qur'ān before its revelation is completed to you." (v. 114). Then, in Sūrah Al-A'lā, it has been said: "We shall enable you to recite: then you shall never forget." (v. 6). Later, when the Holy Prophet became fully used to receiving the Revelation well, there remained no need to give him any such instruction. That is why except for these three, there is no other instance of this in the Qur'ān.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Most of the Sūrahs, from here till the end of the Qur'ān, in view of their content and style, seem to have been sent down in the period when after the first seven verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir, revelation of the Qur'ān began like a shower of rain. Thus, in the successively revealed Sūrahs Islam and its fundamental concepts and moral teachings were presented so forcefully and effectively in pithy, brief sentences and the people of Makkah warned so vehemently on their errors and deviations that the Quraish chiefs were utterly confounded. Therefore, before the next Hajj season came they held the conference for devising schemes to defeat the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as has been mentioned in the Introduction to the Sūrah Al-Muddaththir above.

In this Sūrah, addressing the deniers of the Hereafter, replies have been given to each of their doubts and objections, strong arguments have been given to prove the possibility, occurrence and necessity of the Resurrection and Hereafter, and also it has been pointed out clearly that the actual reason of the people's denying the Hereafter is not that they regard it as impossible rationally but because their selfish motives do not

allow them to affirm it. At the same time, the people have been warned, as if to say: "The event the occurrence of which you deny, will inevitably come: all your deeds will be brought and placed before you. As a matter of fact, even before any of you sees his record, he will be knowing fully well what he has done in the world, for no man is unaware of himself, no matter what excuses and pretences he may offer to deceive the world and deceive himself in respect of his misdeeds."



لَآ اُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۝١ وَلَآ اُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ۝٢ اَيَحْسَبُ الْاِنْسَانُ
اَلَّنْ نَّجْمَعَ عِظَامَهٗ ۝٣ بَلٰى قٰدِرِيْنَ عَلٰٓى اَنْ نُّسَوِّيَ بَنَانَهٗ ۝٤ بَلْ يُرِيْدُ الْاِنْسَانُ
لِيَفْجُرَ اَمَامَهٗ ۝٥ يَسْـَٔلُ اَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۝٦ فَاِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصَرُ ۝٧ وَخَسَفَ الْقَمَرُ ۝٨
وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ ۝٩ يَقُوْلُ الْاِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ اَيْنَ الْمَفَرُّ ۝١٠ كَلَّا لَا وَزَرَ ۝١١ اِلٰى
رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذِ ِالْمُسْتَقَرُّ ۝١٢ يُنَبَّؤُا الْاِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَاَخَّرَ ۝١٣ بَلِ الْاِنْسَانُ
عَلٰى نَفْسِهٖ بَصِيْرَةٌ ۝١٤ وَّلَوْ اَلْقٰى مَعَاذِيْرَهٗ ۝١٥ لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهٖ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهٖ ۝١٦
اِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهٗ وَقُرْاٰنَهٗ ۝١٧ فَاِذَا قَرَاْنٰهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْاٰنَهٗ ۝١٨ ثُمَّ اِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهٗ ۝١٩
كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّوْنَ الْعَاجِلَةَ ۝٢٠ وَتَذَرُوْنَ الْاٰخِرَةَ ۝٢١ وُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ نَّاضِرَةٌ ۝٢٢
اِلٰى رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ ۝٢٣ وَوُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ بَاسِرَةٌ ۝٢٤ تَظُنُّ اَنْ يُّفْعَلَ بِهَا فَاقِرَةٌ ۝٢٥
كَلَّآ اِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِيَ ۝٢٦ وَقِيْلَ مَنْ ۜ رَاقٍ ۝٢٧ وَّظَنَّ اَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ ۝٢٨ وَالْتَفَّتِ
السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ ۝٢٩ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذِ ِالْمَسَاقُ ۝٣٠ فَلَا صَدَّقَ وَلَا صَلّٰى ۝٣١ وَ
لٰكِنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلّٰى ۝٣٢ ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهٖ يَتَمَطّٰى ۝٣٣ اَوْلٰى لَكَ فَاَوْلٰى ۝٣٤ ثُمَّ
اَوْلٰى لَكَ فَاَوْلٰى ۝٣٥ اَيَحْسَبُ الْاِنْسَانُ اَنْ يُّتْرَكَ سُدًى ۝٣٦ اَلَمْ يَكُ نُطْفَةً مِّنْ
مَّنِيٍّ يُّمْنٰى ۝٣٧ ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقَ فَسَوّٰى ۝٣٨ فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ
وَالْاُنْثٰى ۝٣٩ اَلَيْسَ ذٰلِكَ بِقٰدِرٍ عَلٰٓى اَنْ يُّحْيِۦَ الْمَوْتٰى ۝٤٠

LXXV
AL-QIYĀMAH
اَلقِيٰمَة

Verses. 40

Revealed at Makkah

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

Nay,[1] I swear by the Day of Resurrection and nay, I swear by the reproaching self;[2] Does man think that We shall not be able to put his bones together?[3] Why not? We have even the power to shape and restore his very finger-tips.[4] But man desires that he may go on doing evil in future as well.[5] He asks, "When is the Day of Resurrection to be?"[6] When the eyes are dazzled[7] and the moon is darkened and the sun and the moon are brought together,[8] then the same man will say, "Whither to escape?" No, by no means! There will be no refuge whatever. Only before your Lord that Day shall be the place of rest. That Day man shall be told all his former and latter deeds.[9] Nay, man knows his own self best, even though he may offer many excuses.[10] — O Prophet,[11] 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,[12] listen to its recital carefully. Again, it is for Us to explain its meaning.[13]—No, by no means![14] The fact is that you (people) love that which is hastily attainable (i.e. the world) and neglect the Hereafter.[15] On that Day some faces shall be fresh,[16] looking towards their Lord,[17] and some faces shall be gloomy, thinking that a back breaking calamity is about to befall them. No, by no means![18] When the soul reaches the throat, and it is said, "Is there an enchanter to help?"[19] and man thinks that it is the time of his departure from the world, and the leg is joined to the leg,[20] that will be the Day of driving towards your Lord. 1-30

But he neither affirmed (the Truth) nor prayed, but he belied turned away. Then he went to his kinsfolk, arrogantly.[21] This sort of conduct behoves you and you alone. Yes, this sort of conduct behoves 31-35

you and you alone![22]

36-40 Does man[23] think that he will be left to himself to wander at will?[24] Was he not a mere sperm-drop, which is emitted (in the mother's womb)? Then he became a blood-clot then Allah formed him and fashioned his limbs in proportion; then from it He made two kinds, male and female. Has He not then the power to give life to the dead?[25]

---

1. To begin the discourse with "Nay" by itself indicates that the Sūrah was sent down to refute some argument which was already in progress. The theme that follows shows that the argument was about Resurrection and life after death, which the people of Makkah were denying and also mocking at it at the same time. This can be understood by an example. If a person only wants to affirm the truth of the Messenger, he will say: "By God, the Messenger has come with the truth." But if some people might be denying the truth of the Messenger, he in response would rejoin, thus: "Nay, by God, the Messenger has come with the truth." It would mean: "That which you say is not true. I swear that the truth is this and this."

2. The Qur'ān has mentioned three kinds of human self: (1) *Ammārah*: the self that urges man to evil; (2) *Lawwāmah*: the self that feels repentant at doing wrong, thinking wrong and willing wrong and reproaches man for this; and the same is called Conscience in modern terminology; and (3) *Mutma'innah*: the self that feels full satisfaction at following the right path and abandoning the wrong path.

Here, the thing for which Allah has sworn an oath by the Resurrection (*al-Qiyāmah*) and the self-reproaching Self, has not been mentioned, for the following sentence itself points it out. The oath has been sworn to stress the truth that Allah will certainly resurrect man after death and He has full power to do so. Now, the question arises: What is the relevance of swearing an oath by these two truths to this thing?

As for the Day of Resurrection, the reason of swearing by it is certainty. The whole system of the universe testifies that it is neither eternal nor everlasting. Its own nature tells that it has neither existed since eternity nor can last till eternity. Human intellect has never had any strong argument to support the baseless view that this ever changing world could have existed since ever and would last for ever. But as the knowledge of man about this world goes on increasing, it goes on becoming more and more certain for man himself that this workhouse of life had a beginning in time before which it was not, and necessarily it has also an end in time after which it will not be. For this reason, Allah has sworn an oath by Resurrection itself on the occurrence of Resurrection, and this is an oath of the kind that we might swear addressing a sceptical person, who may be sceptical

about his own existence, saying: "By you yourself, you exist, i.e., your own being itself testifies that you exist."

But an oath by the Day of Resurrection is only an agrument for the truth that this system will one day be upset. As for the truth that after that man shall be resurrected and called upon to account for his deeds and made to see the good or evil results thereof, another oath has been sworn by the self reproaching soul. No man exists in the world, who may not have a faculty called Conscience in him. This Conscience is necessarily conscious of the good and evil, and no matter how perverted and degraded a man might be, his Conscience always checks him on doing evil and for not doing good irrespective of the fact whether the criterion of good and evil that he had set for himself might in itself be right or wrong. This is an express pointer that man is not merely an animal but a moral being. He naturally can distinguish good from evil; he regards himself as responsible for the good or the evil he does; and even if he might feel pleased suppressing the reproaches of his Conscience over the evil he has done to another, he, on the contrary, feels and demands from within that the other one who has done the same evil to him, must deserve punishment. Now, if the existence of a self-reproaching soul of this kind in man himself is an undeniable truth, then this truth too is undeniable that the same self-reproaching soul is an evidence of the life hereafter, which exists in man's own nature itself. For this demand of nature that man must be rewarded or punished for his good or evil deeds for which he himself is responsible, cannot be met in any other way than in the life hereafter. No sensible man can deny that if man becomes non existent after death, he will certainly be deprived of the rewards of his good deeds and escape the just and lawful punishment of many of his evil deeds. Therefore, unless one comes to believe in the absurd idea that a rational being like man has stumbled into an irrational system of the universe and a moral being like man has happened to be born in a world which basically has nothing to do with morality, he cannot deny the life hereafter. Likewise, the philosophy of the transmigration of souls also is no reply to this demand of nature, for if man goes on being born and reborn in this very world for the sake of being rewarded and punished for his moral acts, in every cycle of life he will perform some additional moral acts, which again will need to be rewarded and punished, thus making his account more and more lengthy and complicated in an endless way instead of being settled finally and for good. Therefore, this demand of nature is fulfilled only in case man in this world should have only one life and then, after the whole human race has been brought to an end, there should be another life in which all acts of man should be judged and assessed rightly and justly and he should be fully rewarded or punished in consequence thereof. (For further explanation, see E.N. 30 of Sūrah Al-A'rāf).

3. The above two arguments, which have been presented in the form of the oaths, only prove two things. First, that the end of the world (*i.e.* the first stage of Resurrection) is a certainty; and second, that another life after death is necessary, for without it the logical and natural demands of man's being a moral being cannot be fulfilled; and this will certainly happen, for the existence of the Conscience in man testifies to it. Now, this third argument has been given to prove that life after death is possible. The people of Makkah who denied it, said again and again: "How can it be that the people who died hundreds of thousands of years ago, whose bodies have disintegrated into particles and mixed in the dust, whose bones decayed and were scattered away by the winds, some of whom were burnt to ashes, others devoured by the beasts of prey, still others drowned in the seas and swallowed by fish, the material constituents of their bodies should re-assemble and every man should rise up as the same person that he once was ten or twenty thousand years before? Allah has given its very rational and highly forceful reply in the form of this brief question: "Does man think that We shall not be able to put his bones together?" That is, "If you had been told that the scattered particles of your body would reunite of their own accord some time in the future, and you would come back to life by yourself with this very body, you would no doubt have been justified in regarding it as impossible. But what you have actually been told is that such a thing will not happen by itself, but Allah Almighty will do this. Now, do you really think that the Creator of the universe, Whom you yourself also regard as the Creator, would be powerless to do so?" This was such a question in answer to which nobody who believed in God to be the Creator of the universe; could say, neither then nor today, that even God Himself could not do this even if He so willed. And if a disbeliever says such a thing, he can be asked: How did God in the first instance make the body in which you at present exist, by gathering its countless particles together from the air, water and earth and many other places you know not what, and how can you say that the same God cannot gather its constituent parts together once again?

4. That is, "Not to speak of building up your skeleton once again by gathering together the major bones? We are able to make whole the most delicate parts of your body, even your finger tips, as they used to be before."

5. In this brief sentence the real disease of the deniers of the Hereafter has been clearly diagnosed. What makes them deny the Hereafter is not, in fact, their regarding the Resurrection and Hereafter as impossible but they deny it because acceptance of the Hereafter inevitably imposes certain moral restrictions on them, which they detest. They desire that they should continue roaming in the world at will as they have been roaming before. They should have full freedom to go on committing whatever injustice, dishonesty, sin and wickedness that they have been committing before, and there should be no deterrent to obstruct their freedom and

to warn them that one day they will have to appear and render an account of their deeds before their God. Therefore, it is not their intellect which is hindering them from believing in the Hereafter but their desires of the self.

6. This question was not put as a question but derisively and to deny Resurrection, That is, they did not want to ask when Resurrection would take place but asked mockingly: "What has happened to the day with which you are threatening us. When will it come?"

7. Literally, the words *bariq al-basaru* mean dazzling of the eyes by lightning, but in the Arabic idiom these words do not specifically carry this meaning only but are also used for man's being terror-stricken and amazed, or his being confounded on meeting with an accident suddenly and his eyes being dazed at some distressing sight before him. This subject has been expressed at another place in the Qur'ān, thus; "Allah is only deferring their case to the Day when the eyes shall stare with consternation." (Ibrāhīm: 42).

8. This is a brief description of the chaotic condition of the system of the universe, that will prevail in the first stage of Resurrection. The darkening of the moon and the joining of the moon and the sun together can also mean that not only will the moon lose its light, which is borrowed from the sun, but the sun itself will become dark and both will become devoid of light similarly. Another meaning can be that the earth will suddenly start rotating in the reverse order and on that day both the moon and the sun will rise simultaneously in the west. And a third meaning can be that the moon will suddenly shoot out of the earth's sphere of influence and will fall into the sun. There may possibly be some other meaning also of this which we cannot understand today.

9. *Bimā qaddama wa akhkhara* is a very comprehensive sentence, which can have several meanings and probably all are implied; (1) That man on that Day will be told what good or evil he had earned in his worldly life before death and sent forward for his hereafter, and also informed what effects of his good or evil acts he had left behind in the world, which continued to work and to influence the coming generations for ages after him; (2) that he will be told everything he ought to have done but which he did not do, and did what he ought not to have done; (3) that the full datewise account of what he did before and what he did afterwards will be placed before him; (4) that he will be told whatever good or evil he had done as well as informed of the good or the evil that he had left undone.

10. That is, the object of placing man's record before him will not be to inform the culprit of his crimes, but this will be done because the demands of justice are not fulfilled unless the proof of the crime is produced before the court; otherwise everyman fully well knows what he actually is. For the sake of self-

knowledge he does not need that another one should tell him what he is. A liar can deceive the whole world but he himself knows that he lies. A thief can devise a thousand devices to conceal his crime but he himself is aware that he is a thief. A person involved in error can present a thousand arguments to assure the people that he is honestly convinced of the disbelief, atheism or polytheism, which he professes and follows, but his own conscience is never unaware of why he persists in that creed and what, in fact, prevents him from understanding and admitting its error and falsity. An unjust, wicked, dishonest, immoral and corrupt person can even suppress the voice of his own conscience by inventing one or another excuse so that it may stop reproaching him and should be satisfied that he is doing whatever he is doing only because of certain compulsions, expediences and genuine needs, but despite this he has in any case the knowledge of what wrong he has committed against a certain person, how he has deprived another of his rights, how he deceived still another and that unlawful methods he used to gain what he has gained. Therefore, at the time when one appears in the Court of the Hereafter, every disbeliever, every hypocrite, every wicked person and culprit will himself be knowing what he has done in the world and for what crime he stands before his God.

11. The whole passage from here to "Again, it is for Us to explain its meaning", is a parenthesis, which has been interposed here as an address to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). As we have explained in the Introduction above, in the initial stage of the Prophethood when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was not yet fully used to receiving the Revelation, he was afraid when Revelation came down to him whether he would be able to remember exactly what the Angel Gabriel (peace be on him) was reciting to him or not. Therefore, he would try to commit to memory rapidly what he heard from the Angel simultaneously. The same thing happened when Gabriel was reciting these verses of Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah. Therefore, interrupting what was being revealed, the holy Prophet was instructed to the effect: "Do not try to memorise the words of the revelation, but listen to it attentively and carefully. It is Our responsibility to enable you to remember it by heart and then to recite it accurately. Rest assured that you will not forget even a word of this Revelation, nor ever commit a mistake in reciting it!

After this instruction the original theme is resumed with: "No, by no means! The fact is ..." The people who are not aware of this background regard these sentences as wholly unconnected with the context when they see them interposed here. But one does not see any irrelevance when one has understood their background. This can be understood by an example. A teacher seeing the inattentiveness of a student in the course of the lesson might interrupt the lesson to tell him, "Listen to me carefully", and then resume his speech, This sentence will

certainly seem to be irrelevant to those who might be unaware of the incident and might read the lesson when it is printed and published word for word. But the one who is aware of the incident because of which this sentence was interposed, will feel satisfied that the lesson has been reproduced verbatum and nothing has been increased or decreased in it in the process of reproduction.

The explanation that we have given above of the interpolation of the parenthesis in the present context, is not merely based on conjecture, but it has been explained likewise in the authentic traditions. Imām Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarīr, Tabarani, Baihaqī and other traditionists have related with authentic chains of transmitters a tradition from Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, saying that when the Qur'ān was revealed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), he would start repeating the words of the Revelation rapidly as the Angel Gabriel recited them, fearing lest he should forget some part of it later. Thereupon, he was instructed: "Do not move your tongue to remember this Revelation hastily ... The same thing has been related from Sha'bī, Ibn Zaid, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Qatādah, Mujāhid and other early commentators.

12. Although it was Gabriel (peace be on him) who recited the Qur'ān to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace), since he recited it on behalf of Allah,,and not on his own behalf, Allah said: "When We are reciting it."

13. This gives the feeling, and some early commentators also have given expression to the same, that probably in the beginning the Holy Messenger of Allah used to ask of the Angel Gabriel the meaning of a verse or a word or a command of the Qur'ān even in the very midst of the Revelation itself. Therefore, the Holy Prophet was not only given the instruction that he should listen quietly to Revelation when it came down to him, and assured that its each word would be preserved in his memory precisely, and he would be enabled to recite the Qur'ān exactly as it was revealed, but at the same time it was also promised that he would be made to understand the meaning and intention of each command and each instruction of Divine Revelation.

This is a very important verse, which proves certain fundamental concepts which if understood well, can protect one against the errors which some people have been spreading before as they are spreading them today.

First, it clearly proves that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) did not receive only the Revelation which is recorded in the Qur'ān but besides that he was also given such knowledge by revelation as is not recorded in it. For, if the meaning and intention of the commandments of the Qur'ān, its allusions, its words and its specific terms, which the Holy Prophet was made to understand, had been recorded in the Qur'ān, there was no need to say that it was also Allah's own

responsibility to explain its meaning, for it should then be there in the Qur'ān itself. Hence, one will have to admit that the explanations which were given by Allah of the meanings of the contents of the Qur'ān, were in any case in addition to the words of the Qur'ān. This is another proof of the secret Revelation to the Holy Prophet which the Qur'ān provides. (For further proofs of this from the Qur'ān, see our book *Sunnat kī Ā'īnī Ḥaithiyat* pp. 94-95 and pp. 118-125).

Secondly, the explanation of the meaning and intention of the Qur'ān and of its commandments that was given by Allah to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), was given for the purpose that he should make the people understand the Qur'ān by his word and deed according to it and teach them to act on its Commands. If this was not the object, and the explanation was only given so that he may restrict its knowledge to himself, it was then an exercise in futility, for it could not help in any way in the performance of the prophetic duties. Therefore, only a foolish person could say that this explanatory work had no legal value at all. Allah Himself has said in Sūrah An-Naḥl: 44: "And O Prophet, We have sent down this Admonition to you so that you may make plain and explain to the people the teaching which has been sent for them." (For explanation, see E.N. 40 of Sūrah An-Naḥl). And at four places in the Qur'ān Allah has stated that the Holy Prophet's task was not only to recite the verses of the Book of Allah but also to teach the Book. (Al-Baqarah: 129,.151, Āl-Imrān: 164, Al-Jumu'ah: 2. We have fully explained all these verses at pp. 74-77 of *Sunnat kī Ā'īnī Ḥaithiyat*). After this, how can a believer of the Qur'ān deny that the Qur'ān's correct and authoritative, as a matter of fact official, explanation is only that which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has given by his word and deed, for it is not his personal explanation but the explanation given by the God Who sent down the Qur'ān to him. Apart from this, or leaving this aside any person who explains a verse, or a word, of the Qur'ān according to his personal whim and desire, commits a boldness which no true believer could ever commit.

Thirdly, even if a person has read the Qur'ān only cursorily, he cannot help feeling that there are many things in it whose actual meaning and intention cannot be understood by a reader of Arabic only from the words of the Qur'ān, nor can he know how to act on the commands enjoined in them. Take the word *salāt* for instance; The act which has been most stressed by the Qur'ān after the affirmation of faith is the act of *salāt*. But no man only with the help of the dictionary can determine its actual meaning. At the most what one can understand from the way it has been repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'ān is that this Arabic word has been used in some special terminological sense, and it probably implies some special act which the believers are required to perform. But merely by reading the Qur'ān no reader of Arabic can determine what particular act it is, and how it is to be performed. The question: If the Sender of the Qur'ān had not

appointed a teacher from Himself and explained to him the precise and exact meaning of this term and taught him the method in full detail of implementing the command of *salāt*, could there be even two Muslims in the world who would have agreed on one method of acting on the command of *ṣalāt* just by reading the Qur'ān? The reason why Muslims have been performing *ṣalāt* in one and the same way, generation after generation, for more than 1500 years, and the way millions and millions of Muslims are carrying out the command of *salāt* similarly in every part of the world, is that Allah had not only revealed the words of the Qur'ān to His Messenger but had also explained to him fully the meaning of those words and the same meaning he taught to the people who accepted the Qur'an as the Book of Allah and him as the Messenger of Allah.

Fourthly, the means of knowing the explanation of the words of the Qur'ān that Allah taught His Messenger and the Messenger his *Ummah* by word and deed, is none but the *Ḥadīth* and the *Sunnah*. The *Ḥadīth* implies the traditions which the earliest followers passed on to the later generations about the sayings and acts of the Messenger on sound authority, and the *Sunnah* implies the way of life which became prevalent in the individnal and collective life of the Muslims by the Holy Messenger's oral and practical teaching, the details of which have been bequeathed by the former to the latter generations by reliable traditions as well as seen by them practically in the life of the earliest followers. The person who refuses to acknowledge this means of knowledge, in fact, says that Allah after taking the responsibility of explaining the meaning of the Qur'ān to His Messenger had, God forbid, failed to fulfil His promise. For this responsibility had not been taken to explain the meaning only to the Messenger in his personal capacity but for the purpose that the *Ummah* also be made to understand the meaning of the Divine Book through the agency of the Messenger. And as soon as the *Ḥadīth* and the *Sunnah* are denied to be a source of law, it virtually amounts to saying that Allah has failed to carry out His responsibility. May Allah protect us from such blasphemy! To the one who argues that many people had also fabricated *Ḥadīth*, we would say that fabrication of *Ḥadīth* itself is a major proof of the fact that in the beginning the entire *Ummah* gave the sayings and acts of the Holy Messenger (Upon whom be Allah's peace) the status of law, otherwise why should the people who wanted to spread error have fabricated false *Ḥadīth*? For only those coins are counterfeited which are current in the bazaar; nobody would print paper currency which had no value in the bazaar. Then, those who say such a thing perhaps do not know that this *Ummah* had seen to it from the very beginning that no falsehood was ascribed to the holy man whose sayings and acts had the status of law, and as the danger of ascribing false things to him increased, the well-wishers of the *Ummah* made greater and still greater efforts to distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit. The science of distinguishing the genuine from the false traditions is a

unique science invented and developed only by the Muslims. Unfortunate indeed are those who without acquiring this science are being misled by the western orientalists to look upon the *Hadith* and the *Sunnah* as un-authentic and un-reliable and do not realize how grievously they are harming Islam by their foolhardiness.

14: The theme is again resumed from where it was interrupted by the parenthesis. "By no means" implies; "You deny the Hereafter not because you regard the Creator of the universe as helpless to bring about Resurrection and raise the dead, but because of this and this other reason."

15. This is the second reason for denying the Hereafter, the first being the one mentioned in verse 5 above, saying: Since man wants to avoid the moral restrictions which are inevitably imposed by the belief in the Hereafter, his selfish motives, in fact, urge him to deny the Hereafter, and then he tries to present arguments in order to rationalise his denial. Now, the second reason being presented is that the deniers of the Hereafter are narrow-minded and shortsighted; for them only those results are all important, which appear in this world, and they do not give any importance to those effects which will appear in the Hereafter. They think that they should expend all their labour and effort in attaining whatever benefits, pleasures or joys they can attain here, for if one attained this, one attained everything, no matter what evil end this might lead to in the Hereafter. Likewise, they think that the loss or trouble or grief that can afflict one here is a thing that one must avoid, no matter how great a reward it might earn one in the Hereafter if one endured it here. They are only interested in the cash bargain. For the sake of as remote a thing as the Hereafter they can neither abandon a profit nor suffer a loss today. With this mode of thought when they discuss the question of the Hereafter rationally, it is not true rationalism but a mode of thinking because of which they are resolved not to acknowledge the Hereafter in any case even if their conscience might be crying from within that the arguments for the possible occurrence and necessity of the Hereafter given in the Qur'an are highly rational and their own reasoning against it is very weak.

16. "Some faces will be fresh"; will be beaming with joy and delight, for the Hereatter which they had believed in, will be before them precisely accordingly to their belief. Thus, when they see the Hereafter for the sake of which they had given up the unlawful benefits of the world and suffered the lawful losses, actually established before their very eyes, they will have the satisfaction that they had made the correct decision about their way of life, and the time had come when they would enjoy its best and plentiful fruits.

17. Some commentators have understood this allegorically. They say that the words "looking towards someone" are used idiomatically for having expectations from some one, awaiting his decision and hoping for his mercy and

kindness: so much so that even a blind person also says that he is looking towards some one in the hope to see how he helps him. But in a large number of the *Ahadith* the commentary that has been reported of it from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) is that on the Hereafter the illustrious servants of Allah will be blessed with the vision of their Lord. According to a tradition in Bukhārī: "You will openly see your Lord." Muslim and Tirmidhī have related on the authority of Hadrat Suhaib that the Holy Prophet said: "When the righteous people enter Paradise. Allah will ask them: Do you want that I should bless you with something more? They will answer: Have You not made our faces bright: Have You not admitted us into Paradise and saved us from Hell? Thereupon, Allah will remove the curtain and none of the blessings that they had been blessed with until then will be dearer to them than that they should be blessed with the vision of their Lord" And this very reward is the additional reward about which the Qur'ān says: "Those who have done excellent works, will get excellent rewards, and even something in addition to that." (Yūnus: 26) Bukhārī and Muslim have related, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah: "The people asked: O Messenger of Allah, shall we see our Lord on the Day of Resurrection? The Holy Messenger replied: Do you find any difficulty in seeing the sun and the moon when there is no cloud in between? They said that they did not. The Holy Messenger said: Likewise, you will see you Lord." Another tradition bearing almost on the same subject has been reported in Bukhārī and Muslim from Hadrat Jarīr bin 'Abdullah. Imām Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Dāraqutnī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Al-Mundhir, Ṭabarani, Baihaqī, Ibn Abi Shaibah and some other traditionists have related, with a little variation in wordings a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, saying: "The man of the lowest rank among the dwellers of Paradise will see the vastness of his kingdom up to a distance covered in two thousand years, and the people of the highest rank among them will see their Lord twice daily. Then, the Holy Prophet recited this verse: 'On that Day some faces shall be fresh, looking towards their Lord'." A tradition in Ibn Mājah from Ḥaḍrat Jabir bin 'Abdullah is to the effect: "Allah will look towards them, and they will look towards Allah. Then, until Allah hides Himself from them, they will not pay attention to any other blessing of Paradise, and will continue to look towards Him." On the basis of this and many other traditions, the followers of the *Sunnah* almost unanimously understand this verse in the meaning that in the Hereafter the dwellers of Paradise will be blessed with the vision of Allah, and this is supported by this verse of the Qur'ān too: "Nay, surely on that Day they (the sinners) shall be kept away from their Lord's vision." (Al-Muṭaffifin: 15). From this one can automatically conclude that this deprivation will be the lot of the sinners, not of the righteous.

Here, the question arises how can man ever see God? A thing is seen when it is there in a particular direction, place, form and colour, and the rays of light are reflected from it to the eye of man and its image is conveyed from the eye to the sight area in the brain. Is it ever conceivable with regard to the Being of Allah, Lord of the Universe, that man would be able to see Him in this way? But this question, in fact, springs from a grave misunderstanding. It does not take into account the distinction between two things: the essence of seeing and the specific form of the occurrence of the act of seeing with which we are familiar in the world. The essence of seeing is that the seer should be characterised by the power of sight: he should not be blind, and the thing to be seen should be manifest to him, not hidden from him. But in the world what we experience and observe is only the specific form of seeing in which a man or an animal practically sees something, and for this it is necessary that the seer should have an organ called the eye in his body, the eye should have the power of sight, it should have a physically bounded, coloured object before it, which should reflect rays of light to the eye, and the eye should be able to receive its image. Now, if a person thinks that the practical demonstration of the essence of seeing can take place only in the form with which we are familiar in the world, he would be only showing the narrowness of his own mental outlook; otherwise there can be in the Kingdom of God countless ways of seeing, which we cannot even imagine. The one who disputes this should tell us whether his God is seeing or blind. If He is seeing and sees His whole Universe and everything in it, does He see all this with an organ called the eye with which men and animals see things in the world, and does the act of seeing issue forth from Him as it issues forth from us? Obviously, the answer to this is in the negative, and when it is so, why should a sensible man find it difficult to understand that in the Hereafter the dwellers of Paradise will not see Allah in the specific form in which man sees something in the world, but there nature of seeing will be different, which we cannot comprehend here. The fact is that it is even more difficult for us to understand the nature of the Hereafter precisely and accurately than it is for a two-year-old child to understand what matrimonial life is, whereas he himself will experience it when he grows up.

18. The phrase "by no means" relates to the context, and means: "You are wrong in thinking that you will be annihilated after death and you will not return to your Lord."

19. The word *rāqin* in the original may be derived from *ruqayyah*, which means resort to charming, enchanting and exercising, and also from *raqī*, which means ascending. In the first case, the meaning would be: "At last, when the attendants of the patient are disappointed with every remedy and cure, they will say: "Let us at least call in an enchanter, who may save him;" in the second case, the meaning would be: "At that time the angels will say: which angels are to take

his soul: the angels of punishment or the angels of mercy?" In other words, at that very time the question will be decided in what capacity the dying one is entering the Hereafter; if he is a righteous person, the angels of mercy will take him, and if he is wicked, the angels of mercy will keep away and the angels of punishment will seize him and take him away.

20. Some commentators have taken the word *sāq* (leg, shank) in its literal meaning, thereby implying that at death one lean leg will join the other lean leg; some others have taken it metaphorically in the sense of difficulty, vehemence and hardship so as to mean: At that time one affliction will be joined with another affliction, one of being saparated from the world and all its enjoyments, and the other of being seized and taken to the Hereafter as a culprit, and this will be experienced by every disbeliever, hypocrite and sinner.

21. It means that the one who was not prepared to believe in the Hereafter, heard all that has been described in the above verses; yet he persisted in his denial, and hearing these verses went back to his household, arrogantly. Mujāhid, Qatādah and Ibn Zaid say that this person was Abū Jahl. The words of the verse also indicate that it was some particular person, who adopted such a conduct after having heard the above-mentioned verse of Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah.

The words, "He neither affirmed the Truth nor offered the Prayer", are particularly noteworthy. They clearly show that the first and necessary demand of acknowledging the truth about Allah and His Messenger and Book is that one should perform the Prayer. The occasion and time to carry out the other injunctions of the Divine *Shari'ah* come later but the Prayer time approaches soon after one has affirmed the faith, and then it becomes known whether what one has affirmed with the tongue was really the voice of one's heart, or it was only a puff of the wind which one sent out from one's mouth in the form of words.

22. The commentators have given several meanings of the word *aulā laka*: shame on you, may you perish, woe to you, may you hasten to your doom. But in our opinion, in view of the context, the most appropriate meaning is that which Hāfiz Ibn Kathīr has given in his commentary: "When you have had the boldness to disown your Creators then it only behoves a person like you to persist in the sort of conduct you display." This is the same sort of sarcastic remark as occurred in Sūrah Ad-Dukhān: 49 above. While meting out punishment to the culprit in Hell, it will be said: "Taste this: a mighty and honourable man that you are!"

23. Now, in conclusion, the same theme is being repeated with which the discourse began Life-after-death is necessary as well as possible.

24. The word *sudā* when used with regard to a camel implies a camel who is wandering aimlessly, grazing at will, without there being anybody to look after

him. Thus, the verse means: "Does man think that he has been left to himself to wander at will as if his Creator had laid no responsibility on him, had imposed no duty on him, had fobidden nothing to him, that at no time in future he would be required to account for his deeds?" This same theme has been expressed in Al-Mu'minūn: 115 thus: "On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will ask the disbelievers: 'Did you think that We had created you without any purpose, and that you would never be brought back to Us?" At both these places the argument for the necessity of the life hereafter has been presented as a question. The question means: Do you really think that you are no more than mere animals? Don't you see the manifest difference between yourself and the animal? The animal has been created without the power of choice and authority, but you have been blessed with the power of choice and authority; there is no question of morality about what the animal does, but your acts are necessarily characterised by good and evil. Then, how did you take it into your head that you had been created irresponsible and unanswerable as the animal has been? Why the animal will not be resurrected, is quite understandable The animal only fulfilled the fixed demands of its instinct it did not use its intellect to propound a philosophy; it did not invent a religion; it did not make anyone its god nor became a god for others; it did nothing that could be called good or bad; it did not enforce a good or bad way of life, which would influence others, generation after generation, so that it should deserve a reward or punishment for it. Hence, if it perished to annihilation, it would be understandable, for it could not be held responsible for any of its acts to account for which it might need to be resurrected. But how could you be excused from life after-death when right till the time of your death you continued to perform moral acts, which your own intellect judged as good or bad and worthy of reward or punishment? Should a man who killed an innocent person and then fell a victim to a sudden accident immediately after it, get off scot-free and should never be punished for the crime of murder he committed? Do you really feel satisfied that a man, who sowed corruption and iniquity in the world, which entailed evil consequences for mankind for centuries after him, should himself perish like an insect; or a grasshopper, and should never be resurrected to account for his misdeeds, which corrupted the lives of hundreds of thousands of human beings after him? Do you thiuk that the man, who struggled throughout his life for the cause of truth and justice, goodness and peace, and suffered hardships for their sake, was a creation of the kind of an insect, and had no right to be rewarded for his good acts?

25. This is an argument for the possibility of life-after-death. As for the people who believe that the whole act of creation, starting from the emission of a sperm-drop till its development into a perfect man, is only a manifestation of the power and wisdom of Allah, they cannot in fact refute this argument in any way, for their intellect however shamelessly and stubbornly they might behave, cannot

refuse to admit that the God Who thus brings about man in the world, also has the power to bring the same man into being once again. As for those who regard this expressly wise act only as a result of accident, do not in fact have any explanation to offer, unless they are bent upon stubbornness, how in every part and in every nation of the world, from the beginning of creation till today, the birth of boys and girls has continuously been taking place in such proportion that at no time it has so happened that in some human population only males or only females might have been born and there might be no possibility of the continuation of the human race. Has this also been happening just accidentally? To make such an absurd claim one should at least be so shameless as to come out one day with the claim that London and New York, Moscow and Peking, have come into existence just accidentally. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 27 to 30 of Sūrah Ar-Rūm, E.N. 77 of Ash-Shūrā).

There are several traditions to show that whenever the Holy Prophet recited this verse, he would sometimes respond with *balā* (why not!), sometimes with *Subḥānaka Allāhumma fa-balā* (Glorified are You, O Allah, why not!) and sometimes with *Subḥānaka fa-balā* or *Subḥānaka wa-balā.* (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abi Hātim, Abū Da'ūd). Abū Da'ūd contains a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "When in Sūrah At-Tīn, you read the verse; *Alais-Allāhu bi-aḥkam-il-Ḥākimīn* ("Is not Allah the greatest Ruler of all?"), you should respond to it, saying: *Balā wa anā 'alā dhālika min-ash-shāhidin* (Why not? I am of those who bear witness to this"). And when you read this verse of Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah, say: *Balā*; and when you read verse: *Fa-bi ayyi ḥadīth-in ba'da hū yu'minūn* ("Now, what message is there after this (Qur'ān) in which they will believe?" of Sūrah Al-Mursalāt, say: *Āmannā billāh* (We believed in Allah). Traditions on this subject have been related also by Imām Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī and Ḥākim.



LXXVI

AD-DAHR

الدَّهر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXVI

AD-DAHR

الدَّهر

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah is called *Ad-Dahr* as well as *Al-Insān* after the words occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Most of the commentators, including 'Allāma Zamakhshari, Imām Rāzi, Qāḍi Baiḍāwī, 'Allāma Nizām ad-Dīn Nisāburi, Hāfiz Ibn Kathīr and many others, regard it as a Makki Sūrah, and, according to

'Allāma Ālūsī, the same is the opinion of the majority of scholars. However, some commentators hold the view that the Sūrah was revealed at Madīnah, and some others say that it was revealed at Makkah but vv. 8-10 of it were sent down at Madīnah.

As far as the subject-matter and the style of the Sūrah are concerned, these are very different from those of the Madanī Sūrahs. A little study of it rather shows that it is not only a Makkī Sūrah but it was revealed during the earliest period at Makkah, which began just after the revelation of the first seven verses of Sūrah Al-Muddaththir. As for vv. 8-10, they are so naturally set in the theme of the Sūrah that if they are read in their proper context, no one can say that the theme preceding and following them had been sent down 15 to 16 years earlier but these three verses which were revealed many years later were inserted here unnaturally.

In fact, the basis of the idea that this Sūrah, or some verses of it were revealed at Madīnah, is a tradition which 'Atā' has related from Ibn 'Abbās (may Allah bless him). He says that once Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan and Ḥusain fell ill. The Holy Prophet and some of his Companions visited them. They wished Ḥaḍrat 'Ali to make a vow to Allah for the recovery of the two children. Thereupon, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah and Fiḍḍah, their maid servant, vowed a fast of three days if Allah restored the children to health. The children recovered by the grace of Allah and the three of them began to fast as avowed. As there was nothing to eat in the house, Ḥaḍrat 'Ali borrowed three measures (*sā'*) of barley from somebody (according to another tradition, earned through labour). When on the first day they sat down to eat after breaking the fast, a poor man came and begged for food. They gave all their food to him, drank water and retired to bed. The next day when they again sat down to eat after breaking the fast, an orphan came and begged for something. They again gave away the whole food to him, drank water and went to bed. On the third day when they were just going to eat after breaking the fast, a captive came up and begged for food likewise. Again the whole food was given away to him. On the fourth day Hadrat 'Alī took both the children with him and went before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). The Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) seeing the weak condition of the three, returned with them to the house of Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah and found her lying in a corner half dead with hunger. This moved him

visibly. In the meantime the Angel Gabriel (peace be on him) came and said: "Look, Allah has congratulated you on the virtues of the people of your house!" When the Holy Prophet asked what it was, he recited this whole Sūrah in response. (According to Ibn Mahrān's tradition, he recited it from verse 5 till the end. But the tradition which Ibn Mardūyah has related from Ibn 'Abbās only says that the verse *Wa 'yut'immūn-at'ām...* was sent down concerning Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah: there is no mention of this story in it). This whole story has been narrated by 'Alī bin Aḥmad al-Wāhidī in his commentary of the Qur'ān entitled *Al-Basīṭ*, and probably from the same it has been taken by Zamakhsharī, Rāzī, Nisābūrī and others.

In the first place this tradition is very weak as regards its chain of transmission. Then, from the point of view of its subject-matter also, it is strange that when a poor man, or an orphan, or a captive, comes to beg for food, he is given all the food. He could be given one member's food and the five of them could share the rest of it among themselves. Then this also is incredible that illustrious persons like Hadrat 'Alī and Hadrat Fātimah, who possessed perfect knowledge of Islam, should have regarded it as an act of virtue to keep the two children, who had just recovered their health and were still weak, hungry for three consecutive days. Moreover, in respect of the captives also, it has never been a practice under the Islamic government that they should be left to beg for food for themselves. For if they were prisoners of the government, the government itself was responsible to arrange food and clothing for them, and if they were in an individual's custody, he was made responsible to feed and clothe them. Therefore, it was not possible that in Madīnah a captive should have gone about begging food from door to door. However, overlooking the weaknesses of transmission and the probability of subject-matter, even if the narrative is accepted as it goes, at the most what it shows is that when the people of the Holy Prophet's house acted righteously as they did, Gabriel came and gave him the good news that Allah had much appreciated their act of virtue, for they had acted precisely in the righteous way that Allah had commanded in these verses of Sūrah Ad-Dahr. This does not necessitate that these verses too were sent down on that very occasion. The same is the case with many traditions concerning the occasion of revelation. When about a certain verse it is said that it was sent down on a particular occasion, it in fact does not mean that the verse was sent down on the very occasion the

incident took place. But it means that the verse applies precisely and exactly to the incident. Imām Suyūṭī in *Al-Itqān* has quoted this from Ḥāfiz Ibn Taimiyyah: "When the reporters say that a verse was sent down concerning a particular incident, it sometimes implies that the same incident (or matter) occasioned its revelation, and sometimes that the verse applies to the matter although it may not have occasioned its revelation." Further on he quotes Imām Badr ad-Din Zarkashi's view from his *Al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*: "It is well-known in respect of the Companions and their immediate successors that when one of them says that a verse was sent down concerning a particular matter, it means that the ruling contained in it applied to that matter and not that the matter itself occasioned the revelation of the verse. Thus, it only uses the ruling of the verse for the purpose of reasoning and not for stating a fact" *(Al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al Qur'ān,* vol. 1, p. 31, Ed. 1929).

Theme and Subject-Matter

The theme of this Sūrah is to inform man of his true position in the world and to tell him that if he understood his true position rightly and adopted the attitude of gratefulness, he would meet with such and such good end, and if he adopted the way of disbelief, he would meet with such and such evil end. In the longer Sūrahs of the Qur'ān this same theme has been presented at length, but a special characteristic of the style of the earliest Sūrahs revealed at Makkah is that the subjects dealt with at length in the later period, have been presented in a brief but highly effective way in this period in such concise, elegant sentences as may automatically be preserved in the memory of the hearers.

In this Sūrah, first of all man has been reminded that there was a time when he was nothing; then a humble beginning of him was made with a mixed drop of sperm and ovum of which even his mother was not aware; even she did not know that she had been conceived, nor anyone else seeing the microscopic cell could say that it was a man, who in future would become the best of creation on the earth. After this, man has been warned, so as to say: "Beginning your creation in this way We have developed and shaped you into what you are today in order to test and try you in the world. That is why, unlike other creatures, you were made intelligent and sensible and were shown both the way of gratitude and the way of ingratitude clearly so that you may show in the interval

that you have been granted here for work whether you have emerged as a grateful servant from the test or an unbelieving, ungrateful wretch!"

Then, just in one sentence, it has been stated decisively what will be the fate to be met with in the Hereafter by those who emerged as unbelievers from this test.

After this, in vv. 5-22 continuously, the blessings with which those who do full justice to servitude in the world, will be favoured, have been mentioned in full detail. In these verses, not only have their best rewards been mentioned but they have also been told briefly what are the acts on the basis of which they would become worthy of those rewards. Another special characteristic of the earliest Sūrahs revealed at Makkah is that besides introducing in them briefly the fundamental beliefs and concepts of Islam, here and there, those moral qualities and virtuous acts have been mentioned, which are praiseworthy according to Islam, and also those evils of deed and morality of which Islam strives to cleanse human life. And these two things have not been mentioned with a view to show what good or evil result is entailed by them in the transitory life of the world, but they have been mentioned only to point out what enduring results they will produce in the eternal and everlasting life of the Hereafter, irrespective of whether an evil quality may prove useful or a good quality may prove harmful in the world.

This is the subject-matter of the first section (vv. 1-22). In the second section, addressing the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), three things have been stated: first, that "it is in fact We Ourself Who are revealing this Qur'ān piecemeal to you, and this is intended to inform the disbelievers, not you, that the Qur'ān is not being fabricated by Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) but it is "We" Who are revealing it, and it is Our own wisdom which requires that We should reveal it piece by piece and not all at once." Second, the Holy Prophet has been told: "No matter how long it may take for the decree of your Lord to be enforced and no matter what afflictions may befall you in the meantime, in any case you should continue to perform your mission of Apostleship patiently, and not to yield to the pressure tactics of any of these wicked and unbelieving people." The third thing he has been told is: "Remember Allah day and night, perform the Prayer and spend your nights in the worship of Allah, for it is these things

which sustain and strengthen those who call to Allah in the face of iniquity and disbelief".

Then in one single sentence, the actual cause of the disbelievers' wrong attitude has been stated: they have forgotten the Hereafter and are enamoured of the world. In the second sentence, they have been warned to the effect: "You have not come into being by yourself; We have created you. You have not made these broad chests and strong, sturdy hands and feet for yourselves, it is We Who made these for you; and it also lies in Our power to treat you as We please. We can distort your figures, We can destroy you and replace you by some other nation. We can cause you to die and can recreate you in whatever form We like."

In conclusion, it has been said: This is an Admonition: whoever wills may accept it and take a path to his Lord. But man's own will and desire is not everything in the world. No one's will and desire can be fulfilled unless Allah (also) so wills. And Allah's willing is not haphazard: whatever He wills, He wills it on the basis of His knowledge and wisdom. He admits into His mercy whomever He regards as worthy of His mercy on the basis of His knowledge and wisdom, and He has prepared a painful torment for those whom He finds unjust and wicked.

سُوْرَةُ الدَّهْرِ — مَدَنِيَّةٌ — ٣١ — ٢

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

هَلْ اَتٰى عَلَى الْاِنْسَانِ حِيْنٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْـًٔا مَّذْكُوْرًا ﴿١﴾ اِنَّا خَلَقْنَا
الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ اَمْشَاجٍ ۖ نَّبْتَلِيْهِ فَجَعَلْنٰهُ سَمِيْعًا بَصِيْرًا ﴿٢﴾ اِنَّا هَدَيْنٰهُ
السَّبِيْلَ اِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَّاِمَّا كَفُوْرًا ﴿٣﴾ اِنَّا اَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ سَلٰسِلَا۠ وَاَغْلٰلًا وَّ
سَعِيْرًا ﴿٤﴾ اِنَّ الْاَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُوْنَ مِنْ كَاْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُوْرًا ﴿٥﴾ عَيْنًا يَّشْرَبُ
بِهَا عِبَادُ اللّٰهِ يُفَجِّرُوْنَهَا تَفْجِيْرًا ﴿٦﴾ يُوْفُوْنَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُوْنَ يَوْمًا كَانَ
شَرُّهٗ مُسْتَطِيْرًا ﴿٧﴾ وَيُطْعِمُوْنَ الطَّعَامَ عَلٰى حُبِّهٖ مِسْكِيْنًا وَّيَتِيْمًا وَّاَسِيْرًا ﴿٨﴾
اِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللّٰهِ لَا نُرِيْدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَآءً وَّلَا شُكُوْرًا ﴿٩﴾ اِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ
رَّبِّنَا يَوْمًا عَبُوْسًا قَمْطَرِيْرًا ﴿١٠﴾ فَوَقٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ شَرَّ ذٰلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقّٰىهُمْ نَضْرَةً وَّ
سُرُوْرًا ﴿١١﴾ وَجَزٰىهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوْا جَنَّةً وَّحَرِيْرًا ﴿١٢﴾ مُّتَّكِـِٕيْنَ فِيْهَا عَلَى الْاَرَآئِكِ ۚ
لَا يَرَوْنَ فِيْهَا شَمْسًا وَّلَا زَمْهَرِيْرًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَدَانِيَةً عَلَيْهِمْ ظِلٰلُهَا وَذُلِّلَتْ قُطُوْفُهَا
تَذْلِيْلًا ﴿١٤﴾ وَيُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِاٰنِيَةٍ مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ وَّاَكْوَابٍ كَانَتْ قَوَارِيْرَا ﴿١٥﴾ قَوَارِيْرَا
مِنْ فِضَّةٍ قَدَّرُوْهَا تَقْدِيْرًا ﴿١٦﴾ وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيْهَا كَاْسًا كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنْجَبِيْلًا ﴿١٧﴾
عَيْنًا فِيْهَا تُسَمّٰى سَلْسَبِيْلًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَيَطُوْفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُوْنَ ۚ اِذَا رَاَيْتَهُمْ
حَسِبْتَهُمْ لُؤْلُؤًا مَّنْثُوْرًا ﴿١٩﴾ وَاِذَا رَاَيْتَ ثَمَّ رَاَيْتَ نَعِيْمًا وَّمُلْكًا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٢٠﴾ عٰلِيَهُمْ
ثِيَابُ سُنْدُسٍ خُضْرٌ وَّاِسْتَبْرَقٌ ۫ وَّحُلُّوْٓا اَسَاوِرَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ ۚ وَسَقٰىهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ
شَرَابًا طَهُوْرًا ﴿٢١﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا كَانَ لَكُمْ جَزَآءً وَّكَانَ سَعْيُكُمْ مَّشْكُوْرًا ﴿٢٢﴾ اِنَّا نَحْنُ

قرئ بحذف همزة الوصل ايهما ووقف على الاول بالالف وعلى الثانى بغير الالف ١٢

١ ع ٢ ١٩

LXXVI
AD-DAHR
الدَّهر

Verses: 31. *Revealed at Makkah*

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

1-3 Has there also passed on man a period of the endless time when he was not yet a thing worthy of mention?[1] Indeed, We created man from a mixed sperm drop,[2] to try him,[3] and therefore We made him capable of hearing and seeing.[4] We showed him the way, whether to be grateful or disbelieving.[5]

4 For the disbelievers We have prepared chains and collars and a raging Fire.

5-22 The righteous[6] shall drink (in Paradise) cups of wine flavoured with camphor-water. It will be a running fountain[7] with the waters of which the servants of Allah[8] shall drink wine, and shall take out its channels from place to place at will.[9] These will be the people who fulfil their vows[10] (in the world), and fear the Day whose evil shall be wide-spread, and who feed, out of love for Allah,[11] the poor and the orphan and the captive,[12] (saying),[13] "We are feeding you only for the sake of Allah: we neither seek any reward from you nor thanks.[14] We dread from our Lord the torment of the Day, which will be a long, dismal Day of affliction." So Allah shall save them from the evil of that Day and shall bestow on them freshness and joy,[15] and shall grant them Paradise and robes of silk as a reward for their patience.[16] There they shall be reclining upon high couches, neither troubled by the heat of the sun nor by severe cold. The shades of Paradise shall cover them all round, and its fruits shall be within their easy reach (so that they may pluck them at will). Vessels of silver[17] and goblets of glass shall be passed round to them, goblets made of crystal-clear silver,[18] which will have been filled (by the attendants of Paradise) in due measure.[19] There they shall be served with cups of wine flavoured with ginger. This will

be a fountain of Paradise named *Salsabīl*.[20] They will be attended by brisk-moving boys who will for ever remain boys. When you see them, you would think they were scattered pearls.[21] In whatever direction you may look there, you would see only bliss and the splendour of a great kingdom.[22] Upon them shall be the garments of fine green silk and rich brocade.[23] They shall be adorned with bracelets of silver,[24] and their Lord shall give them a pure wine to drink.[25] This is your reward and your endeavours have been appreciated.[26]

---

1. Most of the commentators and translators have taken *hal* in the first sentence *hal atā 'alal-insān-i*, in the meaning of *qad*. Accordingly, they interpret this sentence to mean; "No doubt, there has indeed passed on man a time." But, in fact, the word *hal* in Arabic is used only as an interrogative particle, and its object is not to ask a question in every case, but this apparently interrogative particle is used in different meanings on different occasions. For example, sometimes, in order to find out whether a certain incident has taken place or not, we ask: "Has this thing happened?" Sometimes we do not mean to ask a question but to deny something and we express the denial, thus: "Can any other also do this?" Sometimes we want somebody to affirm something and so ask him: "Have I paid what was due to you?" And sometimes we do not intend to have something just affirmed but we put a question in order to make the addressee pay particular attention to something which follows his affirmation as a sequel. For example, we ask someone: "Have I harmed you in any way?" The object is not only to make him affirm that one has not done him any harm, but also to make him think how far one is justified to harm somebody who has not harmed him in any way. The interrogative sentence in the verse before us illustrates this last meaning. The object is not only to make man affirm that there has indeed passed on him such a period of time but also to make him think that the God Who developed and shaped him into a perfect man from an insignificant, humble beginning, would not be helpless to create him once again.

In the second sentence, *ḥīn min ad-dahr*, the word *dahr* implies the endless time, the beginning and end of which are unknown to man and *ḥīn* is the particular period of time which might at some time have passed during this endless period. What is meant to be said is that in this immensely long span of time there has passed a long period when human race was altogether non-existent. Then a time came in it when a species called Man was created, and in the same period a time has passed on every person when a beginning was made to bring him into existence from nothingness.

The third sentence, "when he was not yet a thing worthy of mention" implies that a part of him existed in the form of a microscopic germ in the sperm-

drop of the father and a part in the form of a microscopic ovum in the mother. For long ages man did not even know that he comes into being when the sperm germ and the ovum combine. Now both have been observed by means of powerful microscopes but even now no one can say how much of man exists in the father's germ and how much in the mother's ovum. Then, the initial cell that comes into being by the combination of the two at the time of conception is such an insignificant thing that it can be seen only through highly powerful microscopes and seeing it also no one at first sight can claim that it is a man taking shape, nor that even if a man emerges from this humble beginning, what will be his size and stature, what will be his form and figure, and what will be his capabilities and personality like. This is the meaning of the sentence that at that time he was not yet a thing worthy of any mention although a beginning of his being as a man had been made.

2. "From a mixed sperm-drop": from the intermingling of the male sperm with the female ovum and not separately from the sperm and the ovum.

3. This shows man's real position in the world and the position of the world for man. He is not like the trees and animals that the object of his creation be fulfilled on the earth itself, and he should die and perish here after he has played his appointed role over a period of time according to the law of nature. Furthermore, this world is neither a place of punishment for him, as the monks think, nor a place of rewards as the believers of the law of transmigration think, nor a place of entertainment and enjoyment, as the materialists think, nor a battlefield, as the followers of Darwin and Marx think, but in fact it is a place of test and trial for him. That which he regards as his age, is in fact the time given him for the test. Whatever powers and capabilities he has been given in the world, the thing that have been placed under his control and authority, the various positions and capacities in which he functions, and the relationships that he enjoys with other men, all these are the countless papers of the test and this test continues till the last breath of his life. The result is not to be announced in this world but in the Hereafter when all his answer-books will have been assessed, decision will be given whether he has come out successful or failed. And his success or failure wholly depends on what he thought of himself while he functioned here and how he answered the papers that were given him here. If he believed that he had no God, or that he was the slave of many gods, and while answering the papers thought that he was not to be held accountable before his Creator in the Hereafter, his whole lifework went wrong. And if he regarded himself as the slave of One God and worked in the way approved by God, with the accountability of the Hereafter always in view, he stood successful in the test. (This theme has occurred at many places in the Qur'ān and has been dealt with at length in the corresponding notes. It is not possible to give all the references, but those who are interested in it

may see the explanation of it in its different aspects under "Test and Trial" in the Index. In no other book beside the Qur'ān has this truth been explained at such length).

4. The word *samī'* (hearing) and *baṣīr* (seeing) in the original actually imply being "sensible and intelligent". These words of the Arabic language are never used in respect of the animal although it also hears and sees. Thus, hearing and seeing here do not imply the powers of hearing and seeing which have been given to the animals too, but those means through which man obtains knowledge and then draws conclusions from it. Besides, since hearing and seeing are among the most important means of knowledge for man, only these two have been mentioned briefly; otherwise it actually implies giving man all those senses of the body by which he gathers information. Then the senses given to man are quite different in their nature from those given to animals, for at the back of every sense he has a thinking brain, which collects information gained through the senses, arranges it, draws conclusions from it, forms opinions, and then takes some decisions which become the basis of his attitude and conduct in life. Hence, after saying, "We created man in order to try him," to say, "therefore, We made him capable of hearing and seeing" actually contains the meaning that Allah gave him the faculties of knowledge and reason to enable him to take the test. Obviously, if this were not the meaning and the meaning of making man hearing and seeing just implied the one who could hear and see, then a blind and deaf person would stand exempted from the test, whereas unless a person is utterly devoid of knowledge and reason, there can be no question of his being exempted from the test.

5. That is, "We did not just leave him to himself after giving him the powers of knowledge and reason, but We also guided him so that he knows which is the path of gratefulness and which of ungratefulness, so that whichever path he chooses in his later life, he himself is responsible for it. In Sūrah Al-Balad, the same subject has been expressed, thus "And We showed him both the conspicuous ways (of good and evil)." And in Sūrah Ash-Shams, thus "By the human self, and by Him Who balanced it (with all the external and internal powers), then inspired it with its wickedness and its piety." When all these explanations are kept in view and also those detailed statements of the Qur'an in which it has been stated what arrangements Allah has made for man's guidance in the world, it becomes evident that in this verse "showing the way" does not imply any one form of guidance but many forms of it which are limitless and countless. For example,

(1) Along with the faculties of knowledge and reason man has also been endowed with a moral sense by which he discerns between good and evil, regards some acts and qualities as evil even if he himself is involved in them, and regards some other acts and qualities as good even if he himself

is avoiding them. So much so that even those people who for the satisfaction of their selfish motives and desires have invented philosophies by which they have justified many evils for themselves, protest loudly when they are themselves treated with the same evils by others, and then it becomes known that in spite of their false philosophies they actually regard them as evil. Likewise, when a man himself is benefited by a good treatment from another person, he is from within forced to commend and appreciate it even though he might be looking upon good acts and qualities as ignorance folly and antiquated things,

(2) In every man Allah has placed the faculty of Conscience (the *lawwāmah*), which checks and pricks him every time he is about to commit an evil, or is in the process of committing it, or has already committed it. However hard man may try to silence his Conscience or make it insensitive, he does not have the power to destroy it completely. He may become shameless and prove himself to be absolutely devoid of the Conscience, he may also try to deceive the world by argumentation, he may even invent a thousand excuses to justify his acts in order to deceive himself, but despite all this the censor that Allah has placed in his nature is so active and powerful that it does not let remain hidden from an evil person what he actually is. This same thing has been stated in Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah, thus: "Man knows his own self best even though he may offer many excuses." (v. 15)

(3) In man's own self and outside him, from the earth to the heavens, there lie scattered in the universe countless such signs which clearly show that all this could not happen without a God, nor could there be many gods to create this life and control and administer it. Likewise, these very signs, inside man and outside him, clearly point also to the Resurrection and Hereafter. If man shuts down his eyes on them, or refuses to ponder over them intelligently, or avoids to admit the truths which they point out, he himself would be to blame. For Allah has shown no negligence in laying out every possible sign of the truth for the guidance of man.

(4) Man does come across in his own life, and in the contemporary world and in the experiences of past history, countless such incidents which prove that a supreme power is ruling over him and the entire universe before whom he is absolutely powerless, whose Will is dominant over everything and whose help he needs at every moment. These experiences and observations which point to the truth do not exist only outside him but in man's own nature as well there exists the evidence of the existence of the supreme power on the basis of which even the most confirmed atheist spreads out his hands in prayer before God when in distress and the most hardened polytheist abandons all false gods and starts invoking One God only for help.

(5) Man's intellect and his nature assert positively that crime ought to be punished and good deeds ought to be rewarded. On this very basis in every society of the world a system of the courts is established in one form or another, and the services and works, which are regarded as commendable are also rewarded in one way or another. This is a clear proof of the fact that there is a necessary relationship between morality and the law of retribution, which man cannot possibly deny. Now, if it is admitted that in this world there are countless such crimes which cannot be punished at all, to say nothing of punishing them fully and adequately, and there are also countless such virtues, which cannot be rewarded at all, to say nothing of rewarding them fully and adequately, there is no alternative but to acknowledge the Hereafter, unless, of course, a foolish person may assume, or a stubborn person may insist on having the opinion, that man who has been endowed with the concept of justice, has taken birth in a world which in itself is devoid of the concept of justice; and then it remains for him to answer the question as to how and wherefrom this man, who was born in such a world, obtained this concept of justice.

(6) To reinforce these means of guidance Allah sent Messengers and revealed Books in the world for the purpose of giving clear and definite guidance to man; in these Books it was clearly explained what is the way of gratefulness and what is the way of ungratefulness and unbelief and what will be the consequences of following either way. The teaching brought by the Prophets and the Books has spread throughout the world in countless perceptible and imperceptible ways, on such a large scale that no section of human population has remained unaware of the concept of God and the Hereafter, of the distinction between good and evil, and of the moral principles and legal rulings presented by them, whether it knows or does not know that it has obtained this knowledge only through the teachings of the Prophets and the Books they brought. Even those who disbelieve in the Prophets and the Books today, or are unaware of them, also are following many of those things which have reached them actually through their teachings while they do not know what is the real source of these teachings.

6. The word *abrār* as used in the original implies the people who have done full justice to their Lord's obedience, have carried out the duties enjoined by Him and abstained from the things forbidden by Him.

7. That is, it will not be camphor-mixed water but a natural fountain, the purity, coolness and agreeable odour of whose water will resemble camphor.

8. Although the words *'ibād Allah* (servants of Allah), or *'ibād ar-Rehmān* (servants of *Rehmān*), can be used for all men literally, for every human being is

God's servant, yet wherever these words occur in the Qur'ān they only imply the righteous men. In other words, the wicked ones who have excused themselves from Allah's servitude do not deserve that Allah should honour them with the honourable title of *'ibād-Allah* or *ibād ar-Rahmān*, attributing them to His own Holy Name.

9. It does not mean that they will use spades and shovels to dig out its channels and will take out its branches whithersoever they please, but that their one single command and desire will be enough to cause a fountain to gush forth from wherever they please in Paradise.

10. One meaning of fulfilling the vow is that one should fulfil, second, that one should fulfil what one has pledged oneself to do, third, that one should fulfil what one has been enjoined; what is obligatory for one to do, whether one has been enjoined it, or is self-imposed. Of these three the second meaning is the best known and generally the same is implied by fulfilling the vow. In any case, these righteous people have been regarded as praiseworthy either because they carry out the duties enjoined by Allah, or because if they vow to Allah to perform certain good deeds which Allah has not enjoined on them, they fulfil even those self imposed vows, not to speak of showing any negligence in carrying out the duties which Allah has actually enjoined on them.

As for the commandments concerning the vow, we have explained these briefly in E.N. 310 of Sūrah Al-Baqarah above, But it would be useful to explain them at length here so as to enable the people to avoid the errors and rid themselves of the misunderstandings with regard to fulfilling the vow and learn the correct rules pertaining to it.

(1) The jurists have mentioned four kinds of the vow: (a) that one should pledge to Allah that one would perform such and such a good act to earn His good pleasure; (b) that one should make a vow that one would perform such and such a good act in gratitude to Allah if He fulfilled one's such and such wish and desire. Both these kinds of the vow have been termed *nadhr tabarrur* (i.e. vows for a good cause) by the jurists, and it is agreed by all that it is obligatory to fulfil them. (c) That one should pledge to do an unlawful thing or to refrain from an obligatory thing; (d) that one should bind oneself to do a permissible thing, or to refrain from an abligatory thing, or pledge to do an unworthy thing. These two kinds of the vow have been termed *nadhr lajāj* (i.e. vow of ignorance, disputation and stubbornness) by the jurists. About the third kind of the vow it is agreed that it does not take place at all; and about the fourth kind the juristic opinion is divided. Some jurists say that it should be fulfilled; some others say that one should expiate the breaking of the oath, and still others that one has the option to fulfil the vow or to expiate it. According to the

Shāf'is and the Mālikīs this vow does not take place at all, and according to the Hanafīs both these kinds of the vow entail expiation.

('Umdat al-Qārī)

(2) Several *Aḥadīth* show that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has forbidden making a vow with a view to changing the destiny, or with a view to making an offer to Allah that if He fulfilled one's such and such wish, one would perform such and such good act, not in gratitude to Allah, but in exchange for His help. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar has reported that once the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) while he forbade the making of a vow, said; "It cannot avert anything which is about to befall, but through it something is extracted from the miserly person." (Muslim, Abū Da'ūd), The last sentence of the *Hadīth* means: The miserly person is not prone to spend anything in the cause of Allah; because of the vow he gives away something in charity in the greed that Allah would accept his offer and change his destiny for him. Another tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar is to the effect; "The Holy Prophet said: the vow can neither hasten anything nor defer anything, but through it something is extracted from the miserly person." (Bukhārī, Muslim). In another tradition he says that the Holy Prophet forbade making of the vow and said: "It does not bring any good, but it is a means whereby something is extracted from the miserly person." (Bukhārī, Muslim). Several traditions on the same subject have been related by Muslim from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, and in one tradition which both Bukhārī and Muslim have related, he reports that the Holy Prophet said: "As a matter of fact, the vow cannot bring the son of Adam anything which Allah has not ordained for him, but the vow sometimes coincides with the destiny itself and through it the Divine will takes out from the possession of the miserly person that which he was not inclined to give away willingly." This same theme is further explained by the tradition of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ according to which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "True vow is that whereby Allah's goodwill and approval may be sought." (*Ṭaḥāvī*)

(3) Another rule that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) gave concerning the vow is that only that vow should be fulfilled, which is in obedience to Allah; the vow made in disobedience to Allah should never be fulfilled. Likewise, there can be no vow concerning a thing which is not in one's power to perform. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "The one who made a vow that he would obey Allah, should obey Him, and the one who made a vow that he would disobey Allah, should not disobey." (*Bukhārī, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ṭaḥāvī*). Thābit bin Ḍaḥḥāk says that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be

peace) said: "There can be no question of fulfilling a vow made in the disobedience of Allah, nor in something which is not in one's possession." (Abū Da'ūd). Muslim has related a tradition on the same subject from Ḥaḍrat 'Imrān bin Ḥusain; and in *Abū Da'ūd* a tradition has been reported in greater detail from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Ās, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "No vow and no oath is of any use in an act which is not in the power of man to perform, or which involves disobedience of Allah, or severance of relations with kindred."

(4) One should not fulfil a vow which is made to perform an act which is of no good in itself, which is useless, or involves unbearable hardship or self-torture, and might have been self-imposed as an act of virtue. In this connection, the sayings of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) are very clear and definite. Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās says that once when the Holy Prophet was giving a sermon, he saw a man who was standing in the sun. He asked who he was and why he was standing in the sun. The people said that he was Abū Isrā'īl: he had vowed that he would keep standing and would not sit, nor take shade, nor speak to anybody, and would keep fast. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "Tell him to speak, to come in the shade and sit, but to observe the fast." (*Bukhārī, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Mu'wattā*). Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir Juhanī says: "My sister vowed that she would go for Ḥajj bare-foot and also vowed that she would not cover her head with a garment during the journey. The Holy Prophet said: Tell her to go by a conveyance and to cover her head." (Abū Da'ūd). Muslim has related several traditions on this subject with a little variation in wording. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas reporting the incident concerning 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir's sister, has reported the Holy Prophet's words to the effect: "Allah has no need of her vow: tell her to use a conveyance." (Abū Da'ūd). In another tradition Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās says "A man said: My sister has vowed to go and perform Ḥajj on foot. The Holy Prophet replied: Allah has no need that your sister should undergo hardship. She should go for Ḥajj by a conveyance." (Abū Da'ūd). Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik has reported that the Holy Prophet saw (probably during the Ḥajj journey) an old man being supported between his two sons. When he asked what was the matter with him, it was said that the old man had vowed to go on foot. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "Allah is free from this that the man should place himself in agony. Then he commanded him to ride." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd. In Muslim another *Ḥadīth* on this very subject has been reported by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah also).

(5) If it is not practically possible to fulfil a vow, it may be fulfilled in some other way. Hadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah says: "On the day of the conquest of Makkah, a man stood up and said: O Messenger of Allah, I had vowed

that if Allah made Makkah fall at your hand, I would pray two *rak'ahs* of the Prayer in *Bait al-Maqdis* (Jerusalem). The Holy Prophet replied: Say the Prayer here. He again asked the same thing and the Holy Prophet again gave the same reply. When he asked it again, the Holy Prophet said: All right, as you please." According to another tradition, the Holy Prophet said: "By Him Who has sent Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) with the truth, if you pray here it will suffice for you instead of your praying at Bait al Maqdis (Abū Da'ūd)."

(6) The opinion among the jurists is divided concerning the person who vows to give away all his possessions for the cause of Allah. Imām Mālik says that he should give away one-third of his possessions, and Sahnun from among the Mālikīs has expressed the opinion that he should give away so much of his possessions as does not subject him to hardship later. Imām Shāfe'ī says that if the vow is of the nature of *tabarrur* (i.e. for a good cause), he should give away all his possessions, and if it is of the nature of *lajāj* (i.e, a vow of ignorance), he has the option to fulfil the vow or to expiate the oath. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah says that he should give away all such possessions as are subject to *zakāt*, but the vow will not apply to those possessions which are exempt from *zakāt*, e.g. house, or other such properties. Imām Zufar from among the Ḥanafīs is of the opinion that he should give away everything in charity after he has taken out two months' maintenance for his family. (*'Umdat al-Qarī, Sharh Mu'wattā* by Shah Walīyullah). Traditions of the Ḥadrat in this connection are as follows.

Ḥadrat Ka'b bin Mālik says: "When I was granted forgiveness for incurring Allah's displeasure for staying behind on the occasion of the Battle of Tabūk, I went before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and submitted: My repentance also included that I would give away all my possessions in charity for the sake of Allah and His Messenger. The Holy Prophet replied: No, do not do that. I said. Then half of the possessions? He said: No. I said: Then one-third of the possessions? He replied: Yes." (Abū Da'ūd). According to another tradition, the Holy Prophet replied: "Withhold some of your possessions for yourself: this would be better for you." (Bukhārī), Imām Zuhri says: "Information has reached me that Ḥadrat Abū Lubabah (who had similarly incurred displeasure in connection with the same Battle of Tabūk) said to the Holy Prophet: "I shall give away all my possessions for the sake of Allah and His Messenger in charity. The Holy Prophet replied: For you it would be enough to give away only one-third of it." *(Mu'wattā).*

(7) Should a person who vowed to perform a good act before embracing Islam, fulfil it after he has embraced Islam? The Holy Prophet's ruling in this connection is that he should fulfil it. (Bukhārī; according to a tradition

in *Abū Da'ūd* and *Ṭaḥāvī* Ḥaḍrat 'Umar is reported to have vowed in the pre-Islamic days that he would observe *i'tikāf* (devotional seclusion) in the *Masjid al-Harām* (for one night, or according to others, one day). After embracing Islam when he asked for the Holy Prophet's ruling, he replied: "Fulfil your vow." Some jurists have taken this ruling of the Holy Prophet to mean that it is obligatory to do so, and some others that it is commendable.

(8) About the question whether the heirs are under obligation to fulfil a vow made by the deceased person or not, the juristic opinion is divided. Imām Ahmad, Ishaq bin Rāhawaih, Abū Thaur and the Zāhirīs say that if the deceased person had vowed to observe the Fast or perform the Prayer but could not fulfil the vow, the heirs have to fulfil it. The Hanafīs say that if the vow pertained to a bodily worship (e.g. the Prayer or the Fast), the heirs are under no obligation to fulfil it, and if it pertained to monetary worship and the deceased did not leave any will for his heirs to fulfil it, they are again under no obligation to fulfil it. but if he left a will, it will be obligatory for the heirs to fulfil it from his inheritance up to one-third of its extent. The Māliki viewpoint also is somewhat the same. The Shāfe'īs say that if the vow pertains to a non-monetary worship, or if it pertains to a monetary worship and the deceased person did not leave any inheritance, the heirs are under no obligation to fulfil it; and if the deceased left some inheritance, the heirs would be bound to fulfil the vow pertaining to a monetary worship, no matter whether the dying person left a will or not. (*Sharḥ Muslim* by Al-Nawawī, *Badhl al-Majhūd Sharh Abī Da'ūd*). In the *Ḥadīth* there is a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas on this sabject to the effect: "Hadrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah asked for the Holy Prophet's verdict, saying: My mother has died and she had made a vow which she could not fulfil. The Holy Prophet said: Fulfil the vow on her behalf." (*Abū Da'ūd. Muslim*). Another tradition from Ibn 'Abbas is to the effect: "A woman went on a sea journey and vowed that if she returned home safe and sound, she would observe fast for a month. On her return home she died. Her sister or her daughter came to the Holy Prophet to ask for his decision. The Holy Prophet replied: "Observe the fast on her behalf." (*Abū Da'ūd*). Abū Da'ūd has related another tradition with the same content from Hadrat Buraidah, saying: "A woman asked the Holy Prophet a similar thing and he gave the same reply as mentioned above." Since these traditions are not explicit as to whether the rulings the Holy Prophet gave pertained to its being obligatory or commendable, and since about the vow made by Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah's mother also it is not clear whether it pertained to a monetary worship, or a bodily worship, there have arisen differences among the jurists on this question.

(9) As for an unlawful vow it is clear that it should not be fulfilled. However, there is a difference of opinion as to whether it entails an expiation or not. On this point since the traditions differ the juristic opinion is also divided. According to one kind of the traditions the Holy Prophet commanded the person concerned to make the expiation. Hadrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "Three is no vow in the disobedience of Allah, and its expiation is the expiation of breaking the oath" (*Abū Da'ūd*). In the case of 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir Juhanī's sister (mentioned under No. 4 above), the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) commanded that she should break her vow and fast for three days. (*Muslim, Abū Da'ūd*). In the case of another woman also who had vowed to go for Hajj on foot, he commanded that she should go by a conveyance and should make expiation for the oath (*Abū Da'ūd*). Ibn 'Abbās has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "The one who made a vow but did not specify what the vow was about, should expiate for the oath, and the one who made a vow to perform a sinful act, should expiate for the oath, and the one who made a vow to perform something which he does not have the power to perform, should expiate for the oath, and the one who made a vow to do something which he can do, should fulfil it." (*Abu Da'ud*). On the other hand, there are the traditions which show that there is no expiation in this case. The person under No.4 above had vowed that he would stand in the sun and would not speak to anyone. Making a reference to him in *Mu'wattā*, Imām Mālik writes: "I could not know by any means whether the Holy Prophet besides commanding him to break the vow might also have told him to make the expiation. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah biu 'Amr bin 'Āṣ has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "If the one swearing an oath for something later finds that another thing was better than that he should abandon it and should adopt the better course and the abandonment itself is the expiation." (*Abū Da'ūd*; Baihāqi says that this *Ḥadīth* and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah's this tradition: "He should adopt the better course and this is its expiation" are not established). Imām Nawawī discussing these traditions of the *Ḥadīth* in his commentary of Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim writes: "Imām Mālik, Shāfe'ī, Abū Ḥanīfah, Da'ūd Ẓāhirī and other scholars say that the vow made to do a sinful thing is void and ineffectual and it does not entail any expiation if not fulfilled, but Imām Aḥmad says that it entails expiation."

11. Most of the commentators hold the view that the pronoun in *ḥubbi-hi* refers to food. Accordingly, they interpret the sentence to mean: "In spite of the food's being agreeable and tasty and that they need it, they give it away to others." Ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid say: "they do so because of their fondness for feeding the poor (*'alā ḥubb-il-it'ām*); and Fudail bin 'Iyād and Abū Sulemān ad-Dārānī say: "They do so out of love for Allah." In our opinion the following sentence ("We are feeding you only for the sake of Allah") supports the last meaning.

12. The custom in the ancient days was that the prisoners were put in fetters and shackles and taken out daily to go about the streets begging food. Later the Islamic government abolished this custom. (Imām Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, p, 150, Ed. 1382 H.) In this verse, the captive implies every such person who is in bondage, whether he is an unbeliever, a Muslim, a war prisoner, or imprisoned in consequence of a crime, and whether he is provided food in that state, or made to beg for it. In any case, to feed a helpless person who cannot do anything to earn a living, is an act of great virtue,

13. Although feeding a poor man is in itself a great virtue, yet fulfilling the other needs of an indigent person is no less virtuous. For example, to clothe a poor man, to arrange treatment for a sick person, or to help a debtor who is harassed by his creditor, is an act of equally great virtue. Here, a particular kind of virtue in view of its importance has been presented only as an example, but the real object is to stress giving help to the needy.

14. It is not necessary that this may be said in so many words while feeding the poor man. It may be said in the heart; in the sight of Allah this is as meritorious as saying it with the tongue. But saying these words with the tongue has been particularly mentioned so as to set the person being helped at ease that no thanks or recompense is due from him, so that he eats with full satisfaction and peace of mind.

15. "Freshness and joy": freshness of the face and joy of the heart. In other words, all the severities and terrors of the Day of Resurrection will be meant only for the disbelievers and the culprits. The righteous will on that Day remain immune from every hardship and will be well-pleased with their lot. The same theme has been expressed in Al-Anbiyā': 103, thus: "The time of great fright will not trouble them at all; the angels will rush forth to receive them, saying: this is the Day that you were promised; and in An-Naml: 89 thus: "He who brings good deeds, will have a reward better than that, and such people shall be secure from the terror of that Day."

16. Here the word *sabr* (patience) has been used in a very comprehensive sense. The whole worldly life of the righteous believers in fact has been described as a life of patience. From the time a man attains discretion, or believes, till death, his suppressing of unlawful desires, adhering to the bounds set by Allah, carrying out the duties enjoined by Him, sacrificing his time, his wealth, his effort, powers and abilities, even his life if so required, ignoring every greed and temptation, which might turn him away from Allah's way, meeting every danger and enduring every hardship faced on the way of the truth, giving up every gain and pleasure accruing from unlawful ways and means, bearing every loss and suffering and

affliction incurred on account of his love for truth, and doing all this with full faith in the promise of Allah that He will bless the doer with the fruits of this righteous conduct not in this world but in the second life after death, turns the whole life of a believer into a life of patience-eternal and perpetual parience, all-pervasive and life-long patience! (For further explanation, see E N 60 of Al-Baqarah. E.N.'s 13, 107, 131 of ,Āl-'Imrān, E.N. 23 of Al-An'ām, E.N.'s 37, 47 of Al-Anfāl, E.N. 9 of Yūnus, E N 11 of Hūd, E.N. 39 of Ar-Ra'd, E.N. 98 of An-Naḥl, E.N. 40 of Maryam, E.N. 94 of Al-Furqān, E.N.'s 75, 100 of Al-Qaṣaṣ. E.N. 97 of Al-'Ankabūt, E.N.'s 29, 56 of Luqmān, E.N. 37 of As-Sajdah, E.N. 58 of Al-Aḥzāb, E.N. 32 of Az-Zumar, E.N. 38 of Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah, E.N. 53 of Ash-Shūrā).

17. According to Az-Zukhruf: 71, vessels of gold shall be passed round to them, but here of silver. This shows that vessels of gold as well as of silver shall be passed round to them as required by the occasion.

18. That is, though silver, it will be as transparent as glass, Vessels of this kind of transparent, crystal like silver will be the special characteristic of the vessels in which drinks will be served to the people of Paradise.

19. "In due measure": filled accurately according to the desire of every person, neither over-filled nor under-filled. In other words, the attendants of the dwellers of Paradise will be so judicious and discerning that they will have accurate judgement about everybody whom they serve wine as to how much of it he wishes to drink. (For the characteristics of the wine of Paradise, see Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 45-47 and the E.N.'s 24 to 27, Muḥammad: 15 and E.N. 22, Aṭ-Ṭūr; 23 and E.N. 18, Al-Wāqi'ah: 19 and E.N. 10).

20. This is to suit the taste of the Arabs who liked the wine flavoured with ginger-mixed water. But this flavouring will not be achieved by adding ginger-mixed water to it; it will be a natural fountain which will have the flavour of ginger but without its bitterness; Therefore, it will be called *Salsabīl*, which implies such water as flows gently and pleasantly down the throat on account of its being sweet, light and platable. Most commentators think that the word *salsabil* has been used here as an adjective of the fountain and not as a name for it.

21. For explanation, see E.N. 26 of As-Sāāffāt, E-N. 19 of At-Tūr, E.N. 9 of Al-Wāqi'ah.

22. Even if a person might have lived a pauper in the world, in the Hereafter when he is admitted to Paradise, on the basis of his good deeds, he will live as thorgh he were the owner of a splendid kingdom.

23. This same theme has been expressed in Sūrah Al-Kahf: 31, thus: "They (the dwellers of Paradise) will wear coloured robes of silk and rich brocade and will be reclining upon raised thrones." On this basis, the opinion of the commentators who have expressed the view that this implies the sheets of cloth which will be hanging over their thrones or bedsteads or that this would be the dress of the boys who would be moving about serving them does not seem to be correct.

24. In Sūrah Al-Kahf: 31, it has been said: "They will be adorned with bracelets of gold. This same theme has also occurred in Al-Ḥajj: 23 and Fatir 33 above. When all these verses are read together, three possibilities become obvious. (1) That sometimes they would like to wear bracelets of gold and sometimes bracelets of silver, both kinds of the ornaments being available for use as and when required; (2) that they will wear bracelets of both gold and silver at the same time, for the combination of the two enhances the personal charms of the wearer; (3) that whosoever desires will wear bracelets of gold and whosoever desires will wear bracelets of silver. As for the question, why will the men be adorned with the ornaments when these are usually worn by the women? The answer is that in the ancient times the custom was that the kings and their nobles used to adorn their hands and necks and the crowns of their heads with different kinds of ornaments. In Sūrah Az-Zukhruf it has been said that when the Prophet Moses arrived in the Pharaoh's court in his simple dress, with only a staff in hand, and told him that he was a Messenger sent by Allah, Lord of the worlds, the Pharaoh said to his courtiers: "What kind of a messenger is he, who has appeared before me in this state? If he was sent by the King of the universe, why were not bracelets of gold sent down on him, or a company of angels as attendants?" (v. 53).

25. Two kinds of the wine have been mentioned above, first that to which water will be added from the fountain of camphor; second that to which water will be added from the fountain of ginger. After these, making mention of another wine, with the remark that their Lord shall give them a pure wine to drink, gives the meaning that this will be some superior kind of wine, which they will be given to drink as a special favour from Allah.

26. In the original, *kāna sa'yu-kum mashkūra*: "your endeavours have been accepted and recognized." *Sa'i* implies the entire lifework that a person accomplished in the world, the works and objectives to which he applied his

[Contd. on p. 180

نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْاٰنَ تَنْزِيْلًا ﴿٢٣﴾ فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تُطِعْ مِنْهُمْ اٰثِمًا
اَوْ كَفُوْرًا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَّاَصِيْلًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَمِنَ الَّيْلِ فَاسْجُدْ لَهٗ وَ
سَبِّحْهُ لَيْلًا طَوِيْلًا ﴿٢٦﴾ اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ يُحِبُّوْنَ الْعَاجِلَةَ وَيَذَرُوْنَ وَرَآءَهُمْ يَوْمًا
ثَقِيْلًا ﴿٢٧﴾ نَحْنُ خَلَقْنٰهُمْ وَشَدَدْنَآ اَسْرَهُمْ ۚ وَاِذَا شِئْنَا بَدَّلْنَآ اَمْثَالَهُمْ تَبْدِيْلًا ﴿٢٨﴾
اِنَّ هٰذِهٖ تَذْكِرَةٌ ۚ فَمَنْ شَآءَ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰى رَبِّهٖ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَمَا تَشَآءُوْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ
يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلِيْمًا حَكِيْمًا ﴿٣٠﴾ يُّدْخِلُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ فِيْ رَحْمَتِهٖ
وَالظّٰلِمِيْنَ اَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿٣١﴾

23-31 O Prophet, it is We Ourself Who have sent down this Qur'ān piecemeal to you.[27] So be patient with regard to the command of your Lord,[28] and do not obey any wicked or disbelieving person from among them.[29] Remember the name of your Lord morning and evening, prostrate yourself before Him in the night, and glorify Him during the long hours of night.[30] These people only love the quickly attainable (world), and neglect a heavy Day that is coming ahead.[31] It is We Who have created them and strengthened their joints, and whenever it be Our will We can change their forms.[32] This is indeed an admonition. Now whoever wills, let him adopt the way to his Lord, but you cannot will it unless Allah wills.[33] Indeed Allah is All-knowing, All-Wise. He admits into His mercy whomever He wills, and for the wrongdoers He has prepared a painful torment.[34]

Contd. from p. 179]

energies and abilities; and its being *mashkūr* means that Allah has appreciated it. *Shukr* when expressed by the servant to God implies his gratefulness to Him for His blessings, and when it is expressed by God for the servant, it means that He has appreciated his services. It is indeed highly kind of the Master that He should appreciate the endeavours of the servant when the servant has only carried out his duties according to the Master's will.

27. Though the addressee here apparently is the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), the discourse is directed to the disbelievers, who said "Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) himself composes the Qur'ān deliberately piece by piece; had it been from Allah, it would be revealed all at once. At some places on the Qur'ān this objection has been cited and answered (e.g. see E.N.'s 102, 104, 105, 106 of An-Nahl and E.N. 119 of Banī Isrā'īl), but here Allah has answered it without citing it, saying emphatically: "It is We Ourself Who are sending it down: it is not the composition of Muḥammad: and it is We Ourself Who are sending it gradually. That is, it is the requirement of Our wisdom that We should not send down Our message all together in book form, but should send it piece by piece."

28 "Be patient": "Face patiently the hardships and difficulties of the great Mission your Lord has entrusted to you: endure firmly and steadfastly whatever comes to pass, without showing any weakness in this regard."

29. "Do not obey ...": "Do not yield to any one of them so as to give up preaching of the true faith: do not be inclined to make even the least change in the religious beliefs for the sake of any denier of the Truth, or in the moral teachings for the sake of a wicked person. Proclaim whatever is unlawful and forbidden to be so openly even if an immoral person might press you hard to show some lenience in this condemnation, and proclaim whatever is false as false and whatever is true as true publicly even if the disbelievers might use all their influence to silence you, or to make you adopt a little lenience in this regard."

30. The rule followed in the Qur'ān is that wherever the Muslims have been exhorted to show patience against the disbelievers, immediately after it they have been commanded to remember Allah much and to observe the Prayer, which automatically implies that the power needed to meet the resistance of the enemies of the Truth in the way of truth faith can be obtained only by this means. To remember Allah morning and evening may also imply remembering Allah always but when the command to remember Allah at specific times is given, it implies the *salāt* (Prayer). In this verse, *bukrah* means the morning and *aṣīl* the time from the sun's decline till sunset, which obviously covers the *Ẓuhr* and the *'Aṣr* times. Night starts after sunset; therefore, the command "to prostrate yourself in the night" would apply to both the *Maghrib* and the *'Ishā'* Prayers. Then, the command "to glorify Allah in the long hours of night", clearly points to the time of the Tahajjud Prayer. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 92 to 97 of Banī Isra'īl, E N. 2 of Al-Muzzammil). This also shows that these very have been the Prayer times in Islam from the beginning. However, the command making the Prayer obligatory five times a day with fixed times and number of *rak'ahs* was given on the occasion of *mi'rāj* (ascension).

31. That is, "The reason why the disbelieving Quraish still persist in the errors and deviations of belief and morality and why they turn a deaf ear to your invitation to the Truth is, in fact, their worship of the world and their heedlessness of the Hereafter. Therefore, the way being followed by a true God-worshipper is so different from and opposed to their way that there can be no question of any compromise between them."

32. The sentence, "Whenever it be Our will We can change their forms", can have several meanings: (1) That whenever We please We can destroy them and replace them by other people of their own kind, who will be different from them in conduct; (2) that whenever We please We can change their forms; that is, just as We can make someone healthy and sound in body, so also We have the power to make somebody a paralytic, cause someone to be struck with facial paralysis and other to fall a victim to some disease or accident and become a cripple permanently; and (3) that whenever We will We can recreate them in some other form after death.

33. Three things have been said in these verses: (1) That whoever wills may adopt the way to his Lord; (2) that one's willing to do a thing is not enough unless Allah so wills; and (3) that Allah is All-Wise, All-Knowing. If one considers these three things deeply one can fully well understand the relationship between man's freedom of choice and Allah's Will, and it helps to remove all the confusions from the people's minds about the question of destiny.

The first verse shows that in this world the authority granted to man is only to the extent that he may decide to adopt any one of the different courses available for passing life here. This is the freedom of choice that Allah has given him. For example, when a man confronts the question of earning a living for himself, he finds many ways before him of which some are lawful, as for example lawful kinds of labour, service, trade and business, industry, or agriculture, and some are unlawful as thievery, robbery, picking pockets, prostitution, trading in money (on interest), gambling, bribery and unlawful kinds of services and business, etc. The decision to adopt any one of these ways has been left to man's own free choice as to how he would like to earn his living. Likewise, there are different modes of morality. On the one side, there are the good qualities, like honesty, nobility, decency, justice, pity, sympathy and chastity, and on the other, the evil traits like wickedness, meanness, tyranny, dishonesty, and frivolity. Man has full freedom to adopt any mode of morality he likes. The same is the case with religion; man has many ways open before him in this regard also—atheism and denial of God, polytheism and idol-worship, different combinations of monotheism and polytheism, and the un-alloyed creed of God-worship which is taught by the Qur'ān. In these also the decision to choose has been left to man as to which of

these he wants to adopt. Allah does not impose on him any decision of His own so that man may like to choose a lawful means of earning his living for himself but Allah may force him to adopt an unlawful means for it, or that he may like to follow the Qur'ān, but Allah may force him to become an atheist, polytheist or disbeliever, or that he may like to become a good man, but Allah may force him to become an evil man.

But after man has exercised this freedom of choice whether he can practically also do the same which he wants to do, depends on Allah's Will, His leave and His grace. If the Will of Allah be to let the man do what he has willed or decided to do, then alone can he do it; otherwise he cannot do anything without Allah's Will and His leave, however hard and seriously he may try to do it. This same thing has been said in the second verse. This can be explained by an example. If man had been delegated all the powers in the world and permitted to do whatever he pleased, the system of the world would have been disrupted. One murderer was enough to murder all the people in the world if he were given the freedom to kill anybody he liked. One pickpocket could pick the pocket of everyone if he were given the option to pick anyone's pocket he pleased. One thief was enough to steal whatever he liked; one adulterer to commit rape on every woman, one robber to plunder every house, if each one of these had full powers to act at he desired. Therefore, Allah has kept this in His own power whether He may allow or disallow the man to follow the right or the wrong path that he chooses to follow or not. The person who, giving up error, wants to adopt the right way is also granted righteousness only by Allah's leave and will. However, the condition is that the decision to give up error and choose guidance should have been taken by the man himself; otherwise just as Allah does not make anybody a thief or murderer or atheist or polytheist forcibly, so also He does not make anybody a believer forcibly.

After this, the third verse removes the misunderstanding whether Allah's willing may not be arbitrary. That is why it has been said that "Allah is All-Knowing, Al-Wise." That is whatever He does, He does it on the basis of knowledge and wisdom; therefore, there can be no possibility of any error in His decisions. He decided with full knowledge and wisdom as to who should be given a particular kind of help and who should not be given it, who should be allowed to do a particular work and who should not be allowed to do it. To the extent that Allah provides opportunities to man and makes the conditions favourable for him, he can work according to his desire, whether it be good or evil, The question of guidance also is no exception to it. Allah alone knows on the basis of His knowledge and He alone determines on the basis of His wisdom as to who deserves to be guided and who does not. (Also see E.N. 41 of *Al-Muddaththir*).

34. In this verse "wrong doers" imply the people whom the Revelations of Allah and the teachings of His Prophet may reach, yet they deliberately and consciously decide that they would not obey and follow them. This also includes those unjust people who may plainly say that they do not accept the Revelation as God's Revelation and the Prophet as God's Prophet, or that they do not believe in God at all, and also those wicked people who may not refuse to believe in God and the Prophet and the Qur'ān, but they are resolved not to obey and follow them. As a matter of fact, both these groups are unjust and wicked. As regards the first group, their case is clear and obvious; but the second group is no less wicked: it is also hypocritical and treacherous. Verbally they say that they believe in God and the Messenger and the Qur'ān, but in their hearts and minds they are resolved not to follow them, and their practical conduct of life is also opposed to it. About both Allah has declared that He has prepared for them a painful torment. They might strut about in the world, enjoy life as they like, boast and brag of their superiority, but ultimately they will be subjected to a disgraceful punishment; they cannot enter and enjoy Allah's mercy in any way.



LXXVII

AL-MURSALĀT

المرْسَلات

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXVII

AL-MURSALĀT

المُرْسَلات

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *wal-mursalāt* in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Its subject-matter bears full evidence that it was revealed in the earliest period at Makkah. If this Sūrah is read together with the two

Sūrahs preceding it, namely Al-Qiyāmah and Ad-Dahr, and the two Sūrahs following it namely An-Naba' and An-Nāzi'āt, it becomes obvious that all these Sūrahs are the Revelations of the same period, and they deal with one and the same theme, which has been impressed on the people of Makkah in different ways.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is to affirm the Resurrection and Hereafter and to warn the people of the consequences which will ultimately follow the denial and the affirmation of these truths.

In the first seven verses, the system of winds has been presented as an evidence of the truth that the Resurrection which is being foretold by the Qur'ān and the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) must come to pass. The reasoning is that the power of All-Mighty Allah Who established this wonderful system on the earth, cannot be helpless in bringing about the Resurrection, and the express wisdom which underlies this system bears full evidence that the Hereafter must appear, for no act of an All-Wise Creator can be vain and purposeless, and if there was no Hereafter, it would mean that the whole of one's life was useless and absurd.

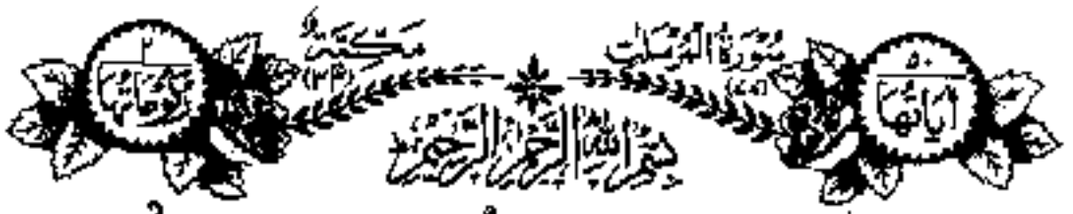
The people of Makkah repeatedly asked; "Bring about the Resurrection with which you threaten us, only then shall we believe in it." In vv. 8-15, their demand has been answered, saying: "Resurrection is no sport or fun so that whenever a jester should ask for it, it should be brought forth immediately. It is indeed the Day of Judgement to settle the account of all mankind and of all its individuals. For it Allah has fixed a specific time, it will take place at its own time, and when it takes place with all its dreads and horrors, it will confound those who are demanding it for fun today. Then their cases will be decided only on the evidence of those Messengers whom these deniers of the truth are repudiating with impunity. Then they will themselves realize how they themselves are responsible for their doom."

In vv. 16-28 arguments have been given continuously for the occurrence and necessity of the Resurrection and Hereafter. In these it has been stated that man's own history, his own birth, and the structure of the earth on which he lives, bear the testimony that the coming of Resurrection and the establishment of the Hereafter are possible as well

as the demand of Allah Almighty's wisdom. History tells us that the nations which denied the Hereafter ultimately became corrupted and met with destruction. This means that the Hereafter is a truth which if denied and contradicted by a nation by its conduct and attitude, will cause it to meet the same doom, which is met by a blind man who rushes headlong into an approaching train. And it also means that in the kingdom of the universe only physical laws are not at work but a moral law also is working in it, under which in this very world the process of retribution is operating. But since in the present life of the world retribution is not taking place in its complete and perfect form, the moral law of the universe necessarily demands that there should come a time when it should take its full course and all those good works and evil deeds, which could not be rewarded here, or which escaped their due punishment, should be fully rewarded and punished. For this it is inevitable that there should be a second life after death. If man only considers how he takes his birth in the world, his intellect, provided it is sound intellect, cannot deny that for the God Who began his creation from an insignificant sperm drop and developed him into a perfect man, it is certainly possible to create the same man once again. After death the particles of man's body do not disappear but continue to exist on the same earth on which he lived his whole life. It is from the resources and treasures of this very earth that he is made and nourished and then into the same treasures of the earth he is deposited. The God Who caused him to emerge from the treasures of the earth, in the first instance, can also cause him to re-emerge from the same treasures after he has been restored to them at death. If one only considers the powers of Allah one cannot deny that He can do this; and if one considers the wisdom of Allah, one also cannot deny that it is certainly the very demand of His wisdom to call man to account for the right and wrong use of the powers that He has granted him on the earth; it would rather be against wisdom to let him off without rendering an account.

Then, in vv. 28-40 the fate of the deniers of the Hereafter has been depicted, and in vv. 41-45 of those who affirming faith in it in their worldly life, endeavoured to improve their Hereafter, and abstained from the evils of disbelief and thought, morality and deed, conduct and character which might be helpful in man's worldly life, but are certainly ruinous for his life hereafter.

In the end, the deniers of the Hereafter and those Who turn away from God-worship, have been warned, as if to say: "Enjoy your short-lived worldly pleasure as you may, but your end will ultimatelty be disastrous." The discourse concludes with the assertion that the man who fails to obtain guidance from a Book like the Qur'ān, can have no other source in the world to afford him guidance.



وَالْمُرْسَلٰتِ عُرْفًا ۝١ فَالْعٰصِفٰتِ عَصْفًا ۝٢ وَّالنّٰشِرٰتِ نَشْرًا ۝٣ فَالْفٰرِقٰتِ
فَرْقًا ۝٤ فَالْمُلْقِيٰتِ ذِكْرًا ۝٥ عُذْرًا اَوْ نُذْرًا ۝٦ اِنَّمَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ لَوَاقِعٌ ۝٧ فَاِذَا النُّجُوْمُ
طُمِسَتْ ۝٨ وَاِذَا السَّمَآءُ فُرِجَتْ ۝٩ وَاِذَا الْجِبَالُ نُسِفَتْ ۝١٠ وَاِذَا الرُّسُلُ اُقِّتَتْ ۝١١
لِاَيِّ يَوْمٍ اُجِّلَتْ ۝١٢ لِيَوْمِ الْفَصْلِ ۝١٣ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ ۝١٤ وَيْلٌ
يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ۝١٥ اَلَمْ نُهْلِكِ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ۝١٦ ثُمَّ نُتْبِعُهُمُ الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ۝١٧ كَذٰلِكَ
نَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ۝١٨ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ۝١٩ اَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُّمْ مِّنْ مَّآءٍ

LXXVII

AL-MURSALĀT

المُرْسَلات

Verses: 50 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

By the (winds) which are sent in succession, which then blow tempestuously, and lift up (the clouds) and scatter them, then split (them) asunder, then infuse (the hearts) with the remembrance (of God), as an excuse or as a warning.![1] That which you are being promised,[2] must happen.[3] 1-7

Then, when the stars become dim[4] and the heaven is rent asunder,[5] and the mountains are thrashed into dust, and the time of the Messengers' appointment comes[6] (that Day it shall happen). For what day has all this been deferred? For the Day of Decision. And what do you know what the Day of Decision is? Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)![7] 8-15

16-19 Did We not destroy the former peoples?[8] Then We shall follow them up with those of latter day.[9] Thus do We deal with the culprits. Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)![10]

---

1. That is, sometimes the failure of winds causes the people to be alarmed at the prospect of a famine, and they turn to Allah to repent of their sins: sometimes they bring a lot of rain and the people turn to Allah in gratitude; and sometimes their blowing violently causes dread in the hearts and the people turn to Allah from fear of destruction.

In these verses initially the order of rain-bringing winds has been stated, which is thus: first, winds start blowing in succession; then they assume the proportions of a storm; then they raise the clouds and spread them; then they split and separate them. After this, instead of making mention of the rainfall, it is said that the winds infuse the hearts with the remembrance of Allah, as an excuse or as a warning. That is, it is an occasion when either because of fear man is compelled to remember Allah, or else he confesses his errors and invokes Allah to protect and save him from ruin and bless him with rain. If it has not rained for a long time, and the people are thirsty for rain, even the most hardened disbeliever sometimes begins to remember God when he sees the winds blowing and the clouds advancing. The drought's being mild and severe makes the difference. In case the drought is mild, the common man who is not far from Allah, will remember Him, but others will offer scientific explanations, saying that there was no cause for anxiety: it did not rain because of such and such a cause and it would be weak-mindedness to start praying to God on such an ordinary thing. However, if the drought is unusually prolonged, and the whole country is faced with a calamitous situation, even the confirmed disbelievers begin to remember God. If they feel shy to use their tongue, in their hearts they feel penitent on their wrongdoing and ingratitude and pray to God to cause rain throughout the country from the winds which are raising the clouds. This is infusion of God's remembrance in the hearts as an excuse. As for its infusion as a warning, it happens when the wind develops into a cyclone and destroys settlement after settlement or it rains so heavily as to cause a deluge. In such a state even a confirmed atheist starts imploring God out of awe for Him, and then all scientific explanations of the cyclone or deluge evaporate from his mind. Thus, after describing the blowing of winds in their succession to say that they infuse the hearts with Allah's remembrance as an excuse or as a warning, is meant to impress the truth that the system working in the world keeps on reminding man that everything on the earth has not been placed under his control but there is a Supreme Power above him, which rules his destiny. That Power is so supreme and

mighty that it can use the elements for the sustenance and nourishment of man when it so wills and can use the same elements for his destruction when it so wills.

After this the same system of winds has been proffered as an argument to prove that the Resurrection which is being promised to man, must come to pass. Now, let us see how this system testifies to this truth.

Man generally is perplexd in the case of Resurrection and the Hereafter at two questions. First: is the occurrence of Resurrection possible? Second: what is its need and necessity? And then being perplexed at these questions, he starts entertaining doubts whether it will at all occur or not, or whether it was only a figment of the imagination. In this connection, the Qur'ān has at some places reasoned out and proved its possibility, its necessity and occurrence from the system of the universe, and at others adopted another mode of reasoning: oaths have been sworn by some of the countless signs of God's Kingdom and it has been asserted that it shall surely come to pass. This mode of reasoning contains arguments for its possibility as well as arguments for its necessity and arguments for its occurrence.

Here, adopting the same mode of reasoning only the system of the circulation of winds and rainfall has been presented as a sign of the truth that it is a regular system, which has been established by the design of an All-Wise, All-Mighty Sovereign; it is not a chance occurrence, as a result of which a system might have been generated in the atmosphere of the earth that vapours should arise from the seas, winds should carry them and gather them into clouds, then split and separate them into pieces and transport them to different parts of the earth and then should cause them to fall as rain. This system has not been devised accidentally by some blind and deaf Nature, but it is a well-considered and well-designed plan, which is functioning regularly according to a law. That is why it never so happens that the heat of the sun should produce ice on the surface of the sea instead of vapours, but the sun always raises only vapours from the sea. It never so happens that the monsoons should blow in the reverse order and suppress vapours into the sea but they always raise them up into the atmosphere. It never so happens that the formation of clouds should cease, or the winds should stop to carry them to dry lands or the falling of rain on the earth should discontinue. The same law has been at work since millions and millions of years under which this system is functioning. Had it not been so our coming into existence on the earth and survival here would not be possible.

In this system one finds a clear purpose and the working of regular law. One can clearly see that on the earth the life of man, animal and vegetation deeply relates to the winds and rainfall, and this arrangement testifies that water has been provided to bring animate life into existence and keep it alive precisely according

to their requirements and a law. This purpose and regularity is not found only in this aspect but in the entire system of the universe, and man's whole scientific progress is based on it. About every thing man tries to find out what is its purpose and on what principle it works Then as he goes on gaining insight into the purposes of the creation of different things and the principles on which they work, he goes on devising new and ever new methods of their use and making new inventions for the progress of his civilization. Had there been no such concept in the mind of man naturally that the world is a meaningful world and everything in it is working on a principle, he would never have entertained the question about anything as to what was its purpose and how it could be put to use.

Now, when this world and everything in it has meaning, and if there is a law working in this world and in everything it contains, and if it has been functioning with the same purpose and regularity since millions and millions of years, then a stubborn person only could refuse to accept that an all-knowing, All-Mighty God has made it, and about that God it would be foolish to assume that although He could make and cause it to function but cannot break it, and after breaking it, cannot reconstruct it in any other form if He so wills. The concept about matter that it is imperishable was the chief support of the ignorant atheist of the past, but the progress of knowledge has proved it also false. Now it is an acknowledged scientific fact that matter can change into energy and energy into matter. Therefore, it is perfectly according to knowledge and reason that this material world will last only as long as the Living and Eternal God sustains it. As soon as He wills to change it into energy, He can change it by a simple Command and His one Command is enough to re-create it into any other material form and shape He wills.

This much then about the possibility of the Resurrection, which cannot now be rejected by any scientific and rational argument. As for the question that it must take place so that man is rewarded for his good works and punished for his evil deeds, the person who acknowledges man's moral responsibility and also believes that rewarding the good services and punishing the crimes is the necessary demand of this moral responsibility, cannot but admit that there must be the Hereafter. There is no law or government in the world, which can punish every crime and reward every good act. To say that the prick of the conscience is a sufficient punishment for the culprit and the satisfaction of the conscience is a sufficient reward for the doer of good is no more than meaningless philosophizing. The question is: How and when did the conscience of the person who killed an innocent man and then himself died in an accident immediately after it reprove him? And when did the conscience of the man who went to fight for the sake of truth and justice and fell a victim to a bomblast suddenly, have the satisfaction that he had laid down his life for a good cause? Thus, the truth is that the pretences

invented to avoid the belief in the Hereafter are all meaningless. Man's intellect wants, his nature requires, that there should be justice, but in the present life of the world it is not possible to have full and perfect justice. Justice can be had only in the Hereafter and only under the judgement and command of the All-Knowing, Omnipotent God. Denial of the necessity of the Hereafter is, in fact, denial of the necessity of justice.

Intellect can go only so far as to convince man that the Hereafter is possible and it should come about. As for the truth that it will surely come about, the "knowledge" of it can be obtained only through Revelation, and Revelation has given us the news that "that which you are being promised must happen". We cannot attain this knowledge by intellectual reasoning; however, we can attain the certainty of its being true on the basis that the thing of which we are being informed by Revelation is both possible and necessary.

2. Another meaning can be; "That which you are being threatened with," *i.e.* the Resurrection and Hereafter.

3. Here an oath has been sworn by five things on the inevitability of the Resurrection: (1) "Those which are sent forth in succession, or for a good cause;" (2) "those which blow violently and tempestuously (3) "those which disperse and scatter;" (4) "those which split and separate;" and (5) "those which inspire the remembrance." As these words only describe the characteristics and it has not been specified what thing or things they qualify, this has given rise to a difference of opinion among the commentators as to whether these are the qualities of one particular thing or of different things and what the thing or things are. One group of them says that all the five qualify the winds; the second group says that all the five imply the angels; the third group says that the first three imply the winds and the remaining two the angels; the fourth says that the first two imply the winds and the other three the angels; another group has opined that the first quality implies the angels of mercy, the second the angels of punishment and the remaining three imply the verses of the Qur'ān.

In our opinion, the first thing worthy of consideration is that when five characteristic have been mentioned continuously in one and the same context and there is no indication to show as to what has been qualified up to a certain point and wherefrom has the qualification of another thing begun, it cannot be correct, on the basis of a baseless conjecture, to understand that in these verses oaths have been sworn by two or three different things. Rather in this case the continuity of the subject by itself requires that the whole passage be regarded as related to the characteristics of one and the same thing. Secondly, wherever in the Qur'ān an oath has been sworn by a certain thing or, things in order to convince the doubters or deniers of an unseen truth, there the oath stands for an argument or reasoning

which is meant to tell that the thing or things point to the truth's being right and correct. For this purpose obviously it cannot be correct to present one imperceptible thing as an argument for another imperceptible thing; for, only a perceptible thing can be presented as an argument for an imperceptible thing. Hence in our opinion the correct explanation is that it implies the winds and the explanation of the people who interpret the five things to mean the angels cannot; be acceptable, for the angels are as imperceptible as is the occurrence of the Resurrection.

Now, let us consider as to how these different states of winds point to the occurrence of the Resurrection. One of the most important factor which has made animal and vegetable life possible on the earth is the air. The relationship its qualities bear with every kind of life testify that there is an All-Powesful, All-Wise Creator, Who willed to create life on this earth and for this purpose created here a thing whose qualities exactly and precisely correspond to the requirements of the existence of living beings. Then, He did not only wrap up the earth in the air and left it alone, but by His power and wisdom characterised this air with countless different states, which are being regulated since millions and millions of years in such a way that they cause the change of seasons and weather sometimes it is close and sometimes a soft breeze blows sometimes it is hot and sometimes cold; sometimes it brings clouds and sometimes it drives away clouds; sometimes it causes pleasant gusts to blow and sometimes disastrous windstorms; sometimes it brings beneficial rains and sometimes there is drought; in short, there are different kinds of winds which blow in their own time, and every kind serves one or the other purpose. This arrangement is the proof of a dominant Power, for which neither it can be impossible to bring life into existence, nor to obliterate it, nor to re-create it after having annihilated it. Likewise, this arrangement is also a proof of a supreme wisdom about which only a foolish man could think that all this was being done for fun, without any higher object in view. As against this wonderful system man is so helpless that he can neither cause a favourable wind to blow for himself, nor can prevent a disastrous cyclone from blowing on himself. However shameless, obstinate and stubborn he may be, the wind does at one time or another remind him that a Mighty Sovereign is ruling over him, Who can turn this principal means of his life into a cause of blessing for him or into a cause of ruin for him whenever He so likes, and man does not have the power to prevent or avert any of His decisions. (For further explanation, see E.N. 7 of Al-Jāthiyah, E.N.'s 1 to 4 of Adh-Dhāriyāt).

4. That is, when they lose their light and lustre

5. "When the heaven is rent asunder": when the system and discipline of the heavens under which every star and planet is established and moving in its orbit and everything in the universe is adhering to the bounds set for it, is broken.

6. At several places in the Qur'ān it has been stated that when the case of mankind will be presented before Allah on the Day of Resurrection, the Messenger of every nation will be called upon to testify that he had conveyed Allah's Messages intact to his people. This will be Allah's first and major argument against the culprits and the wicked people to prove that they were themselves responsible for their wrong attitude and conduct in life, for there had been no negligence on the part of Allah to show guidance and administer warnings . For instance, see Al-A'rāf: 172, 173 and E.N.'s 134, 135, Az-Zumar: 69 and E.N. 80, Al-Mulk:8 and E.N. 14.

7. "Deniers of Truth": those people who took the news of the coming of Resurrection as a lie, and spent their lives in the world under the delusion that the time would never come when they would have to present themselves before their God and render an account of their deeds.

8. This is an argument from history for the Hereafter. It means; "Consider your own history in the world. Whichever nations denied the Hereafter and took this worldly life to be real life and based their moral attitude on the results appearing here regarding them as the criterion of good and evil, ultimately went to their doom without exception This is a proof of the fact that the Hereafter is an actual reality overlooking and ignoring which causes the same kind of harm to a person which is caused when he chooses to close his eyes to the hard facts of life. (For further explanation, see E.N. 12 of Yūnus, E.N. 86 of An-Naml, E.N. 8 of Ar-Rūm, E.N. 25 of Sabā).

9. That is, "This is a permanent law with Us. Just as denial of the Hereafter has proved disastrous for the nations of the past so it will always prove disastrous also for the nations of the future. No nation has been an exception to it before nor will any be so in the future."

10. This sentence in the present context means: "The fate they have met or will meet in the world, is not their real punishment; their real doom will descend on them on the Day of Decision. The punishment here is only in the nature of a person's being arrested when he commits one crime after the other fearlessly and is not inclined to mend and change his ways. The court where his test is to be decided and he is to be punished for all his misdeeds, will not be established in this world but in the Hereafter, and that indeed will be the actual Day of his ruin and disaster." (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 5, 6 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 105 of Hūd).

[Contd. on p. 199

مَّهِيْنٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَجَعَلْنٰهُ فِيْ قَرَارٍ مَّكِيْنٍ ﴿٢١﴾ اِلٰى قَدَرٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَقَدَرْنَا ۖ فَنِعْمَ
الْقٰدِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ اَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْاَرْضَ كِفَاتًا ﴿٢٥﴾ اَحْيَآءً
وَّاَمْوَاتًا ﴿٢٦﴾ وَّجَعَلْنَا فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَ شٰمِخٰتٍ وَّاَسْقَيْنٰكُمْ مَّآءً فُرَاتًا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَيْلٌ
يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ اِنْطَلِقُوْٓا اِلٰى مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ اِنْطَلِقُوْٓا اِلٰى ظِلٍّ
ذِيْ ثَلٰثِ شُعَبٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ لَّا ظَلِيْلٍ وَّلَا يُغْنِيْ مِنَ اللَّهَبِ ﴿٣١﴾ اِنَّهَا تَرْمِيْ بِشَرَرٍ
كَالْقَصْرِ ﴿٣٢﴾ كَاَنَّهٗ جِمٰلَتٌ صُفْرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ هٰذَا يَوْمُ لَا
يَنْطِقُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَا يُؤْذَنُ لَهُمْ فَيَعْتَذِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ هٰذَا
يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ ۚ جَمَعْنٰكُمْ وَالْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَاِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ كَيْدٌ فَكِيْدُوْنِ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَيْلٌ
يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ اِنَّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ فِيْ ظِلٰلٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿٤١﴾ وَّفَوَاكِهَ مِمَّا
يَشْتَهُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ كُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا هَنِيْٓـًٔا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ اِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي
الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ كُلُوْا وَتَمَتَّعُوْا قَلِيْلًا اِنَّكُمْ
مُّجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمُ ارْكَعُوْا لَا يَرْكَعُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾
وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَبِاَيِّ حَدِيْثٍ بَعْدَهٗ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾

Did We not create you out of a mean fluid, and kept it lodged in a secure place[11] for an appointed term?[12] Behold! We had power to do this, as We are excellent Possessors of power![13] Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)![14] 20-24

Have We not made the earth a receptacle, both for the living and for the dead, and set in it high mountains, and given you sweet water to drink?[15] Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)![16] 25-28

Go off[17] now to the same that you used to deny. Go off to the shadow which has three branches.[18] It neither gives coolness nor shelter from the flame of Fire. The Fire shall throw off sparks as huge as castles as though they were yellow camels.[19] Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)! 29-34

That is the Day when they shall neither speak nor be given leave to offer excuses.[20] Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth!) 35-37

This is the Day of Decision. We have gathered both you and those who had gone before you together. Now, if you have a trick, use it against Me.[21] Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)! 38-40

The righteous[22] are today amidst shades and springs, and whatever fruits they desire (they shall have). "Eat and drink with relish as a reward for the deeds you have been doing." Thus do We recompense the doers of good. Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)![23] 41-45

"Eat[24] and enjoy yourselves for a while.[25] Indeed, you are culprits." Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)! When it is said to them: "Bow down (before Allah) they do not bow down."[26] Woe on that Day to the deniers (of Truth)! Now, what message can there be after this (Qur'ān) in which they will believe?[27] 46-50

Contd. from p. 197]

11. "A secure place": the mother's womb in which the child is so firmly lodged as soon as it has been conceived and where such arrangements are made for its security and nourishment that abortion cannot take place unless there is a disaster, and even for artificial abortion extraordinary devices have to be adopted, which are both risky and harmful in spite of modern developments in medical science.

12. The words *qadar im-ma'lūm* do not only mean that the term is appointed and fixed but they also contain the sense that it is known to Allah alone. About no child can man know by any means how many months, days, hours, minutes and seconds it will remain in the mothers womb and what will be its exact and precise time of birth. Allah alone has fixed a specific term for every child and He alone knows it.

13. This is an express argument for the possibility of the life-after-death. What is meant to be said is: "When We had the power to shape and develop you into a perfect and complete man from insignificant sperm-drop, how shall We be helpless to re-create you in some other way ? Our this creation in consequence of which you exist as a living being, is a proof that We are excellent Possessors of power; We cannot be so helpless as to be unable to re-create you after having created you in the first instance."

14. This sentence here gives the meaning that in spite of the express argument for the possibility of life-after-death, the people who are denying it, may mock it as they may and look down upon its believers as people of antiquated ideas and whims, but when the Day comes which they are denying today, they will themselves know that it is a Day of their own ruin and disaster.

15. This is yet another argument for the possibility and reasonableness of the Hereafter. It is this very earth which since millions and millions of years has been sustaining and providing for countless different kinds of creatures. Every kind of vegetation and every kind of animal and man are living on it, To meet the requirements of all immeasureable treasures of provisions of different kinds are coming out of its belly. Then it is on this very earth that countless members of all kinds of creatures die every day, but there exists a wonderful arrangement in that the dead bodies of all creatures are deposited in the same earth, and it again becomes ready for sustaining life and providing home to the new members of every species. This earth has not been shaped like a smooth-surfaced ball either, but here and there on it there have been set high mountains and mountain-ranges, which play an important role in causing the change of seasons and rainfall, the birth of rivers creation of fertile valleys, growth of trees which supply timber, and provisions of a variety of minerals and stones. Then in the interior of this very earth, sweet water has been stored and on its surface rivers of sweet water have been arranged and from the saline waters of the sea also vapours of pure water are raised and caused to fall as rain from the sky. Is not all this an argument to prove that an All-Powerful Sovereign has created all this and He is not only All-Powerful but All-Knowing and All-Wise as well? Now, if this earth has been thus equipped and provisioned only by His power and wisdom, why should an intelligent man find it difficult to understand that the same Sovereign by His power can wind up

this world and create another world on a new pattern, and the demand of His wisdom is that he should create another world after it so that He may call man to account for the deeds he has done in this world?

16. Here, this sentence signifies that the people who deny the coming of the Hereafter and regard it as impossible and irrational in spite of seeing these manifest signs of Allah's power and wisdom, may remain lost in their vain imaginations if they so like. But the Day when all this takes place against their expectations, they will realize that they have earned ruin on account of their own folly.

17. After giving proofs of the coming of the Hereafter, now it is being stated how the deniers will be dealt with when it has actually taken place.

18. "Shadow": shadow of smoke; "three branches": because when a big smoke arises it is divided into several parts at the top.

19. That is, each spark will be like a castle, and when these huge sparks will rise and burst and fly about in all directions it will seem as though they were yellow camels running and jumping about ceaselessly.

20. This will be their ultimate state at the time they will be entering Hell. Before this in the plain of Resurrection they will be offering all sorts of excuses, blaming others for their errors and proving their own selves to be innocent, abusing their leaders and guides who led them astray; so much so that some of them will even disown their crimes shamelessly, as has been stated at several places in the Qur'ān. But when their being criminals will have been established by every kind of evidence, and when their own hands and feet and limbs will have borne witness against them to prove their guilt fully, and when after fulfilling all requirements of justice rightly and truly, the sentence will be passed on them, they will be dumbfounded and no room will be left for them to offer any excuse. To refuse an opportunity or permission to offer an excuse, does not mean that judgment will be passed against them without giving them a chance for self-defence, but it means that their guilt and crime will be proved to the hilt and they will not be able to offer any excuse after it.

21. That is, "In the world you used every kind of deception and trick in self-interest. Now, if you have any trick to escape My punishment, you may use it to defeat Me and My plan."

22. As this world has been used here in contrast to the "deniers"; the righteous here implies the people who refrained from denying the Hereafter and accepted it and passed their life in the world with the belief that in the Hereafter they would have to render an account of their word and deed and their conduct and character.

23. Here this sentence means that one of their afflictions, as mentioned above, will be that they will be standing as culprits in the plain of Resurrection, their crimes will have been proved and established openly and they will not be in a position even to open their mouths to put forward a plea in self defence, and shall ultimately become fuel of Hell. Their other affliction, and by far the worse will be that they will see the same believers enjoying themselves in Paradise, whom they had been opposing and resisting and mocking throughout their lives as foolish, narrow-minded, mean and old fashioned people.

24. In conclusion, these words are being addressed not only to the disbelievers of Makkah but to all disbelievers of the world.

25. "For a while": in their brief life of the world.

26. "Bowing before Allah": does not only imply worshipping Him but also means believing in the Messenger sent by Allah and in the Book revealed by Him and following and obeying His Commands.

27. That is, the greatest Message that could distinguish the Truth from falsehood for man and show him right guidance, has been sent down in the shape of the Qur'ān. if a person does not believe even after reading it or hearing it read, what else after this can show him the correct guidance?



LXXVIII

AN-NABĀ

النَّبا

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXVIII
AN-NABĀ
النَّبَا

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name from the word *an-Nabā* in the second verse. This is not only a name, a title of its subject-matter, for *Nabā* implies the news of Resurrection and Hereafter and the whole devoted to the same theme.

Period of Revelation

As we have explained in the introduction to Sūrah Al-Mursalāt, the theme of all the Sūrahs, from Al-Qiyāmah to An-Nāzi'āt, closely resembles one another, and all these seem to have been revealed in the earliest period at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme also is the same as of Sūrah Al-Mursalāt, *i.e.* to affirm the Resurrection and Hereafter, and to warn the people of the consequences of acknowledging or disacknowledging it.

When the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) first started to preach Islam in Makkah, his message consisted of three elements: (1) That none be held as an associate with Allah in Godhead; (2) that Allah had appointed him as His Messenger; (3) that this world will come to an end one day and then another world will be established when all the former and the latter generations will be resurrected with the same bodies in which they lived and worked in the world; then they will be called to account for their beliefs and deeds and those who emerge as believing and righteous in this accountability will go to Paradise and those who are proved to be disbelieving and wicked will live in Hell for ever.

Of these although the first thing was highly unpleasant for the people of Makkah, yet in any case they were not disbelievers in the existence of Allah. They believed in His Being the Supreme Sustainer, Creator and Providence and also admitted that all those beings whom they regarded as their deities, were themselves Allah's creatures. Therefore, in this regard the only thing they disputed was whether they had any share in the attributes and powers of Divinity and in the Divine Being itself or not.

As for the second thing the people of Makkah were not prepared to accept it. However, what they could not possibly deny was that during the 40 years life that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had lived among them before his claim to Prophethood, they had never found him a lying, deceitful person, or the one who would adopt unlawful methods for selfish ends. They themselves admitted that he was a man possessed of wisdom, righteousness and moral superiority. Therefore, in spite of charging him with a thousand false accusations, nothing to say of making others believe, they were finding it difficult even for themselves to believe that although he was an honest and upright man in every other affair and dealing of life, yet, God forbid, a liar only in his claim to be a Prophet.

Thus, the first two things were not in fact so perplexing for the people of Makkah as the third thing. When this was presented before them, they mocked it most of all, expressed unusual wonder at it, and regarding it as remote from reason and impossible, started talking against it as incredible, even inconceivable, in their assemblies. But in order to bring them to the way of Islam it was absolutely essential that the doctrine of the Hereafter should be instilled into their minds, for without belief in this doctrine, it was not at all possible that they could adopt a serious attitude with regard to the truth and falsehood, could change their standard of values in respect of good and evil, and giving up worship of the world, could be inclined to follow the way that Islam urged them to follow. That is why in the earliest Sūrahs revealed at Makkah the doctrine of the Hereafter has been impressed and stressed more than anything else. However, the arguments for it have been given in such a way that the doctrine of the Oneness of God (Tauhīd) also is impressed on the minds automatically. This also contains brief arguments, here and there, to confirm the truth of the Holy Messenger of Allah and the Qur'ān.

After understanding well why the theme of the Hereafter has been so frequently repeated in the Sūrahs of this period let us now have a look at the subject-matter of this Sūrah. In it, first of all, allusion has been made to the common talk and the doubts that were being expressed in every street of Makkah and in every assembly of the people of Makkah on hearing the news about Resurrection. Then, the deniers have been asked "Don't you see this earth which We have spread as a carpet for you Don't you see the high mountains which we have so firmly placed in the earth? Don't you consider your own selves how We have created you as pairs of men and women? Don't you consider your sleep by which We make you seek a few hours' rest after every few hours' labour and toil so as to keep you fit for work in the world? Don't you see the alternation of the night and day which We are so regularly perpetuating precisely according to your needs and requirements? Don't you see the strongly fortified system of the heavens above you? Don't you see the sun by means of which you are receiving your light and heat? Don't you see the rains which fall from the clouds and help produce corns and vegetables and luxuriant gardens? Do these things only tell you that the power of the Almighty Being Who has created

them, will be unable to bring about Resurrection and establish the Next World? Then, from the supreme wisdom which is clearly working in this world around you, do you only understand that although each part of it and each function of it is purposive, yet life is meaningless? Nothing could be more absurd and meaningless that after appointing man to the office of foreman and granting him vast powers of appropriation in this workhouse, when he leaves the world after fulfilling his role, he should be let off without any accountability. He should neither be rewarded and granted pension on satisfactory work, nor subjected to any accountability and punishment on unsatisfactory performance of duty.

After giving these arguments it has been emphatically stated that the Day of Judgement shall certainly come to pass on its appointed time. No sooner is the Trumpet sounded than whatever is being foretold shall appear before the eyes, and whether you believe in it today, or not, at that time you will come out in your multitudes from wherever you would be lying dead and buried to render your account. Your denial cannot in any way avert this inevitable event.

Then, in vv. 21-30, it has been stated that every single misdeed of those who do not expect any accountability to take place and have thus belied Our Revelations, lies reckoned and recorded with Us, and Hell is ever lying in ambush to punish them and punish them fully for all their doings. Then, in vv. 31-36, the best rewards of those who lived as responsible people in the world and have provided for their Hereafter beforehand have been mentioned. They have been reassured that they will not only be rewarded richly for their services but in addition they will also be given sufficient gifts.

In conclusion, the Divine Court in the Hereafter has been depicted, making it plain that there will be no question of somebody's being adamant in the matter of getting his followers and associates forgiven, none will speak without leave, and leave will be granted on the condition that intercession be made only for the one to whom leave of intercession will have been given, and the intercessor will say only what is right. Moreover, leave for intercession will be given only for those who had acknowledged the Truth in the world but were sinners; rebels of God and rejectors of the Truth will deserve no intercession at all.

The discourse has been concluded with this warning: The Day the coming of which is being foretold, shall certainly come to pass. Do not think it is yet far off, it is close at hand. Now, whoever wills, let him believe in it and take the way towards his Lord. But he who disbelieves, in spite of the warning, will have all his deeds placed before him, and he will exclaim regretfully: "Oh, would that I were not born in the world!" At that time, his regrets will be about the same world of which he is so enamoured today!

سُوْرَةُ النَّبَإِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

عَمَّ يَتَسَآءَلُوْنَ ۝١ عَنِ النَّبَإِ الْعَظِيْمِ ۝٢ الَّذِيْ هُمْ فِيْهِ مُخْتَلِفُوْنَ ۝٣

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝٤ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝٥ اَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْاَرْضَ مِهٰدًا ۝٦ وَّ
الْجِبَالَ اَوْتَادًا ۝٧ وَّخَلَقْنٰكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا ۝٨ وَّجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا ۝٩ وَّ جَعَلْنَا
الَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا ۝١٠ وَّ جَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا ۝١١ وَّ بَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا ۝١٢ وَّ
جَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَّهَّاجًا ۝١٣ وَّ اَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرٰتِ مَآءً ثَجَّاجًا ۝١٤ لِّنُخْرِجَ
بِهٖ حَبًّا وَّنَبَاتًا ۝١٥ وَّ جَنّٰتٍ اَلْفَافًا ۝١٦ اِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيْقَاتًا ۝١٧ يَّوْمَ
يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّوْرِ فَتَاْتُوْنَ اَفْوَاجًا ۝١٨ وَّ فُتِحَتِ السَّمَآءُ فَكَانَتْ اَبْوَابًا ۝١٩ وَّ
سُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا ۝٢٠ اِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا ۝٢١ لِّلطّٰغِيْنَ
مَاٰبًا ۝٢٢ لّٰبِثِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَحْقَابًا ۝٢٣ لَا يَذُوْقُوْنَ فِيْهَا بَرْدًا وَّ لَا شَرَابًا ۝٢٤ اِلَّا
حَمِيْمًا وَّ غَسَّاقًا ۝٢٥ جَزَآءً وِّفَاقًا ۝٢٦ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا لَا يَرْجُوْنَ حِسَابًا ۝٢٧ وَّ
كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا كِذَّابًا ۝٢٨ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ اَحْصَيْنٰهُ كِتٰبًا ۝٢٩ فَذُوْقُوْا فَلَنْ نَّزِيْدَكُمْ
اِلَّا عَذَابًا ۝٣٠ اِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ مَفَازًا ۝٣١ حَدَآئِقَ وَ اَعْنَابًا ۝٣٢ وَّ كَوَاعِبَ اَتْرَابًا ۝٣٣
وَّ كَاْسًا دِهَاقًا ۝٣٤ لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ فِيْهَا لَغْوًا وَّ لَا كِذّٰبًا ۝٣٥ جَزَآءً مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ
عَطَآءً حِسَابًا ۝٣٦ رَّبِّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمٰنِ لَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ
مِنْهُ خِطَابًا ۝٣٧ يَوْمَ يَقُوْمُ الرُّوْحُ وَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ صَفًّا ۙ لَّا يَتَكَلَّمُوْنَ اِلَّا
مَنْ اَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا ۝٣٨ ذٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ ۚ فَمَنْ شَآءَ اتَّخَذَ
اِلٰى رَبِّهٖ مَاٰبًا ۝٣٩ اِنَّآ اَنْذَرْنٰكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيْبًا ۚ يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ
يَدٰهُ وَ يَقُوْلُ الْكٰفِرُ يٰلَيْتَنِيْ كُنْتُ تُرٰبًا ۝٤٠

LXXVIII

AN-NABĀ
النَّبَا

Verses: 40 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

About what are they inquiring? Is it about the Great News concerning which they are at variance?[1] By no means![2] They shall soon know. Yes, by no means! They shall soon know![3] 1-5

Is it not a fact that We have made the earth a bed[4] and set the mountains as pegs[5] and created you as pairs (of men and women),[6] and made your sleep for rest,[7] and the night a covering and the day for seeking livelihood,[8] and established above you seven strong heavens,[9] and set a bright, blazing lamp,[10] and rained water from the clouds in abundance that We may produce thereby corn and vegetables and lush gardens?[11] 6-16

Surely the Day of Decision is an appointed time. The day the Trumpet is blown, you shall come out in multitudes,[12] and the heaven shall be opened so as to become all doors, and the mountains shall be set in motion till they become as a mirage.[13] 17-20

Hell, in fact, is an ambush,[14] the abode for the rebellious in which they shall remain lodged for ages.[15] In it they shall not taste any coolness nor any drink, except boiling water and the washing from wounds,[16] a full recompense (for their misdeeds). They did not expect any reckoning and had treated Our Revelations as utterly false,[17] whereas We had counted and preserved everything in writing.[18] Now taste it, for We shall never increase anything for you except the torment. 21-30

Surely for the righteous [19] there is an abode of success: gardens and vineyards and maidens of equal age [20] and brimful cups. There they shall neither hear idle talk nor any falsehood,[21] a reward and sufficient 31-37

gift [22] from your Lord; from the All-Merciful God, Who is the Owner of the heavens and the earth and of everything lying between them, before Whom none can have the power to speak.[23]

38-39 The Day when the Spirit [24] and the angels shall be standing up in ranks, none shall speak except the one whom the Merciful may permit, and who speaks what is right.[25] That Day is sure to come. Now whoever wills, let him take the path back to his Lord.

40 We have warned you of the torment which is near at hand:[26] the Day when man will see all that his hands have sent forward, and the disbeliever will cry out: "Would that I were mere dust!"[27]

---

1. "The Great News": the news of the Resurrection and Hereafter, which the people of Makkah heard with amazement, then raised questions and doubts about it in their assemblies. When they met each other they would ask: "Did you ever hear that the dead will be resurrected to life? Is it credible that life will be infused once again into the bones which have decayed and become rotten? Does it stand to reason that the former and the latter generations will rise up and gather together at one place? Is it possible that these huge mountains which are so firmly set in the earth will fly about like flakes of wool? Can it so happen that the sun and the moon and the stars should be extinguished and the order and system of the world be overturned and upset? What has happened to him who was until yesterday a sane and wise man among us? Today he is giving us strange, impossible news. Where were this Hell and Heaven of which we had never heard from him before? wherefrom have they appeared suddenly so that he has started depicting them so vividly before us?"

Another meaning of *fī-hi mukhtalifūn* also can be: "As these people themselves are not agreed on any one view about the end of the world, they hold varying views about it." Some one has been influenced by the Christian belief and believes in the life after death but thinks that the second life would not be a physical but only a spiritual life. Another does not deny the Hereafter absolutely but doubts whether it was possible or not. The Qur'ān relates the view of these very people when it says: "We do only guess: we are not certain." (Al-Jāthiyah: 32). And another plainly said: "There is no other life than this present life, and we shall never be raised back to life after our death." (Al-An'ām: 29). Then, there were some atheists, who said: "Life is only this worldly life of ours. Here we shall die and live and nothing but the change of time destroys us." (Al-Jāthiyah: 24). There were some others who were not atheistic but they regarded the second life as impossible. According to them it was beyond the power of God to raise the dead back to life. They said, "Who will give life to these bones when they are rotten." (Yā Sīn: 78). Their different views by themselves were a proof that they had no knowledge in this regard; they were only conjecturing and guessing. Had they any

knowledge they would have agreed on one view. (For further explanation, see E.N. 6 of Sūrah Adh-Dhariyat).

2. That is, whatever they say about the Hereafter is false, and all their concepts about it are wrong.

3. That is, the time is not far off when the same thing about which they are expressing all sorts of meaningless doubts and misgivings, will appear before them as a reality. Then they will realize that what the Messenger had foretold was absolutely true and what they were saying on the basis of conjecture and speculation had no truth in it.

4. Enough light has been thrown at several places in *The Meaning of the Qur'ān* on the supreme wisdom and power of Allah that underlies His making the earth a carpet, i.e. an abode of perfect peace and rest. For explanation, see E.N.'s 73, 74, 81 of An-Naml, E.N. 29 of Yā Sīn, E.N.'s 90, 91 of Al-Mu'min, E.N. 7 of Az-Zukhruf, E.N. 7 of Al-Jāthiyah, E.N. 18 of Sūrah Qāf.

5. For the wisdom of creating mountains on the earth, see E.N. 12 of An-Naḥl, E.N. 74 of An-Naml, E.N. 15 of Al-Mursalāt.

6. For explanation of the supreme wisdom that underlies the creation of men and women into pairs, see E.N. 69 of Al-Furqān, E. N.'s 28 to 30 of Ar-Rūm, E.N. 31 of Yā Sīn, E.N. 77 of Ash-Shūrā, E N.12 of Az-Zukhruf, E.N. 25 of Al-Qiyāmah.

7. The explanation of the wisdom for which Allah Almighty has placed a desire for sleep in man's nature in order to make him fit for work in the world, and which impels him to a few hours' sleep after every few hours of work, has been given in E.N. 33 of Sūrah Ar-Rūm.

8. That is, "The night has been made dark so that protected from light, you could enjoy a peaceful sleep more easily and made the day bright for the reason that you could work for your livelihood with greater ease and facility. Reference has been made to only one benefit out of countless benefits of the continuous alternation of night and day regularly on the earth to tell that all this is not happening without a purpose or accidentally, but there is supreme wisdom underlying it, which has a deep connection with your own immediate interests. The darkness that was needed for the peace and rest of your body in view of its structure has been provided in the night and the light that was needed for earning livelihood has been provided in the day. This arrangement that has been made precisely in accordance with your needs by itself testifies that it could not be possible without the wisdom of a Wise Being." (For further explanation, see E.N. 65 of Yūnus, E.N. 32 of Yā Sīn, E.N. 85 of Al-Mu'min, E.N. 4 of Az-Zukhruf).

9. "Strong" in the sense that their boundaries are so strongly fortified that no change whatever occurs in them, nor does any of the countless stars and planets in the heavens, violating these boundaries, collide with the other, nor falls down to the earth. (For further explanation, see E.N. 34 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 2 of Ar-

Ra'd, E.N.'s 8, 12 of Al-Ḥijr, E.N. 15 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 13 of Luqmān, E.N. 37 of Yā Sīn, E.N.'s 5, 6 of Aṣ-Ṣāffāt, E.N. 90 of Al-Mu'min, E.N.'s 7, 8 of Sūrah Qaf).

10. "A bright, blazing lamp": the sun. The word *wahhāj* used for the sun means both intensely hot and intensely bright. Hence our rendering. In this brief sentence, allusion has been made to a most wonderful and glorious sign of Allah Almighty's power and wisdom which the sun is. Its diameter is 109 times that of the earth's and its size more than 333,000 times that of the earth's. Its temperature is 14,000,000°C. In spite of shining 93,000,000 miles away from the earth, its light and brightness is dazzling, and man can look at it with the naked eye only at the risk of losing his eye-sight. As for its heat, temperature in some parts of the earth reaches 140°F. because of its radiation. It is only Allah Who by His wisdom has placed the earth at the right distance from it, neither it is too hot for being close to it, nor too cold for being very far away from it. For this very reason life of man, animal and vegetable became possible on it. Measureless treasures of energy from it are reaching the earth and sustaining life. It helps ripen our crops to provide sustenance to every creature; its heat causes vapours to rise from the seas, which spread to different parts of the earth by means of the winds and fall as rain. In the sun Allah has kindled such a mighty furnace that has been constantly radiating light, heat and different kinds of rays throughout the entire solar system since millions and millions of years.

11. For the details of the wonderful manifestations of Allah Almighty's power and wisdom in making arrangements for the rain and the growth of vegetation thereby, see E.N. 53 (a) of An-Naḥl, E.N. 17 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 5 of Ash-Shua'rā', E.N. 35 of Ar-Rūm, E.N. 19 of Fāṭir, E.N. 29 of Yā Sīn, E.N. 20 of Al-Mu'min, E.N.'s 10, 11 of Az-Zukhruf, E.N.'s 28 to 30 of Al-Wāqi'ah.

After presenting a number of the signs and testimonies, one after the other, in these verses, the deniers of the Resurrection and Hereafter have been exhorted, so as to say: "If you consider the earth and the mountains and your own creation, your sleep and wakefulness, and the system of the day and night intelligently, and consider the well-fortified system of the universe and the shining sun in the heavens, the rain falling from the clouds and the vegetables growing thereby, you will see two things very clearly: first, that all this could neither come into existence without a mighty power, nor continue to exist and function so regularly; second, that in each of these great wisdom is working and nothing that happens here is purposeless. Now, only a foolish person could say that the Being Who by His power has brought these things into existence, does not have the power to destroy them and create them once again in some other form, and this also could be said only by an unreasonable person that the Wise Being Who has not done anything without purpose in this universe, has given to man in His world understanding and intelligence, discrimination between good and evil, freedom to obey or disobey, and powers of appropriation over countless of His creatures, without any purpose

and design: whether man uses and employs the things granted by Him in the right way or the wrong way, it does not make any difference; whether man continues to do good throughout life till death, he will end up in the dust, or continues to do evil till death, he will likewise end up in the dust; neither the virtuous man will receive any reward for the good deeds nor the bad man will be held accountable for his evil deeds. These very arguments for life after death and Resurrection and Hereafter have been given here and there in the Qur'ān, e.g. see E.N. 7 of Ar-Ra'd, E.N. 9 of Al-Hajj, E.N. 6 of Ar-Rūm, E.N.'s 10, 12 of Sabā, E.N.'s 8, 9 of Aṣ-Ṣāffāt.

12. This implies the final sounding of the Trumpet at which all dead men will rise back to life forthwith. "You" implies not only those who were the addressees at that time but all those humans who will have been born from the beginning of creation till Resurrection. (For explanation, see E.N. 57 of Ibrāhīm, E.N. 1 of Al-Hajj, E.N.'s 46, 47 of Yā Sīn, E.N. 79 of Az-Zumar).

13. One should bear in mind the fact that here also, as at many other places in the Qur'ān, the different states of Resurrection have been mentioned all together. In the first verse, mention has been made of what will happen at the final sounding of the Trumpet and in the following two verses of the state which will appear at the second sounding of the Trumpet. This we have already explained in E.N. 10 of Sūrah Al-Hāāqqah above. "The heavens shall be opened" means: All obstacles in the heavens will be removed and every heavenly calamity from every side will be befalling freely as though all doors for it were open and no door had remained closed to obstruct its happening. "The mountains will be set in motion till they become as a mirage" means: In no time will the mountains be uprooted from their places and then will be scattered away in particles leaving nothing but vast, empty sand plains behind. "This same state has been described in Sūrah Ṭā Hā, thus: They ask you: well, where will the mountains go on that Day? Say to them: My Lord will reduce them to fine dust and scatter it away. He will turn the earth into an empty level plain, wherein you will neither see any curve nor crease." (vv. 105-107 and the corresponding E.N. 83!.

14. "An ambush": a place contrived to entrap game by surprise. Hell has been described as an ambush, because the rebels of God are fearless of it and are enjoying life thinking that the world is a haven of bliss for them. They do not know that Hell is lying in ambush for them, which will trap them suddenly and keep them trapped.

15. The word *ahqāb* as used in the original means successive periods of long time appearing continuously one after the other. From this word some people have tried to argue that there will be eternity in the life of Paradise but no eternity in the life of Hell. For however long these ages may be, they will not be endless but will come to an end at some time. But this argument is wrong for two reasons. First, that lexically, the word *ḥaqab* (sing. of *ahqāb*) itself contains the meaning that one

ḥaqab should be closely followed by another *ḥaqab;* therefore, *aḥqāb* will necessarily be used only for such periods of time as continue to appear successively one after the other and there should be no period which is not followed by another period. Second, that as a rule it is wrong to put a meaning on a verse of the Qur'ān pertaining to a particular theme which clashes with other statements of the Qur'ān pertaining to the same theme. At 34 places in the Qur'ān the word *khulūd* (eternity) has been used concerning the dwellers of Hell. At three places not only the word *khulūd* has been used but the word *abad-an* (for ever and ever) also has been added to it; and at one place it has been clearly stated: "They will wish to get out of Hell but shall not be able to come out of it and theirs shall be an everlasting torment." (Al-Mā'idah: 37). At another place it has been said: "Therein they shall abide for ever, as long as the earth and the heavens shall last, unless your Lord ordains otherwise." And the same thing has been said about the dwellers of Paradise too:" "They shall dwell in Paradise for ever, as long as the earth and the heavens shall last, unless your Lord wills something else." (Hūd: 107-108). After these explanations, how can one argue, on the basis of the word *aḥqāb*, that the stay of the rebels of God in Hell will not be eternal, but it will come to an end at some stage in time?

16. The word *ghassāq* as used in the original applies to pus, blood, pus-blood and all those fluids that flow out from the eyes and skins as a result of a grievous penalty. Besides, this word is also used for a thing which stinks and gives out horrid, offensive smell.

17. This is the reason for which they will deserve this dreadful penalty of Hell. Firstly, they lived in the world thinking that the time will never come when they will have to appear before God and render an account of their deeds; second, that they utterly refused to accept and acknowledge the Revelations that Allah had sent through His Prophets for their instruction and treated them as falsehood.

18. That is, "We were continuously preparing a complete record of their sayings and doings, their movements and occupations, even of their intentions, thoughts and aims in life and nothing was being left un-recorded, whereas the foolish people in their heedlessness thought that they were living in a lawless kingdom where they were free to do whatever they pleased and desired, and there was no power to call them to account."

19. Here, the word "righteous" has been used in contrast to those who did not expect any accountability and who had belied Allah's Revelations. Therefore, this word inevitably implies those people who believed in Allah's Revelations and lived in the world with the understanding that they had to render an account of their deeds ultimately.

20. This may mean that they will be of equal age among themselves as well as that they will be of equal age with their husbands. This same theme has already occurred in Sūrah Sūad: 52 and Al-Wāqi'ah :37 above.

21. At several places in the Qur'ān this has been counted as among the major blessings of Paradise. Human ears there will remain secure against idle, false and indecent talk. There will be no nonsensical, meaningless gossiping in Paradise; no one will tell lies nor belie others; nor will there be any use of abusive language, slandering; calumnies and false accusations which are so common in the world. (For further explanations, see E.N. 28 of Sūrah Maryam, E.N.'s 13, 14 of Al-Wāqi'ah).

22. "A reward and sufficient gift": that is, they will not only be given their due rewards which they will deserve for their good deeds, but over and above these they will be given additional and sufficient gifts and prizes as well. Contrary to this, in respect of the dwellers of Hell it has been said: "They will be recompensed fully for their misdeeds." That is, they will neither be punished less than what they will deserve for their crimes nor more. This theme has been explained at length at many places in the Qur'ān, for example, see Yūnus: 26-27, An-Naml: 89-90, Al-Qaṣaṣ: 84, Sabā: 33-38, Al-Mu'min: 40.

23. That is, the Court of Allah Almighty will be so awe-inspiring that no one, whether belonging to the earth or to the heavens, will dare open his mouth of his own will before Allah, nor interfere in the Court's work and proceedings.

24. According to most commentators, "the Spirit" implies the Angel Gabriel (peace be on him), who has been mentioned separately from the angels because of his high rank and position with Allah. (For further explanation, see E.N. 3 of Al-Ma'ārij).

25. "To speak": to intercede, and intercession has been made conditional upon two things: (1) That the person who is granted permission by Allah to intercede for a sinner will alone be allowed to intercede and for the particular sinner only; and (2) that the intercessor will say only what is right and proper, and nothing derogatory, and the one for whom he is interceding should have at least acknowledged the Truth in the world. That is, he should only be a sinner, not an unbeliever. (For further explanation, see E.N. 281 of Al-Baqarah, E.N. 5 of Yūnus, E.N. 106 of Hūd, E.N. 52 of Maryam, E.N.'s 85, 86 of Ṭā Hā, E.N. 27 of Al-Anbiyā', E.N.'s 40, 41 of Saba. E.N. 32 of Al-Mu'min, E.N 63 of Az-Zukhruf, E N. 21 of An-Najm, E.N. 36 of Al-Muddaththir).

26. Apparently, one might think that the people who were the audience of this verse died fourteen centuries ago, and even now it cannot be said how many hundreds or thousands or millions of years Resurrection will take to come. Then, in what sense has it been said: "The torment of which you have been warned, has approached near at hand?" And what is the meaning of saying in the beginning of the Sūrah: "Soon they shall know?" The answer is that man can have the feeling of time only until he is passing a physical life in the world within the bounds of space and time. After death when only the soul will survive, he will lose every feeling and consciousness of time, and on the Day of Resurrection when man will rise

back to life, he will feel as though some one had aroused him from sleep suddenly. He will not at all be conscious that he has been resurrected after thousands of years. (For further explanation, see E.N. 26 of An-Naḥl, E.N. 56 of Banī Isrā'īl, E.N. 80 of Ṭā Hā, E.N. 48 of Yā Sīn).

27. "Would .....dust": "Would that I had not been born in the world, or had become mere dust after death, and thus reduced to nothingness."



LXXIX

AN-NĀZI‘ĀT

النَّازِعات

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXIX

AN-NĀZI'ĀT

النّازِعات

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the word *wan-nāzi'āt* with which the Sūrah opens.

Period of Revelation

According to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, this Sūrah was sent down after Sūrah An-Nabā. Its subject matter also testifies that it belongs to the earliest period at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is affirmation of Resurrection and the life hereafter; it also warns of the consequences of belying the Messenger of God.

The Sūrah opens with oaths sworn by the angels who take the soul at death, and those who hasten to carry out Allah's Commands, and those who conduct the affairs of the universe according to Divine Wills to assure that the Resurrection will certainly come to pass and the second life after death will certainly take place. For the angels who are employed to pluck out the soul today can also be employed to restore the soul tomorrow, and the angels who promptly execute Allah's Commands and conduct the affairs of the universe today can also upset the order of the universe tomorrow by orders of the same God and can also bring about a new order.

After this the people have been told, so as to say: "This work which you regard as absolutely impossible, is not any difficult for Allah, for which He may have to make lengthy preparations. Just a single jolt will upset this system of the world and a second jolt will be enough to cause you to appear as living beings in the new world. At that time the same people who were wont to deny it, would be trembling with fear and seeing with awe-struck eyes all that they thought was impossible.

Then, relating the story of the Prophet Moses and Pharaoh briefly, the people have been warned to the effect: "You know full well what fate the Pharaoh met in consequence of belying the Messenger and rejecting the guidance brought by him and endeavouring to defeat his mission by trickery and deceit. If you do not learn any lesson from it and do not change your ways and attitude accordingly, you also will have to meet the same fate.

Then in vv. 27-33, arguments have been given for the Hereafter and life after death. In this regard, the deniers have been asked the question: "Is your resurrection a more difficult task or the creation of the huge universe which spreads around you to infinite distances with myriads of its stars and planets? Your re-creation cannot be difficult for the God for Whom this was an easy task. Thus, after presenting in a single sentence, a decisive argument for the possibility of the Hereafter, attention has been drawn to the earth and its provisions that have been arranged in it for the sustenance of man and animal and of which everything testifies that it has been created with great wisdom for fulfilling some special purpose. Pointing to this the question has been left for the intellect of man to ponder for itself and form the opinion whether calling man to account after having delegated authority and

رَبِّكَ مُنْتَهٰىهَا ﴿٤٤﴾ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنْذِرُ مَنْ يَخْشٰىهَا ﴿٤٥﴾ كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَهَا
لَمْ يَلْبَثُوٓا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحٰىهَا ﴿٤٦﴾

responsilities to a creature like him in this wise system would be more in keeping with the demands of wisdom, or that he should die after committing sorts of misdeeds in the world and should perish and mix in the dust for ever and should never be called to account as to how he employed the authority and fulfilled the responsibilities cntrusted to him. Instead of discussing this question, in vv. 34-41, it has been said: "When the Hereafter is established, men's eternal future will be determined on the criterion as to which of them rebelled against his God transgressing the bounds of service and made the material benefits and pleasures his objective of life and which of them feared standing before his Lord and refrained from fulfilling the unlawful desires of the self. This by itself provides the right answer to the above question to every such person who considers it honestly, free from stubbornness. For the only rational, logical and moral demand of giving authority and entrusting responsibilities to man in the world is that he should be called to account on this very basis ultimately and rewarded or punished accordingly.

In conclusion the question of the disbelievers of Makkah as to when Resurrection will take place, has been answered. They asked the Holy Prophet this question over and over again. In reply it has been said that the knowledge of the time of its occurrence rests with Allah alone. The Messenger is there only to give the warning that it will certainly come. Now whoever wishes may mend his ways, fearing its coming, and whoever wishes may behave and conduct himself as he likes, fearless of its coming. When the appointed time comes, those very people who loved the life of this world and regarded its pleasures as the only object of life, would feel that they had stayed in the world only for an hour or so. Then they will realize how utterly they had ruined their future for ever for the sake of the shortlived pleasures of the world.

سُوْرَةُ النّٰزِعٰت مَكِّيَّة

اٰيَاتُهَا ٤٦ رُكُوْعَاتُهَا ٢

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

وَالنّٰزِعٰتِ غَرْقًا ۝١ وَّالنّٰشِطٰتِ نَشْطًا ۝٢ وَّالسّٰبِحٰتِ سَبْحًا ۝٣ فَالسّٰبِقٰتِ
سَبْقًا ۝٤ فَالْمُدَبِّرٰتِ اَمْرًا ۝٥ يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الرَّاجِفَةُ ۝٦ تَتْبَعُهَا الرَّادِفَةُ ۝٧
قُلُوْبٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ وَّاجِفَةٌ ۝٨ اَبْصَارُهَا خَاشِعَةٌ ۝٩ يَقُوْلُوْنَ ءَاِنَّا لَمَرْدُوْدُوْنَ
فِي الْحَافِرَةِ ۝١٠ ءَاِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا نَّخِرَةً ۝١١ قَالُوْا تِلْكَ اِذًا كَرَّةٌ خَاسِرَةٌ ۝١٢
فَاِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَّاحِدَةٌ ۝١٣ فَاِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ ۝١٤ هَلْ اَتٰىكَ حَدِيْثُ
مُوْسٰى ۝١٥ اِذْ نَادٰىهُ رَبُّهٗ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ۝١٦ اِذْهَبْ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ اِنَّهٗ
طَغٰى ۝١٧ فَقُلْ هَلْ لَّكَ اِلٰٓى اَنْ تَزَكّٰى ۝١٨ وَاَهْدِيَكَ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشٰى ۝١٩
فَاَرٰىهُ الْاٰيَةَ الْكُبْرٰى ۝٢٠ فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصٰى ۝٢١ ثُمَّ اَدْبَرَ يَسْعٰى ۝٢٢ فَحَشَرَ
فَنَادٰى ۝٢٣ فَقَالَ اَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْاَعْلٰى ۝٢٤ فَاَخَذَهُ اللّٰهُ نَكَالَ الْاٰخِرَةِ وَالْاُوْلٰى ۝٢٥
اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّمَنْ يَّخْشٰى ۝٢٦ ءَاَنْتُمْ اَشَدُّ خَلْقًا اَمِ السَّمَآءُ ۭ بَنٰىهَا ۝٢٧
رَفَعَ سَمْكَهَا فَسَوّٰىهَا ۝٢٨ وَاَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَاَخْرَجَ ضُحٰىهَا ۝٢٩ وَالْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ
ذٰلِكَ دَحٰىهَا ۝٣٠ اَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَآءَهَا وَمَرْعٰىهَا ۝٣١ وَالْجِبَالَ اَرْسٰىهَا ۝٣٢
مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِاَنْعَامِكُمْ ۝٣٣ فَاِذَا جَآءَتِ الطَّآمَّةُ الْكُبْرٰى ۝٣٤ يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ
الْاِنْسَانُ مَا سَعٰى ۝٣٥ وَبُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيْمُ لِمَنْ يَّرٰى ۝٣٦ فَاَمَّا مَنْ طَغٰى ۝٣٧ وَ
اٰثَرَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا ۝٣٨ فَاِنَّ الْجَحِيْمَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى ۝٣٩ وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ
مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى ۝٤٠ فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى ۝٤١
يَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ اَيَّانَ مُرْسٰىهَا ۝٤٢ فِيْمَ اَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرٰىهَا ۝٤٣ اِلٰى

LXXIX

AN-NĀZI'ĀT

النَّازِعات

Verses: 46 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

By those (angels) who pluck out from the depths, and draw out gently, and by those (angels) who glide about swiftly (through space), then hasten out (to carry out Commands), then conduct the affairs (in accordance with Divine Commands)[1]: the Day when the quake shall cause a violent jolt, which is followed by another jolt,[2] some hearts on that Day shall be trembling with fear,[3] their looks struck with awe. 1-9

They say, "Shall we really be restored to our former state? What, when we shall have become hollow, rotten bones?" They said, "It would then be a return with sheer loss!"[4] Whereas it will only need a single shout and they will forthwith appear in an open plain.[5] 10-14

Has[6] the story of Moses reached you? Recall when his Lord called out to him in the sacred valley of Tuwā,[7] (saying), "Go to Pharaoh: he has become rebellious, and say to him: Will you mind to adopt purity that I may guide you to your Lord, so that you may have fear (of Him)?"[8] Then Moses (went to Pharaoh and) showed him the great Sign,[9] but he belied it and disobeyed. Then, he turned back to devise plots,[10] and gathering the people together, proclaimed,[11] "I am your Lord, the highest." Consequently, Allah seized him for punishment both in the Hereafter and in the world. Indeed, there is a lesson in this for him who fears.[12] 15-26

Are[13] you (O men,) harder to create, or is the heaven?[14] Allah built it: He raised its vault high and gave it balance, and covered its night and brought forth its day.[15] After that He spread out the earth:[16] from within it, He brought out its water and its pasture,[17] and set the mountains in it, as a means of sustenance for you and your cattle.[18] 27-33

34-41 Then, when the great Disaster befalls[19]— the Day when man shall remember whatever he had striven for[20]—and Hell shall be laid open for everyone to see, then the one who had rebelled and preferred the life of the world, Hell shall be his home. As for him who had feared to stand before his Lord and restrained himself from evil desires, Paradise shall be his home.[21]

42-46 They ask you, "When will the Hour come to stay?"[22] (But) it is not for you to tell its time. Its knowledge rests only with your Lord. You are only a warner to him who fears it.[23] The day these people see it, they will feel as though they had stayed (in the world or in the state of death) only for the afternoon of a day or its forenoon.[24]

---

1. Here, the object for which an oath has been sworn by beings having five qualities has not been mentioned; but the theme that follows by itself leads to the conclusion that the oath has been sworn to affirm that the Resurrection is a certainty, which must come to pass, when all dead men shall be resurrected. Nor is there any mention as to what are the beings possessed of the qualities. However, a large number of the Companions and their immediate successors and most of the commentators have expressed the opinion that they are the angels. Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Masrūq, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Abū Ṣālih, Abud-Duhā and Suddi; say that "those who pluck out from the depths and those who draw out gently" imply the angels, who wrench out the soul of man at death from the very depths of his body, from its every fibre. "Those who glide about swiftly", according to Ḥaḍrat Ibn Mas'ūd, Mujāhid, Sa'īd bin Jubair and Abū Sālih, also imply the angels, who hurry about swiftly in execution of Divine Commands as though they were gliding through space. The same meaning of "those who hasten out as in a race" has been taken by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Mujāhid, Masrūq, Abū Sālih and Ḥasan Baṣrī, and hastening out implies that each one of them hurries on his errand as soon as he receives the first indication of Divine Will. "Those who conduct the affairs" also imply the angels as has been reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, Mujāhid, 'Atā' Abū -Ṣālih, Ḥasan Baṣrī;, Qatādah, Rabī' bin Anas and Suddī. In other words, these are the workers of the Kingdom of the Universe, who are conducting all the affairs of the world in accordance with Allah's Command and Will. Though this meaning of these verses has not been reported in any authentic Ḥadīth from the Holy Prophet, while this meaning has been given by some major Companions and their immediate successors and pupils, one is led to form the view that they must have obtained this knowledge from the Holy Prophet himself.

Now the question arises: On what basis has the oath been sworn by these angels for the occurrence of the Resurrection and life after death when they themselves are as imperceptible as the thing for the occurrence of which they have been presented as an evidence and as an argument. In our opinion the reason is (and Allah has the best knowledge) that the Arabs were not deniers of the existence of the angels. They themselves admitted that at the death the soul was taken out by the angels; they also believed that the angels moved at tremendous speeds; they could reach any place between the earth and the heavens instantly and promptly execute any errand that was entrusted to them. They also acknowledged that the angels are subordinate to Divine Will and they conduct the affairs of the universe strictly and precisely in accordance with Divine Will; they are not independent and masters of their will. They regarded them as daughters of Allah out of ignorance and worshipped them as deities, but they did not believe that they possessed the real authority as well. Therefore, the basis of the reasoning from the above-mentioned attributes for the occurrence of the Resurrection and life after death is that the angels who took the soul by the order of God, could also restore the soul by the order of the same God; and the angels who conducted the affairs of the universe by the order of God could also upset this universe by the order of the same God whenever He so ordered them and could also bring about a new world order. They would not show any negligence or delay in the execution of His Command.

2. The first jolt implies the jolt which will destroy the earth and everything on it, and the second jolt at which all dead men will rise up from death and from their graves. This same state has been described in Sūrah Az-Zumar, thus: "And when the Trumpet shall be blown on that Day, all those who are in the heavens and the earth shall fall down dead except those whom Allah may allow (to live). Then the Trumpet shall be blown again and they will all stand up, looking around." (v. 68)

3. "Some hearts", because, according to the Qur'ān, only the disbelievers, the wicked people and the hypocrites will be terror-stricken on the Resurrection Day, the righteous believers will remain secure from this terror. About them in Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' it has been said: "The time of great fright will not trouble them at all; the angels will rush forth to receive them, saying: 'This is the very Day which you were promised'." (v. 103)

4. That is, when they were told that they would surely be raised back to life after death, they started mocking it, saying to one another, "Well, if we have really to be restored to our former state of life, then we would certainly be doomed."

5. That is, "They are mocking it as an impossibility, whereas it is not at all a difficult task for Allah for the performance of which He may have to make lengthy preparations. For it only a single shout or cry is enough at which your dust of ash will gather together from wherever it lay, and you will suddenly find yourself alive on the back of the earth. Thinking this return to be a return to loss, you may try to escape from it however hard you may, but it will inevitably take place: it cannot be averted by your denial, escape or mockery."

6. As the denial of the Resurrection and Hereafter by the disbelievers of Makkah and their mockery of it was not, in fact, rejection of a philosophy but belying Allah's Messengers, and the tricks that they were employing against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) were not against an ordinary man but were meant to frustrate the mission of Allah's Messenger, the story of the Prophet Moses and the Pharaoh is being related before giving additional arguments for the occurrence of the Hereafter so that they are warned of the consequences of fighting with the Messenger and resisting the God Who sent him.

7. According to general opinion among the commentators "the sacred valley of Ṭuwā" means "the sacred valley which was named Ṭuwā". But, besides this, two other meanings of it also have been given: (1) "The valley that was blessed and made sacred twice", for it was first made sacred when Allah spoke to Moses in it for the first time, and it was blessed and made sacred for the second time when the Prophet Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt and brought them into it; and (2) "called out to him in the sacred valley in the night," and this is according to the meaning of ṭuwā in the Arabic idiom.

8. Here, one should understand a few things well: (1) The dialogue that took place between the Prophet Moses and Allah Almighty at the time of appointing him to the office of Prophethood has been related at some places briefly and at others in full detail in the Qur'ān as the occasion demanded. Here, brevity was the need; therefore, only a resume has been given. Fuller details are found in Tā Hā: 9-48, Ash-Shua'rā': 10-17, An-Naml: 7-12, Al-Qasas: 29-35.

(2) The rebellion of the Pharaoh referred to here relates to his transgressing the bounds of service and rebelling both against the Creator and against His creatures. As for his rebellion against the Creator, it is being mentioned a little below when he gathered his people together and proiaimed: "I am your lord, the supreme." As against the creatures his rebellion was that he had divided his subjects into classes; he treated the weak classes tyrannically and had reduced his entire nation to slavery as has been mentioned in Al-Qaṣaṣ: 4 and Az-Zukhruf: 54.

(3) The instruction given to Moses was: "Go, you and your brother Aaron, to Pharaoh for he has transgressed all bounds. Talk to him gently; maybe

that he is convinced by admonition or is imbued with fear." (Tā Hā: 44). One model of the gentle speech has been given in these verses, which shows what right method a preacher should adopt when preaching to a perverted man. Other models are given in Tā Hā: 49-52, Ash-Shua'rā': 23-28, and Al-Qasas: 37. These verses are of those in which Allah has taught the correct methods of preaching Islam in the Qur'ān.

(4) The Prophet Moses had not been sent to Pharaoh only for the deliverance of the children of Israel as some people seem to think, but the primary object of his appointment was to show Pharaoh and his people the right way, and the second object was that if he did not accept the right way, the children of Israel (who in fact were a Muslim people) should be taken out of his slavery and from Egypt. This thing becomes plain from these verses too, for there is no mention whatever in these of the deliverance of the children of Israel, but the Prophet Moses has been commanded to present the message of the Truth before Pharaoh, and this is confirmed by those verses also in which the Prophet Moses has preached Islam as well as demanded freedom of the children of Israel, e.g. see Al-A'rāf 104-105, Tā Hā: 47-52, Ash-Shua'arā': 16-17, 23-28. (For further explanation, see E.N. 74 of Yūnus).

(5) Here, "to adopt purity" means to adopt purity of belief, morals and deeds, or, in other words, to accept Islam. Ibn Zaid says: "Wherever in the Qur'ān the word *tazakka* (purity) has been use, it implies acceptance of Islam." As an example of this he has cited the following three verses: "And this is the reward of him who adopts purity", *i.e.* accepts Islam; "and what would make you know that he might adopt purity", *i.e.* becomes a Muslim ('Abasa:3); "And you would not be responsible if he did not adopt purity", i.e. did not become a Muslim ('Abasa: 7). (Ibn Jarir).

(6) "That I may guide you to your Lord so that you may have fear (of Him)" means: "When you recognize your Lord and come to know that you are His slave, and not a free man, you will inevitably have fear of Him in your heart, for fear of God is the thing on which depends the right attitude of man in the world. Without the knowledge and fear of God no purity of the self can be possible."

9. "The great Sign": the turning of the staff into a serpent, as has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān. Obviously there could be no greater sign than that a lifeless staff should turn into a living serpent right in front of the eyes of the people, that it should devour the artificial serpents produced by the magicians out of their staffs and cords, and when the Prophet Moses should pick it

up, it should become a walking stick again. This was proof that it was Allah, Lord of the worlds, Who had sent Moses as a Prophet.

10. According to the details given at other places in the Qur'ān, he summoned skilful magicians from all over Egypt and made them produce serpents out of sticks and cords in front of the assembled people so that they were convinced that Moses (peace be upon him) was not a Prophet but a magician, and that the miracle worked by him of turning a staff into a serpent, could also be worked by other magicians. But this device of his recoiled upon himself and the defeated magicians themselves admitted that what Moses (peace be on him) had displayed was no magic but a miracle.

11. This proclamation of Pharaoh has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān. On one occasion he said to the Prophet Moses: "If you took another one as a deity beside me, I would cast you in the prison." (Ash-Shua'rā': 29). On another occasion he had addressed his courtiers, saying: "O chiefs, I do not know of any other god of yours than myself. (Al-Qasas.: 38). By this Pharaoh did not mean, nor could he ever mean, that he himself was the creator of the universe and he had made the world, nor that he denied the existence of Allah and claimed to be lord of the universe, nor that he regarded only himself as a deity of the people in the religious sense. In the Qur'ān itself there is a clear testimony that as regards religion he himself worshipped other gods. Once his courtiers said to him: "Will you leave Moses and his people free to spread chaos in the land, and let them discard you and your deities?" (Al A'rāf: 127). And in the Qur'ān itself this saying of the Pharaoh also has been cited: "Had Moses been sent by Allah, why were not bracelets of gold sent down to him, or a company of angels as attendants?" (Az-Zukhruf: 53). Thus, in fact, he called himself a god and supreme deity not in the religious but in the political sense. What he meant was that he possessed the sovereign rights: no one beside him had the right to rule in his kingdom and there was no superior power whose orders could be enforced in the land. (For further explanation, see E.N. 85 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 21 of Ṭā Hā, E.N.'s 24, 26 of Ash-Shua'rā', E-N.'s 52, 53 of Al-Qaṣaṣ E.N. 49 of Az-Zukhruf).

12. "...who fears": who fears the consequences of denying God's Messenger, which the Pharaoh experienced in the past.

13. Now arguments are being given for the possibility of Resurrection and life after death and their being the very demand and requirement of wisdom.

14. Here, creation implies the recreation of men, and the heaven the entire firmament which contains countless stars and planets, and innumerable solar systems and galaxies, means to say: "You think that your resurrection after death is something extremely improbable and you express wonder saying: 'How is it

possible that when our very bones will have decayed and become rotten the scattered particles of our bodies will be reassembled and made living once again?' But have you ever also considered whether the great universe is harder to create or your own re-creation in the form in which you were created in the first instance? The God Who created you in the first instance cannot be powerless to create you once again." This same argument for life after death has been given at several places in the Qur'ān. For example, in Sūrah Yā Sīn it has been said: "Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them (again)? Why not, when He is the skilful Creator." (v. 81) And in Sūrah Al-Mu'min it was said: "Surely the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater task than the creation of man, but most people do not know. (v. 57)

15. The night and the day have been attributed to the heaven, for the night falls when the sun of the heavens sets and the day dawns when it rises. The word "cover" has been used for the night in the sense that after the sun has set the darkness of the night so spreads over the earth as though it has covered it from above by a curtain.

16. "After that He spread out the earth" does not mean that Allah created the earth after the creation of the heavens, but it is a style of expression just like our saying after making mention of something: "Then this is noteworthy." The object is not to express the sequence of occurrence between the two things but to draw attention from the first to the second thing although both may exist together. Several instances of this style are found in the Qur'ān, *e.g.* in Sūrah Al-Qalam it is said: "(He is) oppressive, and after that, ignoble by birth." This does not mean that first he became oppressive and then he turned ignoble by birth, but it means: "He is oppressive, and above all, ignoble by birth." Likewise, in Sūrah Al-Balad it is said: "Should free a slave...then be of those who believe." This also does not mean that first he should act righteously and then believe, but that along with doing righteous deeds he should also be characterised by belief. Here, one should also understand that at some places in the Qur'ān the creation of the earth has been mentioned first and then the creation of the heavens, as in Al-Baqarah: 29, and at others the creation of the heavens has been mentioned first and then of the earth, as in these verses. There is, in fact, no contradiction in this. At no place the object is to tell what was created first and what afterwards, but wherever the context requires that the excellences of the power of Allah be made prominent, the heavens have been mentioned first and then the earth, and where the context requires that the people be made to appreciate and acknowledge the blessings that they are benefiting by on the earth, the mention of the earth has been made before that of the heavens. (For further explanation, see E.N's 13,14 of Hā Mīm As-Sajdah).

17. "Pasture" here does not only imply pasture and fodder for the animals but all kinds of herbal produce suitable for consumption both by man and by animal. An example of the use of *rat'*, which is generally used in Arabic for the grazing animals, is found in Sūrah Yūsuf: 12, signifying that this word is sometimes used for man also. The brothers of Joseph said to their father: "Send Joseph with us tomorrow that he may freely graze and enjoy sport." Here, the word graze (rat') for the child has been used in the meaning that he may move about freely in the jungle and pluck and eat fruit.

18. In these verses arguments have been given for the Resurrection and life after death from two aspects: first, that it is not at all difficult to establish these for the power of that God Who has made this vast and huge universe with such wonderful balance and this earth with such provisions. Second, that the pointers to the perfect wisdom of Allah which are clearly visible in the universe and the earth, point out that nothing is happening here purposelessly. The balance that exists between countless of the stars and planets and galaxies in the heavens testifies that all this has not happened haphazardly but there is a well thought-out plan working behind it. The regular alternation of the night and day is an evidence that this system has been established with supreme wisdom and knowledge for making the earth a home and place of settlement. On this very earth are found regions where the alternation of the night and day takes place within 24 hours and also those regions where there are longer days and longer nights. A very large part of the earth's population lives in the first kind of the regions. Then as the days and nights go on becoming longer and longer, life goes on becoming harder and harder and population thinner and thinner. So much so that the regions where there are six-month-long days and six-month-long nights, are not at all fit for human settlement. Arranging both these types of the land on this very earth Allah has provided the evidence that this regular order of the alternation of night and day has not come about accidentally but has been brought about with great wisdom precisely in accordance with a scheme to make the earth a place fit for human settlement. Likewise, spreading out the earth so that it becomes a fit place to live in, providing in it that water which should be palatable for man and animal and a cause of growth for vegetation, setting in it mountains and creating all those things which may become a means of life for both man and animal-- all these are a manifest sign that they are not chance happenings or the purposeless works of a care-free person but each one of these has been arranged purposefully by a Supreme, Wise Being. Now every sensible and intelligent man can consider for himself whether the necessity and occurrence of the Hereafter is the requirement of wisdom or its negation. The person who in spite of seeing all this says that there is no Hereafter, in fact, says that everything in the universe is happening wisely and purposefully, but only the creation of man on the earth as a being endowed with sense and power

is meaningless and foolish. For there could be nothing more purposeless than delegating to man vast powers of appropriation in the earth and providing him an opportunity to do good as well as evil deeds but then failing to ever subject him to accountability.

19. This implies the Resurrection for which the words *at-Tāāmmat al-kubrā* have been used. *Tāāmmah* by itself is a grievous calamity which afflicts everybody. Then it has been further qualified by the word *kubrā* (great), which shows that the mere word *tāāmmah* is not enough to describe fully its intensity and severity.

20. That is, "When man will see that the same Day of accountability of which he was being foretold in the world, has come, he will start remembering each one of his misdeeds done in the world even before his records are handed over to him. Some people experience this even in the world. If at some time they come across a dangerous situation suddenly when death seems to be staring them in the face, their whole life-film flashes across their mind's eye all at once.

21. Here, in a few words, it has been told briefly what shall be the criterion of the final judgement in the Hereafter. One kind of the conduct of life in the world is that transgressing all bounds of service man should rebel against his God and should make up his mind that he would seek only the benefits and pleasures of this world in whatever way they could be sought and achieved. The other kind of conduct is that while man passes life in the world he should constantly keep in view the truth that ultimately one day he has to stand before his Lord, and should refrain from fulfilling the evil desires of the self only for the fear that if he earned an unlawful benefit in obedience to his self, or enjoyed an evil pleasure, what answer he would give to his Lord. The criterion of the judgement in the Hereafter will be which of the two kinds of conduct he adopted in the world. If he had adopted the first kind of conduct, his permanent abode would be Hell, and if he had adopted the second kind of conduct, his permanent home would be Paradise.

22. The disbelievers of Makkah asked this question of the Holy Prophet over and over again. By this they did not mean to know the time and date of the coming of Resurrection but to mock it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 35 of Sūrah Al-Mulk).

23. This also we have explained in E.N. 36 of Sūrah Al-Mulk above. As for the words "you are only a Warner to him who fears it", they do not mean that it is not your duty to warn those who do not fear, but it means: "Your warning will benefit only him who fears the coming of that Day."

24. This theme has occurred at several places in the Qur'ān and been explained in the corresponding Notes. For it, see E.N. 53 of Yūnus, E.N. 56 of Banī Isrā'īl, E.N. 80 of Tā Hā, E.N. 101 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N.'s 81, 82 of Ar-Rūm, E.N. 48 of Yā Sīn. Besides, this theme has also occurred in Al-Ahqāf: 35 but we have not explained it there for fear of repetition.



LXXX

ʻABASA

عَبَسَ

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXX
'ABASA
عَبَسَ

INTRODUCTON

Name

The Sūrah is so designated after the word *'abasa* with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

The commentators and traditionists are unanimous about the occasion of the revelation of this Sūrah. According to them, once some big chiefs of Makkah were sitting in the Holy Prophet's assembly and he was earnestly engaged in trying to persuade them to accept Islam. At that very point, a blind man, named Ibn Umm Maktūm, approached him to seek explanation of some point concerning Islam. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) disliked his interruption and ignored him. Thereupon Allah sent down this Sūrah. From this historical incident the period of the revelation of this Sūrah can be precisely determined.

In the first place, it is confirmed that Hadrat Ibn Umm Maktūm was one of the earliest converts to Islam. Hāfiz Ibn Hajar and Hāfiz Ibn Kathīr have stated that he was one of those who had accepted Islam at a very early stage at Makkah.

Secondly, some of the traditions of the Hadīth which relate this incident show that he had already accepted Islam and some others show that he was inclined to accept it and had approached the Holy Prophet in search of the truth. Hadrat 'A'ishah states that coming to the Holy Prophet he had said: "O Messenger of Allah, guide me to the straight path." (Tirmidhi, Hākim, Ibn Hibbān, Ibn Jarīr, Abū Yā'lā). According to Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, he had asked the meaning of a verse of the Qur'ān and said to the Holy Prophet: "O Messenger of Allah, teach me the knowledge that Allah has taught you."(Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Hātim). These statements show that he had acknowedged the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) as a Messenger of Allah and the Qur'ān as a Book of Allah. Contrary to this, Ibn Zaid has interpreted the *words la'allahū yazzakkā* of verse 3 to mean; *la'allahū yuslim:* "maybe that he accepts Islam." (Ibn Jarīr) And Allah's own words: "What would make you know that he might reform, or heed the admonition, and admonishing might profit him?" and "The one who comes to you running, of his own will, and fears, from him you turn away", point out that by that time he had developed in himself a deep desire to learn the truth; he had come to the Holy Prophet with the belief that he was the only source of guidance and his desire would be satisfied only through him; his apparent state also reflected that if he was given instruction, he would benefit by it.

Thirdly, the names of the people who were sitting in the Holy Prophet's assembly at that time, have been given in different traditions. In this list we find the names of 'Utbah, Shaibah, Abū Jahl, Umayyah bin Khalaf, Ubayy bin Khalaf, who were the bitterest enemies of Islam. This shows that the incident took place in the period when these chiefs were still on meeting terms with the Holy Prophet and their antagonism to Islam had not yet grown so strong as to have stopped their paying visits to him and having dialogues with him off and on. All these arguments indicate that this is one of the very earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

In view of the apparent style with which the discourse opens, one feels that in this Sūrah Allah has expressed His displeasure against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) for his treating the blind man with indifference and attending to the big chiefs exclusively. But when the whole Sūrah is considered objectively, one finds that the displeasure, in fact, has been expressed against the disbelieving Quraish, who because of their arrogant attitude and indifference to the truth, were rejecting with contempt the message of truth being conveyed by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). Then, besides teaching him the correct method of preaching, the error of the method that he was adopting at the start of his mission has also been pointed out. His treating the blind man with neglect and disregard and devoting all his attention to the Quraish chiefs was not for the reason that he regarded the rich as noble and a poor blind man as contemptible, and, God forbid, there was some rudeness in his manner for which Allah reproved him. But, as a matter of fact, when a caller to Truth embarks on his mission of conveying his message to the people, he naturally wants the most influential people of society to accept his message so that his task becomes easy, for even if his invitation spreads among the poor and weak people, it cannot make much difference. Almost the same attitude had the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) also adopted in the beginning, his motive being only sincerity and a desire to promote his mission and not any idea of respect for the big people and hatred for the small people. But Allah made him realize that that was not the correct method of extending invitation to Islam, but from his mission's point of view, every man who was a seeker after truth, was important, even if he was weak, or poor, and every man, who was heedless to the truth, was un-important, even if he occupied a high position in society. Therefore, he should openly proclaim and convey the teachings of Islam to all and sundry, but the people who were really worthy of his attention, were those who were inclined to accept the Truth, and his sublime and noble message was too high to be presented before those haughty people who in their arrogance and vanity thought that they did not stand in need of him but rather he stood in need of them.

This is the theme of vv. 1-16. From verse 17 onward the rebuke directly turns to the disbelievers, who were repudiating the invitation of the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace). In this, first they have been reproved for their attitude which they had adopted against their Creator, Providence and Sustainer. In the end, they have been warned of the dreadful fate that they would meet in consequence of their conduct, on the Day of Resurrection.

سُوْرَةُ عَبَسَ مَكِّيَّةٌ

اٰيَاتُهَا ٤٢ رُكُوْعُهَا ١

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلّٰٓى ۝١ اَنْ جَآءَهُ الْاَعْمٰى ۝٢ وَمَا يُدْرِيْكَ لَعَلَّهٗ يَزَّكّٰٓى ۝٣ اَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ
فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرٰى ۝٤ اَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنٰى ۝٥ فَاَنْتَ لَهٗ تَصَدّٰى ۝٦ وَمَا عَلَيْكَ
اَلَّا يَزَّكّٰى ۝٧ وَاَمَّا مَنْ جَآءَكَ يَسْعٰى ۝٨ وَهُوَ يَخْشٰى ۝٩ فَاَنْتَ عَنْهُ
تَلَهّٰى ۝١٠ كَلَّآ اِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ ۝١١ فَمَنْ شَآءَ ذَكَرَهُ ۝١٢ فِيْ صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ ۝١٣
مَّرْفُوْعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ ۝١٤ بِاَيْدِيْ سَفَرَةٍ ۝١٥ كِرَامٍۢ بَرَرَةٍ ۝١٦ قُتِلَ الْاِنْسَانُ
مَآ اَكْفَرَهٗ ۝١٧ مِنْ اَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهٗ ۝١٨ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ۭ خَلَقَهٗ فَقَدَّرَهٗ ۝١٩
ثُمَّ السَّبِيْلَ يَسَّرَهٗ ۝٢٠ ثُمَّ اَمَاتَهٗ فَاَقْبَرَهٗ ۝٢١ ثُمَّ اِذَا شَآءَ اَنْشَرَهٗ ۝٢٢
كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَآ اَمَرَهٗ ۝٢٣ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْاِنْسَانُ اِلٰى طَعَامِهٖٓ ۝٢٤ اَنَّا صَبَبْنَا
الْمَآءَ صَبًّا ۝٢٥ ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْاَرْضَ شَقًّا ۝٢٦ فَاَنْۢبَتْنَا فِيْهَا حَبًّا ۝٢٧ وَّعِنَبًا وَّ
قَضْبًا ۝٢٨ وَّزَيْتُوْنًا وَّنَخْلًا ۝٢٩ وَّحَدَآئِقَ غُلْبًا ۝٣٠ وَّفَاكِهَةً وَّاَبًّا ۝٣١ مَّتَاعًا
لَّكُمْ وَلِاَنْعَامِكُمْ ۝٣٢ فَاِذَا جَآءَتِ الصَّآخَّةُ ۝٣٣ يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ
اَخِيْهِ ۝٣٤ وَاُمِّهٖ وَاَبِيْهِ ۝٣٥ وَصَاحِبَتِهٖ وَبَنِيْهِ ۝٣٦ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ
يَوْمَئِذٍ شَاْنٌ يُّغْنِيْهِ ۝٣٧ وُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ ۝٣٨ ضَاحِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ ۝٣٩
وَوُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ ۝٤٠ تَرْهَقُهَا قَتَرَةٌ ۝٤١ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْكَفَرَةُ الْفَجَرَةُ ۝٤٢

LXXX

'ABASA

عَبَسَ

Verses: 42 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

He frowned and turned away his face because there came up to him the blind man.[1] And what would make you know that he might reform, or heed the admonition, and admonishing might profit him? As for him who is indifferent, to him you attend, though you would not be responsible if he did not reform. And the one who comes to you running, of his own will, and fears, from him you turn away.[2] By no means![3] This is but an admonition.[4] Let him who wills accept it. It is written in scrolls, which are honoured, exalted, purified,[5] (and which) remain in the hands of noble and virtuous scribes.[7] 1-16

Cursed[8] be man![9] What a perverse disbeliever he is![10] Out of what has Allah created him? Out of a spermdrop.[11] Allah created him, then set him his destiny,[12] then made the way of life easy for him,[13] then caused him to die, and brought him to the grave.[14] Then whenever He wills, He will raise him up again to life.[15] Nay, but he has not fulfilled the duty that Allah had assigned to him.[16] Then let man look at his food.[17] We poured down water in abundance,[18] then cleft the earth asunder,[19] then caused to grow in it corns and grapes and vegetables and olives and dates and lush gardens and fruits of every kind and fodder as a means of sustenance for you and your cattle.[20] 17-32

At last, when the deafening blast is sounded,[21]— that Day shall man flee from his brother and his mother and his father and his wife and his children.[22] Each one of them, on that Day, shall have enough to occupy him so as to make him heedless of others.[23] Some faces on that Day shall be shining—rejoicing and joyful. And some faces on that Day shall be dusty, and darkness shall be covering them. These will be the 33-42

disbelievers and the sinners.

---

1. The style of this first sentence is elegant and subtle. Although in the following sentences the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been directly addressed, which by itself shows that the act of frowning and turning aside had issued forth from him, the discourse has been opened in a manner as though it was not he but some one else who had so acted. By this style the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), by a subtle method, has been made to realize that it was an act unseemly for him. Had somebody familiar with his high morals witnessed it, he would have thought that it was not he but some other person who had behaved in that manner.

The blind man referred to here implies, as we have explained in the Introduction, the well-known Companion, Hadrat Ibn Umm Maktūm. Hāfiz Ibn 'Abdul Barr in *Al-Isti'āb* and Hāfiz Ibn Hajar in *Al-Ishāb* have stated that he was a first cousin of the Holy Prophet's wife, Hadrat Khadijah. His mother, Umm Maktūm, and Hadrat Khadijah's father, Khuwailid, were sister and brother to each other. After one knows his relationship with the Holy Prophet, there remains no room for the doubt that he had turned away from him regarding him as a poor man having a low station in life, and attended to the high-placed people, for he was the Holy Prophet's brother-in-law and a man of noble birth. The reason why the Holy Prophet had shown disregard for him is indicated by the word *a'mā* (blind man), which Allah Himself has used as the cause of the Holy Prophet's inattention. That is, the Holy Prophet thought that even if a single man from among the people whom he was trying to bring to the right path, listened to him and was rightly guided, he could become a powerful means of strengthening Islam. On the contrary, Ibn Umm Maktūm was a blind man, who could not prove to be so useful for Islam because of his disability as could one of the Quraish elders on becoming a Muslim. Therefore, he should not interrupt the conversation at that time; whatever he wanted to ask or learn, he could ask or learn at some later time.

2. This is the real point which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had overlooked in the preaching of Islam on that occasion, and for teaching him the same Allah first reproved him on his treatment of Ibn Umm Maktūm, and then told him what really deserved to occupy his attention as preacher of the Truth and what did not. There is a man whose apparent state clearly shows that he is a *seeker* after truth: he fears lest he should follow falsehood and invite Allah's wrath; therefore, he comes all the way in search of the knowledge of the true faith. There is another man, whose attitude clearly reflects that he has no desire for the truth; rather on the contrary, he regards himself as self-sufficient, having no desire to be guided to the right way. Between these two kinds of men one should not see whose becoming a Muslim would be of greater use for Islam and whose becoming a

believer could not be of any use in its propagation. But one should see as to who was inclined to accept the guidance and reform himself, and who was least interested in this precious bargain. The first kind of man, whether he is blind, lame, crippled, or an indigent mendicant, who might apparently seem incapable of rendering any useful service in the propagation of Islam, is in any case a valuable man for the preacher to the Truth. To him therefore he should attend, for the real object of this invitation is to reform the people, and the apparent state of the person shows that if he was instructed he would accept guidance. As for the other kind of man, the preacher has no need to pursue him, no matter how influential he is in society. For his attitude and conduct openly proclaim that he has no desire for reform; therefore, any effort made to reform him would be mere waste of time. If he has no desire to reform himself, he may not; the loss would be his, the preacher would not at all be accountable for it.

3. That is, "You should never do so: do not give undue importance to those who have forgotten God and become proud of their high worldly position. The teaching of Islam is not such that it should be presented solicitously before him who spurns it, nor should a man like you try to invite these arrogant people to Islam in a way as may cause them the misunderstanding that you have a selfish motive connected with them, and that your mission would succeed only if they believed, otherwise not, whereas the fact is that the Truth is as self-sufficient of them as they are of the Truth."

4. The allusion is to the Qur'ān.

5. "Purified": free from all kinds of mixtures of false ideas and thoughts, and presenting nothing but the pure Truth. There is no tinge whatever in these scrolls of the impurities with which the other religious books of the world have been polluted. They have been kept pure and secure from all kinds of human speculation and evil suggestions.

6. This refers to the angels who were writing the scrolls of the Qur'ān under the direct guidance of Allah, were guarding them and conveying them intact to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). Two words have been used to qualify them: *karīm*, i.e. noble, and *barr*, i.e. virtuous. The first word is meant to say that they are so honoured and noble that it is not possible that such exalted beings would commit even the slightest dishonesty in the trust reposed in them. The second word has been used to tell that they carry out the responsibility entrusted to them of writing down the scrolls, guarding them and conveying them to the Messenger with perfect honesty and integrity.

7. If the context in which these verses occur, is considered deeply, it becomes obvious that here the Qur'ān has not been praised for the sake of its

greatness and glory but to tell the arrogant people, who were repudiating its message with contempt, plainly: "The glorious Qur'ān is too holy and exalted a Book to be presented before you humbly with the request that you may kindly accept it if you so please. For it does not stand in need of you as you stand in need of it. If you really seek your well-being, you should clear your head of the evil thoughts and submit to its message humbly; otherwise you are not so self-sufficient of this Book as this Book is self-sufficient of you. Your treating it with scorn and contempt will not affect its glory and greatness at all, rather your own pride and arrogance will be ruined on account of it."

8. From here the rebuke turns directly against the disbelievers, who were treating the message of the Truth with scant attention. Before this, from the beginning of the Sūrah to verse 16, the address though apparently directed to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), was actually meant to reprimand the disbelievers, as if to say: "O Prophet, why are you ignoring a seeker after truth and paying all your attention to those who are worthless from your mission's point of view? they do not deserve that a great Prophet like you should present a sublime thing like the Qur'ān before them."

9. At all such places in the Qur'ān, "man" does not imply every individual of the human race but the people whose evil traits of character are intended to be censured. At some places the word "man" is used because the evil traits are found in most of human beings, and at others for the reason that if the particular people are pin-pointed for censure, it engenders stubbornness. Therefore, admonition is given in general terms so as to be more effective. (For further explanation, see E.N. 65 of Hā Mīm As-Sajdah, E.N. 75 of Ash-Shūrā).

10. Another meaning also can be: "What caused him to be inclined to *kufr*?" Or, in other words: "On what strength does he commit *kufr?" Kufr?"* here means denial of the Truth as well as ingratitude for the favours of one's benefactor and also rebellious attitude against one's Creator, Providence and Master.

11. That is, let him first consider out of what he was created, where he was nourished and developed, by what way he came into the world, and from what helpless state he began his life in the world. Why does he forget his such beginning and becomes involved in conceit and haughtiness and why does he feel so puffed up as to resist his Creator and stand before Him as an adversary? (The same theme has been expressed in Yā Sīn 77-78 above).

12. That is, he was yet developing and taking shape in his mother's womb when his destiny was set for him. It was determined what would be his sex, his colour, his size, the extent and volume of his body, the extent to which his limbs would be sound or unsound, his appearance and voice, the degree of physical

strength and mental endowments, what would be the land, the family, the conditions and environments in which he would take birth, develop and be moulded into a specific person, what would be the hereditary influences and effects of the surroundings and the role and impact of his own self in the make-up of his personality, the part he would play in his life of the world, and how long he would be allowed to function on the earth. He cannot swerve even a hair-breadth from his destiny, nor can effect the slightest alteration in it. Then, how strange is his daring and stubbornness! He commits disbelief of the Creator before Whose destiny he is so helpless and powerless!

13. That is, He created all those means and provisions in the world, which he could utilize, otherwise all the capabilities of his body and mind would have remained useless, had not the Creator provided the means and created the possibilities on the earth to employ them. Furthermore, the Creator also gave him the opportunity to choose and adopt for himself whichever of the ways, good or evil, of gratitude or ingratitude, of obedience or disobedience, that he pleased. He opened up both the ways before him and made each way smooth and easy so that he could follow any way that he liked.

14. That is, not only in the matter of birth and destiny but in the matter of death also he is absolutely helpless before his Creator. Neither he can take birth by his choice nor die by his choice, nor can defer his death even by a moment. He dies precisely at the appointed time, in the appointed place, under the appointed circumstances that have been decreed for his death, and he is deposited in the type of grave destined for him whether it is the belly of the earth, the depths of the sea, a bonfire, or the stomach of a beast. Nothing to say of the man, even the whole world together cannot change the Creator's decree in respect of any person.

15. That is, he does not either have the power to refuse to rise up when the Creator may will to resurrect him after death. When he was first created, he was not consulted: he was not asked whether he wanted to be created or not. Even if he had refused, he would have been created. Likewise, his resurrection also is not dependent upon his will and assent that he may rise from death if he so likes, or refuse to rise if he does not like. In this matter also he is absolutely helpless before the Creator's will. Whenever He wills He will resurrect him, and he will have to rise whether he likes it or not.

16. "Duty" implies the duty that Allah has enjoined on every man in the form of natural guidance as well as the duty to which man's own existence and every particle of the universe, from the earth to the heavens, and every manifestation of Divine power are pointing, and that duty also which Allah has conveyed in every age through His Prophets and Books and disseminated through the righteous people of every period. (For explanation, see E.N. 5 of Sūrah Ad-

Dahr). In the present context the object is to express the meaning that on the basis of the truths stated in the above verses, it was man's duty to have obeyed his Creator, but, contrary to this, he adopted the way of disobedience and did not fulfil the demand of his being His creature.

17. That is, let him consider the food, which he regards as an ordinary thing, how it is created. Had God not provided the means for it, it was not in the power of man himself to have created the food on the earth in any way.

18. This refers to rainwater: water vapours are raised in vast quantities from the oceans by the heat of the sun: then they are turned into thick clouds; then the winds blow and spread them over different parts of the earth; then because of the coolness in the upper atmosphere the vapours turn back to water and fall as rain in every area in a particular measure. The water not only falls as rain directly on the earth but also collects underground in the shape of wells and fountains, flows in the form of rivers and streams, freezes on the mountains as snow and melts and flows into rivers in other seasons as well than the rainy season. Has man himself made all these arrangements? Had his Creator not arranged this for his sustenance, could man survive on the earth ?

19. "Cleaving the earth asunder" implies cleaving it in a way that the seeds, or seed-stones, or vegetable seedlings that man sows or plants in it, or which are deposited in it by winds or birds, or by some other means, should sprout up. Man can do nothing more than to dig the soil, or plough it, and bury in it the seeds that God has already created. Beyond this everything is done by God. It is He Who has created the seeds of countless species of vegetable; it is He Who has endowed these seeds with the quality that when they are sown in the soil, they should sprout up and from every seed vegetable of its own particular species should grow. Again it is He Who has created in the earth the capability that in combination with water it should break open the seeds and develop and nourish every species of vegetable with the kind of food suitable for it. Had God not created the seeds with these qualities and the upper layers of the earth with these capabilities, man could not by himself have arranged any kind of food on the earth.

20. That is, "A means of sustenance not only for you but also for those animals from which you obtain items of food like meat, fat, milk, butter, etc. and which perform countless other services also for your living. You benefit by all this and yet you disbelieve in God Whose provisions sustain you."

21. The final terrible sounding of the Trumpet at which all dead men shall be ressurected to life.

22. A theme closely resembling this has already occurred in Al-Ma'ārij: 10-14 above. "Fleeing" may also mean that when he sees those nearest and dearest

to him in the world, involved in distress, instead of rushing forth to help them, he will run away from them lest they should call out to him for help; and it may also mean that when they see the evil consequences of committing sin for the sake of one another and misleading one another, fearless of God and heedless of the Hereafter, in the world, each one would flee from the other lest the other should hold him responsible for his deviation and sin. Brother will fear brother, children their parents, husband his wife, and parents their children lest they should become witnesses in the case against them.

23. A tradition has been reported in the Hadīth by different methods and through different channels, saying that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "On the Day of Resurrection all men will rise up naked." One of his wives (according to some reporters, Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, according to others, Hadrat Saudah, or a woman) asked in bewilderment: "O Messenger of Allah, shall we (women) appear naked on that Day before the people ?" The Holy prophet recited this very verse and explained that on that Day each one will have enough of his own troubles to occupy him, and will be wholly unmindful of others. (Nasa'i, Tirmidhi, Ibn Abī Hātim, Ibn Jarīr, Tabarānī Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī, Hākim).



LXXXI

AT-TAKWĪR

التَّكوِير

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LXXXI

AT-TAKWĪR

التَّكوِير

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the word *kuwwirat* in the first verse. *Kuwwirat* is passive voice from *takwīr* in the past tense, and means "that which is folded up", thereby implying that it is a Sūrah in which the "folding up has been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter and the style clearly show that it is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

It has two themes: the Hereafter and the institution of Apostleship.

In the first six verses the first stage of the Resurrection has been mentioned when the sun will lose its light, the stars will scatter, the mountains will be uprooted and will disperse, the people will become heedless of their dearest possessions, the beasts of the jungle will be stupefied and will gather together, and the seas will boil up. Then in the next seven verses the second stage has been described when the souls will be re-united with the bodies, the records will be laid open, the people will be called to account for their crimes, the heavens will be unveiled, and Hell and Heaven will be brought into full view. After depicting the Hereafter thus, man has been left to ponder his own self and deeds saying: "Then each man shall himself know what he has brought with him."

After this the theme of Apostleship has been taken up. In this the people of Makkah have been addressed as if to say: "Whatever Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is presenting before you, is not the bragging of a madman, nor an evil suggestion inspired by Satan, but the word of a noble, exalted and trustworthy messenger sent by God, whom Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has seen with his own eyes in the bright horizon of the clear sky in broad day light. "Whither then are you going having turned away from this teaching?"

سُوْرَةُ التَّكْوِيْر ٨١ — مَكِّيَّة — ١ رُكُوْعًا — ٢٩ اٰيَاتُهَا

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

اِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ ۝١ وَاِذَا النُّجُوْمُ انْكَدَرَتْ ۝٢ وَاِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ ۝٣ وَاِذَا
الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ ۝٤ وَاِذَا الْوُحُوْشُ حُشِرَتْ ۝٥ وَاِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ ۝٦ وَاِذَا
النُّفُوْسُ زُوِّجَتْ ۝٧ وَاِذَا الْمَوْءٗدَةُ سُئِلَتْ ۝٨ بِاَيِّ ذَنْۢبٍ قُتِلَتْ ۝٩ وَاِذَا
الصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ ۝١٠ وَاِذَا السَّمَآءُ كُشِطَتْ ۝١١ وَاِذَا الْجَحِيْمُ سُعِّرَتْ ۝١٢ وَاِذَا
الْجَنَّةُ اُزْلِفَتْ ۝١٣ عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّآ اَحْضَرَتْ ۝١٤ فَلَآ اُقْسِمُ بِالْخُنَّسِ ۝١٥
الْجَوَارِ الْكُنَّسِ ۝١٦ وَالَّيْلِ اِذَا عَسْعَسَ ۝١٧ وَالصُّبْحِ اِذَا تَنَفَّسَ ۝١٨ اِنَّهٗ
لَقَوْلُ رَسُوْلٍ كَرِيْمٍ ۝١٩ ذِيْ قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِيْنٍ ۝٢٠ مُّطَاعٍ ثَمَّ
اَمِيْنٍ ۝٢١ وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُوْنٍ ۝٢٢ وَلَقَدْ رَاٰهُ بِالْاُفُقِ الْمُبِيْنِ ۝٢٣ وَمَا هُوَ
عَلَى الْغَيْبِ بِضَنِيْنٍ ۝٢٤ وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَيْطٰنٍ رَّجِيْمٍ ۝٢٥ فَاَيْنَ تَذْهَبُوْنَ ۝٢٦
اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝٢٧ لِمَنْ شَآءَ مِنْكُمْ اَنْ يَّسْتَقِيْمَ ۝٢٨ وَمَا تَشَآءُوْنَ
اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝٢٩

LXXXI

AT-TAKWĪR

التّكوير

Verses: 29 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

When the sun is folded up,[1] and when the stars scatter,[2] and when the mountains are set in motion,[3] and when the ten-month pregnant she-camels are left untended,[4] and when the beasts are gathered together[5] and when the oceans are set ablaze,[6] and when[7] the souls are re-united (with the bodies),[8] and when the infant girl, buried alive, is asked for what crime she was slain,[9] and when the records are unfolded, and when the veil of heaven is removed,[10] and when Hell is set blazing, and when Paradise is brought near,[11] then each person shall know what he has brought with him. 1-14

But not so![12] I swear by the retreating and hiding stars, and the night when it departed, and the dawn when it breathed up,[13] that this indeed is the Word of a noble Messenger,[14] who has great power,[15] and has high ranks with the Owner of the Throne: there he is obeyed[16] and held as trustworthy.[17] And (O people of Makkah), your Companion[18] is not mad. He has seen that Messenger on the clear horizon;[19] and he is not stingy in the matter of conveying the (knowledge of the) unseen (to the people).[20] And this is not the word of an accursed satan.[21] Whither then are you going? This is an Admonition to all the people of the world, to each one of you, who wishes to follow the Straight Path;[22] but your willing is of no avail unless Allah, Lord of the worlds, wills so.[23] 15-29

---

1. This is a matchless metaphor for causing the sun to lose its light. *Takwīr* means to fold up; hence *takwīr al-'amāmah* for folding up the turban on the head. Here, the light which radiates from the sun and spreads throughout the solar system has been likened to the turban and it has been said that on the

Resurrection Day the turban will be folded up about the sun and its radiation will fade.

2. That is, when the force which is keeping them in their orbits and positions is loosened and all the stars and planets will scatter in the universe. The word *inkidār* also indicates that they will not only scatter away but will also grow dark.

3. In other words, the earth also will lose its force of gravity because of which the mountains have weight and are firmly set in the earth. Thus, when there is no more gravity the mountains will be uprooted from their places and becoming weightless will start moving and flying as the clouds move in the atmosphere.

4 This was by far the best way of giving an idea of the severities and horrors of Resurrection to the Arabs. Before the buses and trucks of the present day there was nothing more precious for the Arabs than the she-camel just about to give birth to her young. In this state she was most sedulously looked after and cared for, so that she is not lost, stolen, or harmed in any way. The people's becoming heedless of such she-camels, in fact, meant that at that time they would be so stunned as to become unmindful of their most precious possessions.

5. When a general calamity befalls the world, all kinds of beasts and animals gather together in one place. then neither the snake bites, nor the tiger kills and devours.

6. The word *sujjirat* as used in the original in passive voice from *tasjīr* in the past tense. *Tasjīr* means to kindle fire in the oven. Apparently it seems strange that on the Resurrection Day fire would blaze up in the oceans. But if the truth about water is kept in view, nothing would seem strange. It is a miracle of God that He combined oxygen and hydrogen, one of which helps kindle the fire and the other gets kindled of itself and by the combination of both He created a substance like water which is used to put out fire. A simple manifestation of Allah's power is enough to change this composition of water so that the two gases are separated and begin to burn and help cause a blaze, which is their basic characteristic.

7. From here begins mention of the second stage of Resurrection .

8. That is, men will be resurrected precisely in the state as they lived in the world before death with body and soul together

9. The style of this verse reflects an intensity of rage and fury inconceivable in common life. The parents who buried their daughters alive, would be so contemptible in the sight of Allah that they would not be asked: "Why did you kill the innocent infant?" But disregarding them the innocent girl will be asked: "For what crime were you slain?" And she will tell her story how cruelly

she had been treated by her barbarous parents and buried alive. Besides, two vast themes have been compressed into this brief verse, which though not expressed in words, are reflected by its style and tenor. First that in it the Arabs have been made to realize what depths of moral depravity they have touched because of their ignorance in that they buried their own children alive; yet they insist that they would persist in the same ignorance and would not accept the reform that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) was trying to bring about in their corrupted society. Second, that an express argument has been given in it of the necessity and inevitability of the Hereafter. The case of the infant girl who was buried alive, should be decided and settled justly at some time, and there should necessarily be a time when the cruel people who committed this heinous crime, should be called to account for it, for there was none in the world to hear the cries of complaint raised by the poor soul. This act was looked upon with approval by the depraved society; neither the parents felt any remorse for it, nor anybody in the family censured them, nor the society took any notice of it. Then, should this monstrosity remain wholly unpunished in the Kingdom of God?

This barbaric custom of burying the female infants alive had become widespread in ancient Arabia for different reasons. One reason was economic hardship because of which the people wanted to have fewer dependents so that they should not have to bear the burden of bringing up many children. Male offspring were brought up in the hope that they would later help in earning a living, but the female offspring were killed for the fear that they would have to be reared till they matured and then given away in marriage. Second, the widespread chaos because of which the male children were brought up in order to have more and more helpers and supporters; but daughters were killed because in tribal wars they had to be protected instead of being useful in any way for defence. Third, another aspect of the common chaos also was that when the hostile tribes raided each other and captured girls they would either keep them as slave-girls or sell them to others. For these reasons the practice that had become common in Arabia was that at childbirth a pit was kept dug out ready for use by the woman so that if a girl was born she was immediately cast into it and buried alive. And if sometimes the mother was not inclined to act thus, or the people of the family disapproved of it, the father would rear her for some time half-heartedly, and then finding time would take her to the desert to be buried alive. This tyranny and hard-heartedness was once described by a person before the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) himself. According to a Hadith related in the first chapter of Sunan Dārimī, a man came to the Holy Prophet and related this incident of his pre-Islamic days of ignorance: "I had a daughter who was much attached to me. When I called her, she would come running to me. One day I called her and took her out with me. On the way we came across a well. Holding her by the hand I pushed her into the

well. Her last words that I heard were: Oh father, oh father!!" Hearing this the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) wept and tears started falling from his eyes One of those present on the occasion said: O man, you have grieved the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet said: Do not stop him, let him question about what he feels so strongly now. Then the Holy Prophet asked him to narrate his story once again. When he narrated it again the Holy Prophet wept so bitterly that his beard became wet with tears. Then he said to the man: "Allah has forgiven that you did in the days of ignorance: now turn to Him in repentance."

It is not correct to think that the people of Arabia had no feeling of the baseness of this hideous, inhuman act. Obviously, no society, however corrupted it may be, can be utterly devoid of the feeling that such tyrannical acts are evil. That is why the Holy Qur'ān has not dwelt upon the vileness of this act, but has only referred to it in awe-inspiring words to the effect: "A time will come when the girl who was buried alive, will be asked for what crime she was slain?" The history of Arabia also shows that many people in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance had a feeling that the practice was vile and wicked. According to Tabarānī, Sa'sa'ah bin Nājiyah al-Mujāshi'ī, grandfather of the poet, Farazdaq, said to the Holy Prophet: "O Messenger of Allah, during the days of ignorance I have done some good works also among which one is that I saved 360 girls from being buried alive: I gave two camels each as ransom to save their lives. Shall I get any reward for this?" The Holy Prophet replied; "Yes, there is a reward for you, and it is this that Allah has blessed you with Islam."

As a matter of fact, a great blessing of the blessings of Islam is that it not only did put an end to this inhuman practice in Arabia but even wiped out the concept that the birth of a daughter was in any way a calamity, which should be endured unwillingly. On the contrary, Islam taught that bringing up daughters, giving them good education and enabling them to become good housewives, is an act of great merit and virtue. The way the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) changed the common concept of the people in respect of girls can be judged from his many sayings which have been reported in the Hadīth. As for example, we reproduce some of these below:

"The person who is put to a test because of the birth of the daughters and then he treats them generously, they will become a means of rescue for him from Hell." (Bukhāri, Muslim).

"The one who brought up two girls till they attained their maturity, will appear along with me on the Resurrection Day ... Saying this the Holy Prophet jointed and raised his fingers. (Muslim).

"The one who brought up three daughters, or sisters, taught then good manners and treated them with kindness until they became self-sufficient. Allah will make Paradise obligatory for him. A man asked: what about two, O Messenger of Allah? The Holy Prophet replied: the same for two." Ibn 'Abbâs, the reporter of the Hadîth, says: "Had the people at that time asked in respect of one daughter, the Holy Prophet would have also given the same reply about her." (Sharh as-Sunnh).

"The one who has a daughter born to him and he does not bury her alive, nor keeps her in disgrace, nor prefers his son to her, Allah will admit him to Paradise." (Abū Da'ūd).

"The one who has three daughters born to him, and he is patient over them, and clothes them well according to his means, they will become a means of rescue for him from Hell." (Bukhārī, Al-Adab al-Mufrad, Ibn Mājah).

"The Muslim who has two daughters and he looks after them well, they will lead him to Paradise." (Bukhārī: Al-Adab al-Mufrad).

The Holy Prophet said to Surâqah bin Ju'sham: "Should I tell you what is the greatest charity (or said: one of the greatest charities)? He said: Kindly do tell, O Messenger of Allah. The Holy Prophet said: Your daughter who (after being divorced or widowed) returns to you and should have no other bread-winner." (Ibn Mājah, Bukhārī Al-Adab al-Mufrad).

This is the teaching which completely changed the viewpoint of the people about girls not only in Arabia but among all the nations of the world, which later become blessed with Islam.

10. That is, everything which is hidden from view now will become visible. Now one can only see empty space, or the clouds, hanging dust, the moon, the sun or stars, but at that time the Kingdom of God will appear in full view before the people, without any veil in between, in its true reality.

11. That is, in the Plain of Resurrection, when the hearing of the cases of the people will be in progress, the blazing fire of Hell also will be in full view, and Paradise also with all its blessings will be visible to all, so that the wicked should know what they are being deprived of and where they are going to be cast, and the righteous as well should know what they are being saved from and with what being blessed and honoured.

12. That is, "You are not correct that what is being presented in the Qur'ān is the bragging of an insane person, or the evil suggestion of a devil."

13. That for which the oath has been sworn, has been stated in the following verses. The oath means: "Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and

blessings) has not seen a vision in darkness, but when the stars had disappeared, the night had departed and the bright morning had appeared, he had seen the Angel of God in the open sky. Therefore, what he tells you is based on his own personal observation and on the experience that he had in full senses in the full light of day."

14. "A noble messenger": the Angel who brought down Revelation, as becomes explicit from the following verses. "The word of a noble messenger" does not mean that the Qur'ān is the word of the Angel himself, but, as the context shows, of Him Who appointed him a messenger. In Al-Hāāqqah: 40, likewise, the Qur'ān has been called the word of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), and there too it does not mean that it is the Holy Prophet's own composition, but describing it as "the word of an honorable messenger", it has been made clear that the Holy Prophet is presenting it in his capacity as the Messenger of God and not as Muhammad bin 'Abdullah. At both places, the Word has been attributed to the Angel and to Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) on the ground that the message of Allah was being delivered to Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) by the Angel and to the people by Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). (For further explanation, see E.N. 22 of Al-Hāāqqah).

15. Sūrah An-Najm: 4-5, deals with the same theme, thus "It is but a Revelation which is sent down to him. One, mighty in power, has taught him." As to what is implied by the mighty powers of the Angel Gabriel (peace be upon him) is ambiguous. In any case it at least shows that he is distinguished even among the angels because of his extraordinary powers. In Muslim (kitāb- al-Imān) Hadrat 'Ā'ishah has reported the Holy Prophet's saying to the effect: "I have twice seen Gabriel in his real shape and form: his glorious being was encompassing the whole space between the earth and the heavens." According to the tradition reported from Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd in Bukhāri, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Musnad Ahmad, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) had seen Gabriel with his six hundred wings. From this one can have an idea of his mighty powers.

16. That is, he is the chief of the angels and all angels work under his command.

17. That is, he is not one who would tamper with Divine Revelation, but is so trustworthy that he conveys intact whatever he receives from God.

18. "Your Companion": the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace). Here, making mention of the Holy Prophet as the companion of the people of Makkah, they have been made to realize that the Holy Prophet was no stranger for them. He was not an outsider but a man of their own clan and tribe; he had lived his whole life among them; even their children knew that he was a very wise

man. They should not be so shameless as to call such a man a mad man. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 2, 3 of An-Najm).

19. In An-Najm: 7-9, this observation of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been described in greater detail. (For explanation, see E.N.'s 7, 8 of An-Najm).

20. That is, "The Holy Messenger of Allah does not conceal anything from you. Whatever of the unseen realities are made known to him by Allah, whether they relate to the essence and attributes of Allah, the angels, life-after-death and Resurrection, or to the Hereafter, Heaven and Hell, he conveys everything to you without change.

21. That is, "You are wrong in thinking that some satan comes and whispers these words into the ear of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). It does not suit Satan that he should divert man from polytheism, idol-worship, atheism and sin and turn him to God-worship and Tauhid, make man realize that he should live a life of responsibility and accountability to God instead of living an irresponsible, care-free life, should forbid man to adopt practices of ignorance, injustice, immorality and wickedness and lead him to a clean life of justice, piety and high morals." (For further explanation, see Ash-Shua'ra': 210-212 along with E.N.'s 130 to 133, and vv. 221-223 along with E.N.'s 140,141).

22. In other words, although this is an Admonition for all mankind, only such a person can benefit by it, who is himself desirous of adopting piety and righteousness. Man's being a seeker after truth and a lover of right is the foremost condition of his gaining any benefit from it.

23. This theme has already occurred in Al-Muddaththir: 56 and Ad-Dahr: 20 above. For explanation, see E.N. 41 of Al-Muddaththir.



LXXXII

AL-INFITĀR

الانفطار

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXXII
AL-INFIṬĀR

الانفطار

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the word *infatarat* in verse. *Infitār* is an infinitive which means to split asunder, thereby implying that it is the Sūrah in which the splitting asunder of the sky has been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

This Sūrah and the Sūrah At-Takwīr closely resemble each other in their subject-matter. This shows that both were sent down in about the same period.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is the Hereafter. According to a tradition related in Musnad Aḥmad Tirmidhi, Ibn-Mundhir, Ṭabarānī, Ḥākim and Ibn Mardūyah, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) said "The one who wants that he should see the Resurrection Day as one would see it with one's eyes, should read Sūrah. At-Takwir, Sūrah Al-Infiṭār and Sūrah Al-Inshiqaq"

In this Sūrah first the Resurrection Day has been described and it is said that when it occurs, every person will see whatever he has done in the world. After this, man has been asked to ponder the question: "O man, what has deluded you into thinking that the God, who brought you into being and by Whose favour and bounty you possess the finest body, limbs and features among all creatures, is only bountiful and not just? His being bountiful and generous does not mean that you should become fearless of His justice " Then, man has been warned, so as to say "Do not remain involved in any misunderstanding. Your complete record is being prepared. There are trustworthy writers who are writing down whatever you do." In conclusion it has been forcefully stated that the Day of Resurrection will surely take place when the righteous shall enjoy every kind of bliss in Paradise and the wicked shall be punished in Hell. On that Day no one shall avail anyone anything. All powers of judgement shall be with Allah.



إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انفَطَرَتْ ﴿١﴾ وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انتَثَرَتْ ﴿٢﴾ وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِّرَتْ ﴿٣﴾
وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ ﴿٤﴾ عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ ﴿٥﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنسَانُ
مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ ﴿٦﴾ الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَلَكَ ﴿٧﴾ فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ
مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ ﴿٨﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ تُكَذِّبُونَ بِالدِّينِ ﴿٩﴾ وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ ﴿١٠﴾
كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ ﴿١١﴾ يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ وَإِنَّ
الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ ﴿١٤﴾ يَصْلَوْنَهَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٥﴾ وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ ﴿١٦﴾
وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ مَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ﴿١٨﴾ يَوْمَ لَا
تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِّنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا ۖ وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلَّهِ ﴿١٩﴾

LXXXII
AL-INFITĀR

الانفطار

Verses: 19 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

When the heaven splits asunder, and when the stars scatter, and when the seas are torn apart,[1] and when the graves are laid open,[2] then every person shall know all his works, the former and the latter.[3] 11-5

O man, what has beguiled you concerning your Lord, the gracious, Who created you, fashioned you, prōportioned you, and put you together in whatever form He pleased?[4] Indeed not![5] But (the fact is that) you (O men) deny (the meting out of) rewards and punishments,[6] although watchers have been appointed over you, 6-12

honourable scribes, who know whatever you do.[7]

13-19 Surely the righteous shall be in bliss, and the wicked shall indeed go to Hell: they shall enter it on the Day of Recompense, and shall never be able to be absent from it. And what do you know what the Day of Recompense is? Yes, what do you know what the Day of Recompense is? It is a Day when no one shall have the power to do anything for another[8]. Judgement on that Day shall wholly rest with Allah.

---

1. In Sūrah At-Takwīr it has been said: "When the oceans are set ablaze," and here: "When the oceans are torn apart." When the two verses are read together, and this fact also is kept in view that even according to the Qur'ān a terrible earthquake will occur on the Resurrection Day, which will shake up the entire earth all at once, the state of the splitting of the oceans and their being set ablaze seems to be as follows: first, because of the terrible convulsion, the bottom of the oceans will split asunder and their water will start sinking into the interior of the earth where an intensely hot lava is constantly boiling up. Coming into contact with the lava, water will dissolve into its two constituent parts, oxygen which helps combustion, and hydrogen, which is itself combustible. Thus, in the process of dissolution and combustion, a chain reaction will start, which will set all the oceans of the world ablaze. This is our conjecture, the correct knowledge is only with Allah.

2. In the first three verses, the first stage of the Resurrection has been mentioned, and in this verse the second stage is being described. "Opening of the graves" implies resurrection of the dead men.

3. The words *mā qaddamat wa akhkharat* can have several meanings and all are implied here: (1) *Mā qaddamat* is the good or evil act which man has sent forward, and *mā akhkharat* is what he refrained from doing. Thus, these Arabic words correspond to the acts of commission and omission in one's life.

(2) *Mā qaddamat* is what one did earlier and *mā akhkharat* what one did later; *i.e.* the whole life-work of man will appear before him date-wise and in proper sequence

(3) Whatever good and evil deeds a man did in his life is *mā qaddamat* and whatever effects and influences of his acts he left behind for human society is *mā akhkharat*.

4 That is, "In the first place, the bounty and favour of your Beneficent Sustainer required that you should have acknowledged his bounties and become an obedient servant and should have felt shy of disobeying Him, but you were

deluded into thinking that you have become whatever you are by your own effort, and you never thought that you should acknowledge that favour of Him Who gave you life. Secondly, it is your Lord's bounty and kindness that you can freely do whatever you like in the world and it never so happens that whenever you happen to commit an error, He should punish you with paralysis, or blind your eyes, or cause lightning to strike you. But you took His bountifulness for weakness and were beguiled into thinking that the Kingdom of your God was devoid of justice "

5 That is, "There is no reasonable ground for you to be deluded. Your own physical existence itself tells that you did not come into being by yourself; your parents also did not make you. Man also did not come about as a result of the elements combining together by themselves accidentally; but a Wise and Powerful God has composed you into this perfect human shape and form. There are other kinds of animals in the world compared with which your excellent form and structure and your superior powers and faculties stand out in sharp contrast. Reason demanded that in view of all this you should have submitted gratefully and should never have dared commit disobedience of your beneficent Sustainer. You also know that your Lord and Sustainer is not only Compassionate and Bountiful but Almighty and Omnipotent as well. When an earthquake, cyclone or flood occurs by His Command, all your devices and measures fail to be effective. You also know that your Lord and Sustainer is not ignorant and foolish but Wise and knowing, and the necessary demand of wisdom and knowledge is that whoever is given intellect should also be held responsible for his acts; whoever is given powers should also be held accountable as to how he used those powers; and whoever is given the choice to do good or evil on his own responsibility, should also be rewarded for his good act and punished for his evil act. All these truths are clearly and plainly known to you; therefore, you cannot say that there exists a reasonable ground for you to be deluded concerning your Lord. Your own nature is sufficient evidence that the beneficence of the Master should never cause the servant to be fearless of Him, and be involved in the misunderstanding that he may do whatever he pleases, no one can harm him in any way.

6 That is, "You have not been deluded and beguiled by any good reason but by your foolish concept that there is going to be no meting out of rewards and punishments after the life of this world. It is this wrong and baseless concept which has made you heedless of God, fearless of His justice and irresponsible in your moral attitude."

7 That is, "whether you deny the meting out of rewards and punishments, belie it, or mock it, the reality cannot change. The reality is that your Lord has not left you to your self in the world, but has appointed over each one of you honest and upright guardians, who are recording objectively and faithfully all your good

and evil acts, and none of your acts is hidden from them, whether you commit it in darkness, or in private, or in far off jungles, or in secret when you are fully satisfied that whatever you have done has remained hidden from human eye. For these guardian angels Allah has used the words *kirām-an kātibīn*, *i.e.* writers who are honorable and noble They are neither attached in personal love with somebody, nor are inimical to anybody, so that they would prepare a fictitious record on the basis of their favouring one man and disfavouring another unduly. They are neither dishonest that without being present on duty they would make wrong entries by themselves; nor are they bribable so that they would take bribes and make false reports in favour of or against somebody. They are far above these moral weaknesses. Therefore, both the good and the bad people should be fully satisfied that each man's good acts will be recorded without any omission, and no one will have an evil act recorded in his account which he has not done. Then the second quality that has been mentioned of these angels is: "They know whatever you do " That is, they are not like the secret, intelligence agencies of the world, from which, despite all their search and scrutiny, many things remain hidden. They are fully aware of everyone's deeds. They accompany every person, at all places, under all conditions, in such a way that he himself does not know that someone is watching him, and they also know with what intention has somebody done a certain thing. Therefore the record prepared by them is a complete record in which nothing has been left un-recorded. About this very thing it has been said in Sūrah Al-Kahf 49: "Woe to us! What sort of a book it is, it has left nothing un-recorded of our doings, small or great. They will see before them everything, whatever they had done."

8. That is, no one there will have the power to save anyone from suffering the consequences of his deeds; no one there will be so influential, strong, or such a favourite with Allah that he should behave stubbornly in the Divine Court and say: "Such and such a one is a close relative or associate of mine; he will have to be forgiven, no matter what evils he might have committed in the world."


L III
AL
MUṬAFFIFIN
المُطَفِّفِين

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LXXXIII

AL-MUTAFFIFIN

الْمُطَفِّفِين

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the very first verse: *Wayl-ul-lil-mutaffifin*

Period of Revelation

The style of the Sūrah and its subject-matter clearly show that it was revealed in the earliest stage at Makkah, when Sūrah after Sūrah was being revealed to impress the doctrine of the Hereafter on the people's minds. This Sūrah was revealed when they had started ridiculing the Muslims and disgracing them publicly in the streets and in

their assemblies. but persecution and manhandling of the Muslims had not yet started. Some commentators regard this as a Madanī Sūrah. This misunderstanding has been caused by a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās according to which when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) arrived in Madīnah, 'the evil of giving short weight and measure was widespread among the people there. Then Allah sent down *Wayl-al-lil-mutaffifīn* and the people began to give full weight and measure. (Nasā'ī,Ibn Mardūyah, Ibn Jarīr,Baihaqī: Shu'ab-al-Imān). But, as we have explained in the Introduction to Sūrah Ad-Dahr, the common practice with the Companions and their successors was that when they found that a verse applied to a certain matter of life, they would say that it had been sent down concerning that particular matter. Therefore, what is proved by the tradition of Ibn 'Abbās is that when after his emigration to Madīnah the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) saw that the evil was widespread among the people there, he recited this Sūrah before them by Allah's Command and this helped them mend their ways.

Theme and Subject-Matter

The theme of this Sūrah too is the Hereafter. In the first six verses the people have been taken to task for the prevalent evil practice in their commercial dealings. When they had to receive their due from others, they demanded that it be given in full, but when they had to measure or weigh for others, they would give less than what was due. Taking this one evil as an example out of countless evils prevalent in society, it has been said that it is an inevitable result of the heedlessness of the Hereafter. Unless the people realized that one day they would have to appear before God and account for each single act they performed in the world, it was not possible that they would adopt piety and righteousness in their daily affairs. Even if a person might practise honesty in some of his less important dealings in view of honesty is the best policy", he would never practise honesty on occasions when dishonesty would seem to be "the best policy". Man can develop true and enduring honesty only when he fears God and sincerely believes in the Hereafter, for then he would regard honesty not merely as "a policy" but as 'a duty' and obligation, and his being constant in it, or otherwise, would not be dependent on its being useful or useless in the world.

Thus, after making explicit the relation between morality and the doctrine of the Hereafter in an effective and impressive way, in vv. 7-

17, it has been said: The deeds of the wicked are already being recorded in the black list of the culprits, and in the Hereafter they will meet with utter ruin. Then in vv. 18-28, the best end of the virtuous has been described and it has been said that their deeds are being recorded in the list of the exalted people, on which are appointed the angels nearest to Allah.

In conclusion, the believers have been consoled and the disbelievers warned, as if to say: "The people who are disgracing and humiliating the believers today, are culprits who, on the Resurrection Day, will meet with a most evil end in consequence of their conduct, and these very believers will feel comforted when they see their fate"

سُوْرَةُ الْمُطَفِّفِيْنَ ٣٦ — مَكِّيَّةٌ (٨٦) — رُكُوْعُهَا ١

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِيْنَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِيْنَ اِذَا اكْتَالُوْا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾ وَاِذَا كَالُوْهُمْ
اَوْ وَّزَنُوْهُمْ يُخْسِرُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ اَلَا يَظُنُّ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَنَّهُمْ مَّبْعُوْثُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٥﴾
يَّوْمَ يَقُوْمُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾ كَلَّآ اِنَّ كِتٰبَ الْفُجَّارِ لَفِيْ سِجِّيْنٍ ﴿٧﴾
وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا سِجِّيْنٌ ﴿٨﴾ كِتٰبٌ مَّرْقُوْمٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَيْلٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾
الَّذِيْنَ يُكَذِّبُوْنَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا يُكَذِّبُ بِهٖٓ اِلَّا كُلُّ مُعْتَدٍ اَثِيْمٍ ﴿١٢﴾
اِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِ اٰيٰتُنَا قَالَ اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ ۜ رَانَ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ
مَّا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ كَلَّآ اِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَّبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّمَحْجُوْبُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ ثُمَّ
اِنَّهُمْ لَصَالُوا الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ يُقَالُ هٰذَا الَّذِيْ كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾
كَلَّآ اِنَّ كِتٰبَ الْاَبْرَارِ لَفِيْ عِلِّيِّيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا عِلِّيُّوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ كِتٰبٌ مَّرْقُوْمٌ ﴿٢٠﴾
يَّشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ اِنَّ الْاَبْرَارَ لَفِيْ نَعِيْمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ عَلَى الْاَرَآئِكِ يَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾
تَعْرِفُ فِيْ وُجُوْهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٢٤﴾ يُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ رَّحِيْقٍ مَّخْتُوْمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ خِتٰمُهٗ
مِسْكٌ ۭ وَفِيْ ذٰلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَمِزَاجُهٗ مِنْ تَسْنِيْمٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ عَيْنًا
يَّشْرَبُ بِهَا الْمُقَرَّبُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اَجْرَمُوْا كَانُوْا مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
يَضْحَكُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَاِذَا مَرُّوْا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامَزُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَاِذَا انْقَلَبُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهِمُ انْقَلَبُوْا
فَكِهِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَاِذَا رَاَوْهُمْ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ لَضَآلُّوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَآ اُرْسِلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ
حٰفِظِيْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ عَلَى الْاَرَآئِكِ
يَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ هَلْ ثُوِّبَ الْكُفَّارُ مَا كَانُوْا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾

LXXXIII

AL-MUṬAFFIFIN

الْمُطَفِّفِين

Veres: 36 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Woe to those who give short weight,[1] who, when they take by measure from others, take it fully, and when they measure or weigh for them, they give them less than what is due.[2] Do they not think that they will be raised up again on a Great Day?[3]--the Day when all mankind shall stand before the Lord of the worlds. 1-6

Indeed not![4] Surely the records of the wicked are in the Prison Register,[5] and what do you know what the Prison Register is? It is a written book. Woe on that Day to the beliers who belie the Day of Recompense, and none belies it but every sinful transgressor. When Our Revelations are recited to him,[6] he says: "These are tales of the ancient times." By no means! But the fact is that their evil deeds have stained their hearts.[7] By no means! Surely on that Day they shall be debarred from their Lord's vision.[8] Then they shall enter Hell. Then it will be said to them, "This is the very thing you used to belie." 7-17

Indeed not![9] Surely the record of the righteous is in the Register of the exalted ones. And what do you know what is the Register of the exalted ones" It is a written book, guarded by the angels nearest to Allah. Surely the righteous shall be in bliss; seated on high couches they shall be looking around. In their faces you shall mark the glow of bliss. They shall be given to drink the choicest, sealed wine whose seal shall be *musk*.[10] Those who wish to excel others, let them endeavour to excel in this. That wine shall have the mixture of *Tasnim*;[11] this is a fountain with the waters of which those nearest to Allah shall drink wine. 18-28

29-36 The culprits used to laugh at the believers in the world. They would wink at one another when they passed by them. When they returned to their kinsfolk they returned jesting,[12] and when they saw them, they would say, "These are the people gone astray",[13] although they had not been sent to be guardians over them.[14] Today the believers are laughing at the disbelievers, as they recline on couches and gaze at them. Have not the disbelievers been duly rewarded for what they used to do?[15]

---

1. In the original the word *mutaffifīn* has been used, which is derived from *tatfīf*, a word used for an inferior and base thing in Arabic. Terminologically, *tatfīf* is used for giving short weight and short measure fraudulently, for the person who acts thus while measuring or weighing, does not defraud another by any substantial amount, but skimps small amounts from what is due to every customer cleverly, and the poor customer does not know of what and of how much he is being deprived by the seller.

2. At several places in the Qur'ān giving of short measure and weight has been condemned and measuring fully and weighing rightly has been stressed. In Sūrah Al-An'ām, it has been enjoined: "You should use a full measure and a just balance. We charge one only with that much responsibility that one can bear." (v. 152). In Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl it has been said: "Give full measure when you measure and weigh with even scales." (v. 35). In Sūrah Ar-Rehmān it has been stressed: Do not upset the balance: weigh with equity and do not give short weight." (vv. 8-9). The people of the Prophet Shu'aib were punished for the reason that the evil of giving short measure and weight had become widespread among them and in spite of his counsel and advice they did not refrain from it.

3. "A Great Day": the Day of Resurrection when all men and jinn will be called to account together in the Divine Court and decisions of vital importance will be made pertaining to rewards and punishments.

4. That is, "These people are wrong in thinking that they will be let off without being called to account when they have committed such and such crimes in the world."

5. The word *sijjīn* in the original is derived from *sijn* (a prison) and the explanation of it that follows shows that it implies the general Register in which the actions and deeds of the people worthy of punishment are being recorded.

6. "Our Revelations": those verses in which news of the Day of Recompense has been given.

7. That is, they have no good reason for regarding the meting out of rewards and punishments as unreal. What has made them say this, is that their hearts have become rusty because of their sins; therefore, a thing which is thoroughly reasonable appears unreal and unreasonable to them. The explanation of this rust as given by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) is as follows: "When a servant commits a sin, it marks a black stain on his heart. If he offers repentance, the stain is washed off, but if he persists in wrongdoing, it spreads over the whole heart." (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhí, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Jarīr, Hākim, Ibn Abi Hātim, Ibn Hibbān and others).

8. That is, these people will remain deprived of the vision of Allah with which the righteous will be blessed. (For further explanation, see E.N. 17 of Al-Qiyāmah).

9. That is, they are wrong in thinking that there is going to be no meting out of rewards and punishments.

10. One meaning of the words *khitāmu-hū misk* is that the vessels containing the wine will carry the seal of musk instead of clay or wax. Accordingly the verse means: This will be the choicest kind of wine, which will be superior to the wine flowing in the canals, and it will be served by the attendants of Paradise in vessels sealed with musk to the dwellers of Paradise. Another meaning also can be: When that wine will pass down the throat, its final effect will be of the flavour of musk. This state is contrary to the wines of the world which give out an offensive smell as soon as the bottle opens and one feels its horrid smell even while drinking and also when it passes down the throat.

11. *"Tasnīm":* height. Thus, *Tasnīm* will be a fountain flowing down from a height.

12. That is, they returned home rejoicing, thinking that they had made fun of such and such a Muslim, had passed evil remarks against him and subjected him to ridicule among the people.

13. That is, they have lost their reason: they have deprived themselves of the gains and enjoyments of the world and have experienced dangers and undergone hardships only for the reason that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has deluded them with the Hereafter, Heaven and Hell. They are giving up whatever is present and here on the false hope that the promise of some Paradise has been held out to them after death, and they are enduring the hardships in the present life only for the reason that they have been threatened with some Hell in the next world.

14. In this brief sentence the mockers and jesters have been given an instructive warning to the effect: "Even if what the Muslims have believed in, is

false, they are not harming you at all. They regard something as true and are accordingly adopting a certain moral attitude for themselves, for their own good. Allah has not appointed you to be keepers over them so that you may be free to criticise and persecute those who are not harming you in any way."

15. There is a subtle satire in this sentence. In the world, the disbelievers used to persecute the believers, thinking it was an act of virtue. In the Hereafter, the believers will be enjoying life in Paradise, and watching the disbelievers being punished in Hell, will say to themselves what a reward they have earned for their acts of virtue!



LXXXIV

AL-IṆSHIQĀQ

الإنشِقاق

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXXIV

AL-INSHIQĀQ

الإنشِقاق

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the word *inshaqqat* in the first verse. *Inshaqqat* is infinitive which means to split asunder, thereby implying that it is the Sūrah in which mention has been made of the splitting asunder of the heavens.

Period of Revelation

This too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah. The internal evidence of its subject-matter indicates that persecution of

the Muslims had not yet started; however, the message of the Qur'ān was being openly repudiated at Makkah and the people were refusing to acknowledge that Resurrection would ever take place when they would have to appear before their God to render an account of their deeds.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is the Resurrection and Hereafter.

In the first five verses not only has the state of Resurrection been described vividly but an argument of its being true and certain also has been given. It has been stated that the heavens on that Day will split asunder, the earth will be spread out plain and smooth, and it will throw out whatever lies inside it of the dead bodies of men and evidences of their deeds so as to become completely empty from within. The argument given for it is that such will be the Command of their Lord for the heavens and the earth; since both are His creation, they cannot dare disobey His Command. For them the only right and proper course is that they should obey the Command of their Lord.

Then, in vv. 6-19 it has been said that whether man is conscious of this fact, or not, he in any case is moving willy nilly to the destination when he will appear and stand before his Lord. At that time all human beings will divide into two parts: first those whose records will be given in their right hands: they will be forgiven without any severe reckoning; second those whose records will be given them behind their back. They will wish that they should die somehow, but they will not die; instead they will be cast into Hell. They will meet with this fate because in the world they remained lost in the misunderstanding that they would never have to appear before God to render an account of their deeds, whereas their Lord was watching whatever they were doing, and there was no reason why they should escape the accountability for their deeds. Their moving gradually from the life of the world to the meting out of rewards and punishments in the Hereafter was as certain as the appearance of twilight after sunset, the coming of the night after the day, the returning of men and animals to their respective abodes at night, and the growing of the crescent into full moon.

In conclusion, the disbelievers who repudiate the Qur'an instead of bowing down to God when they hear it, have been forewarned of a grievous punishment and the good news of limitless rewards has been given to the believers and the righteous.

سُوْرَةُ الْاِنْشِقَاق — مَكِّيَّةٌ (٨٤) — اٰيَاتُهَا ٢٥ — رُكُوْعَاتُهَا ١

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

اِذَا السَّمَآءُ انْشَقَّتْ ۝١ وَاَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ ۝٢ وَاِذَا الْاَرْضُ مُدَّتْ ۝٣
وَاَلْقَتْ مَا فِيْهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ ۝٤ وَاَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ ۝٥ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْاِنْسَانُ
اِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلٰقِيْهِ ۝٦ فَاَمَّا مَنْ اُوْتِيَ كِتٰبَهٗ بِيَمِيْنِهٖ ۝٧
فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَّسِيْرًا ۝٨ وَّيَنْقَلِبُ اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهٖ مَسْرُوْرًا ۝٩ وَاَمَّا مَنْ
اُوْتِيَ كِتٰبَهٗ وَرَآءَ ظَهْرِهٖ ۝١٠ فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُوْا ثُبُوْرًا ۝١١ وَّيَصْلٰى سَعِيْرًا ۝١٢ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ فِيْٓ
اَهْلِهٖ مَسْرُوْرًا ۝١٣ اِنَّهٗ ظَنَّ اَنْ لَّنْ يَّحُوْرَ ۝١٤ بَلٰٓى ۚ اِنَّ رَبَّهٗ كَانَ بِهٖ بَصِيْرًا ۝١٥
فَلَآ اُقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ ۝١٦ وَالَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ ۝١٧ وَالْقَمَرِ اِذَا اتَّسَقَ ۝١٨ لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا
عَنْ طَبَقٍ ۝١٩ فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝٢٠ وَاِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْاٰنُ لَا يَسْجُدُوْنَ ۝٢١
بَلِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يُكَذِّبُوْنَ ۝٢٢ وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُوْعُوْنَ ۝٢٣ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ
اَلِيْمٍ ۝٢٤ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ اَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُوْنٍ ۝٢٥

سجدة ٣ — ١ ع ٩

LXXXIV
AL-INSHIQĀQ
الإنشِقاق

Verses: 25 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

When the heaven splits asunder, and obeys its Lord's Command,[1] as in truth it must (obey its Lord's Command); and when the earth is spread out,[2] and throws out whatever is within it, and becomes empty,[3] and obeys its Lord's Command, as in truth it must (obey the Command):[4] O man, you are moving on towards your Lord, willy nilly,[5] and are about to meet Him. Then he whose record is given in his right hand, shall have an easy reckoning,[6] and he shall return to his kinsfolk rejoicing.[7] As for him whose record is given him behind his back,[8] he shall call for death and shall enter a blazing Fire. For he lived among his kinsfolk, completely absorbed,[9] and deemed he would never return. Why not! His Lord was ever watching his misdeeds.[10] 1-15

So no! I swear by the twilight and the night and what it gathers together, and the moon when it grows full, that you have surely to pass from one state to another gradually.[11] Then, what is the matter with these people that they do not believe, and when the Qur'an is recited before them, they do not fall prostrate?[12] But, on the contrary, the disbelievers deny, although Allah knows best what they are collecting (in their record).[13] Therefore, give them the good news of a painful torment. However, those who have believed and done righteous deeds, shall have a reward that will never fail. 16-25

---

1. Literally: "... and hears its Lord's Command." However, according to Arabic usage *adhina lahū* does not only mean: "He heard the Command," but it means: "Hearing the Command he carried it out promptly like an obedient servant."

2. "When the earth is spread out": when the oceans and rivers are filled up, the mountains are crushed to pieces and scattered away, and the earth is levelled and turned into a smooth plain. In Sūrah Ṭā Hā, the same thing has been

expressed, thus: "He will turn the earth into an empty level plain, wherein you will neither see any curve nor crease." (vv 106-107) Hākim in *Mustadrak* has related through authentic channels on the authority of Hadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah a saying of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) to the effect: "On the Resurrection Day the earth will be flattened out and spread out like the table-cloth; then there will hardly be room on it for men to place their feet." To understand this saying one should keep in mind the fact that on that Day all men who will have been born from the first day of creation till Resurrection, will be resurrected simultaneously and produced in the Divine Court. For gathering together such a great multitude of the people it is inevitable that the oceans, rivers, mountains, jungles, ravines and all high and low areas be levelled and the entire globe of the earth be turned into a vast plain so that all individuals of human race may have room on it to stand on their feet.

3. That is, it will throw out all dead bodies of men and also the traces and evidences of their deeds lying within it, so that nothing remains hidden and buried in it.

4. Here, it has not been expressly told what will happen when such and such an event takes place, for the subsequent theme by itself explains this, as if to say: "O man, you are moving towards your Lord and are about to meet Him; you will be given your conduct book; and rewarded or punished according to your deeds."

5. That is, "You may if you so like think that all your efforts and endeavours in the world are confined to worldly life and motivated by worldly desires, yet the truth is that you are moving, consciously or unconsciously, towards your Lord and you have ultimately to appear before Him in any case."

6. That is, his reckoning will be less severe: he will not be asked why he had done such and such a thing and what excuses he had to offer for it. Though his evil deeds also will be there alongwith his good deeds in his records, his errors will be overlooked and pardoned in view of his outweighing good deeds. In the Holy Qur'ān, for the severe reckoning of the wicked people the words *sū-al-hisāb* (heavy reckoning) have been used (Ar-Ra'd: 18), and concerning the righteous it has been said: "From such people We accept the best of their deeds and overlook their evils." (Al-Ahqāf: 16). The explanation of it given by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been related in different words by Imām Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Abū Da'ūd, Ḥākim, Ibn Jarīr, 'Abd bin Humaid, and Ibn Mardūyah on the authority of Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah. According to one of these traditions the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Doomed will be he who is called to account for his deeds. Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah said: O Messenger of Allah, has not Allah said: 'He whose record is given in his right hand shall have

an easy reckoning?' The Holy Prophet replied: That is only about the presentation of the deeds, but the one who is questioned would be doomed." In another tradition Hadrat 'Ā'ishah has related: "I once heard the Holy Prophet supplicate during the prayer, thus: O God, call me to a light reckoning. When he brought his Prayer to conclusion, I asked what he meant by that supplication. He replied: Light reckoning means that one's conduct book will be seen and one's errors will be overlooked. O 'Ā'ishah, the one who is called to account for his deeds on that Day, would be doomed.

7. "His kinsfolk": his family and relatives and companions who will have been pardoned even like himself.

8. In Sūrah Al Ḥāāqqah: 25, it was said that his record will be given him in his left hand but here "behind his back. ! This will probably be for the reason that he would already have lost all hope that he would be given his record in his right hand, for he would be well aware of his misdeeds and sure to receive his record in his left hand. However, in order to avoid the humiliation of receiving it in the left hand, in front of all mankind, he will withdraw his hand behind and so would receive it 'behind his back."

9. That is, his way of life was different from that of God's righteous men, about whom in Sūrah At-Tūr: 26, it has been said that they lived among their kinsfolk in fear and dread of God, *i.e.* they fear lest they should ruin their own Hereafter on account of their absorption in the love of children and endeavours for the sake of their well-being and prosperity in the world. On the contrary, this man lived a life free from every care and worry and helped his children and kinsfolk also to enjoy life fully, no matter what wicked and immoral methods he had to use to procure the means of enjoyment, how he had to usurp the rights of others and transgress the bounds set by Allah for the sake of the worldly pleasures.

10. That is, it was against God's justice and His wisdom that He should overlook the misdeeds that he was committing and should not summon him before Himself to render his account of the deeds.

11. That is, "You will not remain in one and the same state, but will have to pass through countless stages gradually, from youth to old age, from old age to death, from death to *barzakh* (the intermediary state between death and Resurrection), from *barzakh* to Resurrections from Resurrection to the Plain of Assembly, then to the Reckoning, and then to the meting out of rewards and punishments. An oath has been sworn by three things to confirm this: (1) by the twilight, (2) by the darkness of night and the gathering together in it of all those human beings and animals who remain scattered in the day time, and (3) by the moon's passing through different phases to become full. These are some of those

things which testify that rest and stillness is unknown in the universe in which man lives. There is a continuous and gradual change taking place everywhere. Therefore, the disbelievers are wrong in thinking that life comes to an end after man has breathed his last.

12. "They do not fall prostrate": they do not bow down to God out of fear of Him. To perform a *sajdah* (prostration) here is confirmed by the practice of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). Imām Mālik, Muslim and Nasā'ī have related a tradition concerning Ḥaḍrat Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him), saying that he recited this Sūrah in the Prayer and performing a *sajdah* here said: "The Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) performed a *sajdah* at this point." Bukhārī; Muslim, Abu Da'ūd and Nasā'i have cited this statement of Abu Rafi': "Ḥaḍrat Abu Huraira recited this Sūrah in the 'Ishā' Prayer and performed a *sajdah* When I asked why he had done so, he replied: I prayed under the leadership of Abul Qāsim (upon whom be Allah's peace) and he performed a *sajdah* here. Therefore, I will continue to perform this *sajdah* likewise as long as I live." Muslim, Abu Dā'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasa'i, Ibn Mājah and others have related another tradition saying that Hadrat Abu Huraira said: "We performed *sajdah* behind the Holy Messenger of Allah in this Sūrah and in *Iqra' bi-isuri Rabbik-alladhi khalaq.*

13. Another meaning also can be: "Allah knows best what filth of disbelief, malice, hostility to the Truth and evil intentions and designs they keep filled in their breasts."



LXXXV

AL-BURŪJ

الْبُرُوج

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXXV

AL-BURŪJ

البُرُوج

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah is so designated after the word *al-burūj* appearing in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter itself indicates that this Sūrah was sent down at Makkah in the period when persecution of the Muslims was at its climax and the disbelievers of Makkah were trying their utmost by tyranny and coercion to turn away the new converts from Islam.

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is to warn the disbelievers of the evil Consequences of the persecution and tyranny That they were perpetrating on the converts to Islam, and to console the believers, so as to say: "If you remain firm and steadfast against tyranny and coercion, you will be rewarded richly for it, and Allah will certainly avenge Himself on your persecutors on your behalf."

In this connection, first of all the story of the people of the ditch *(ashāb al-ukhdūd)* has been related, who had burnt the believers to death by casting them into pits full of fire. By means of this story the believers and the disbelievers have been taught a few lessons. First, that just as the people of the ditch became worthy of Allah's curse and punishment, so are the chiefs of Makkah also becoming worthy of it. Second, that just as the believers at that time had willingly accepted to sacrifice their lives by being burnt to death in the pits of fire instead of turning away from the faith, so also the believers now should endure every persecution but should never give up the faith. Third, that God, acknowledging Whom displeases the disbelievers and is urged on by the believers, is Dominant and Master of the Kingdom of the earth and heavens; He is self-praiseworthy and is watching what the two groups are striving for. Therefore, it is certain that the disbelievers will not only be punished in Hell for their disbelief but, more than that, they too will suffer punishment by fire as a fit recompense for their tyranny and cruelties. Likewise, this also is certain that those, who believe and follow up their belief with good deeds, should go to Paradise and this indeed is the supreme success. Then the disbelievers have been warned, so as to say: "God's grip is very severe. If you are proud of the strength of your hosts, you should know that the hosts of Pharaoh and Thamūd were even stronger and more numerous, Therefore, you should learn a lesson from the fate they met. God's power has so encompassed you that you cannot escape His encirclement, and the Qur'ān that you are bent upon belying, is unchangeable: it is inscribed in the Preserved Tablet, which cannot be corrupted in any way."



وَ السَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوْجِ ۙ﴿١﴾ وَ الْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُوْدِ ۙ﴿٢﴾ وَ شَاهِدٍ وَّ مَشْهُوْدٍ ۙ﴿٣﴾ قُتِلَ
اَصْحٰبُ الْاُخْدُوْدِ ۙ﴿٤﴾ النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوَقُوْدِ ۙ﴿٥﴾ اِذْ هُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُعُوْدٌ ۙ﴿٦﴾ وَّ هُمْ
عَلٰى مَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ شُهُوْدٌ ؕ﴿٧﴾ وَ مَا نَقَمُوْا مِنْهُمْ اِلَّاۤ اَنْ يُّؤْمِنُوْا
بِاللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَمِيْدِ ۙ﴿٨﴾ الَّذِيْ لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ شَهِيْدٌ ؕ﴿٩﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ فَتَنُوا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَ الْمُؤْمِنٰتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوْبُوْا
فَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيْقِ ؕ﴿١٠﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ
عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتٌ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ؕ ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيْرُ ؕ﴿١١﴾
اِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيْدٌ ؕ﴿١٢﴾ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ يُبْدِئُ وَ يُعِيْدُ ۖ﴿١٣﴾ وَ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الْوَدُوْدُ ۖ﴿١٤﴾
ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيْدُ ۖ﴿١٥﴾ فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيْدُ ؕ﴿١٦﴾ هَلْ اَتٰىكَ حَدِيْثُ الْجُنُوْدِ ۙ﴿١٧﴾
فِرْعَوْنَ وَ ثَمُوْدَ ؕ﴿١٨﴾ بَلِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا فِيْ تَكْذِيْبٍ ۙ﴿١٩﴾ وَّ اللّٰهُ مِنْ وَّرَآئِهِمْ
مُّحِيْطٌ ؕ﴿٢٠﴾ بَلْ هُوَ قُرْاٰنٌ مَّجِيْدٌ ۙ﴿٢١﴾ فِيْ لَوْحٍ مَّحْفُوْظٍ ۧ﴿٢٢﴾

LXXXV

AL-BURŪJ

البُروج

Verses: 22 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

By the heaven with its strong forts,[1] and the promised Day,[2] and the seer and that which is seen:[3] Doomed were the people of the ditch, (of that ditch) which had the fire fed by the intensely blazing fuel, when they were sitting by the ditch and witnessing what they were doing with the believers.[4] And their enmity against the believers was for no other reason than that they had believed in that Allah Who is the All-Mighty the Self-Praiseworthy, Who is the Owner of the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is watching over everything. [5] 1-9

For those who persecuted the believing men and women and did not repent of it, there is the torment of Hell and the punishment of burning.[6] As for those who believed and did good deeds, there are Gardens for them beneath which canals will be flowing. This is the supreme success! 10-11

Indeed, the grip of your Lord is very severe. It is He Who creates in the first instance, and He it is Who will create again. And He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Loving, Owner of the Throne, the Exalted and Doer of whatever He wills.[7] Has the story of the hosts reached you, (of the hosts of) Pharaoh and Thamud?[8] But those who disbelieve, persist in denying, although Allah has encircled them. (Their denial does not affect the Qur'ān at all), for this Qur'ān is sublime: it is (inscribed) in the Tablet that is preserved.[9] 12-22

---

1. Literally: "By the heaven having constellations." Some of the commentators have interpreted it to mean the twelve signs of the zodiac in the heavens according to ancient astronomy, However, according to Ibn 'Abbās,

Mujahid, Qatādah, Hasan Basrī, Dahhāk and Suddī it implies the glorious stars and planets of the sky.

2. That is, the Day of Resurrection.

3. The commentators have expressed many different views about "the seer" and "that which is seen". In our opinion what fits in well with the context is that the seer is every such person who will witness the Day of Resurrection and that which is seen is the Resurrection itself, the dreadful scenes of which will be seen by all. This is the view of Mujāhid. 'Ikrimah, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibn Nujaih and some other commentators.

4. "The people of the ditch": those who had burnt the believers at stake and witnessed their burning themselves. "Doomed were...": cursed were they by God and they became worthy of Hell torment. On this an oath has been sworn by three things: (1) By the heaven having constellations. (2) by the Day of Resurrection, which has been promised, and (3) by the dreadful scenes of the Day of Resurrection and all those creatures who will witness those scenes. The first of these testifies to the truth that the Sovereign, Absolute Being Who is ruling over the glorious stars and planets of the universe, cannot allow this contemptible, insignificant creature called man to escape His grip. The second thing has been sworn by on the basis that the wicked people committed whatever tyranny they wanted to commit, but the Day of which men have been fore-warned is sure to come, when the grievances of every wronged person will be redressed and every wrongdoer will be brought to book and punished. The third thing has been sworn by for the reason that just as these wicked people enjoyed witnessing the burning of the helpless believers, so will all human beings on the Day of Resurrection witness how they are taken to task and burnt in Hell.

Several events have been mentioned in the traditions of the believers having been thrown into pits of blazing fire, which show that such tyrannies have been inflicted many a time in history.

One of the events has been reported by Ḥaḍrat Ṣuhaib Rūmi from the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace), saying that a king had a magician at his court, who on becoming old requested the king to appoint a boy who should learn magic from him. Accordingly the king appointed a boy. But the boy while going to the magician's place and coming back home also started visiting on the way a monk (who was probably a follower of the Prophet Jesus) and being influenced by his teaching turned a believer. So much so that by his training he acquired miraculous powers. He would heal the blind and cure the lepers. When the king came to know that the boy had believed in the Unity of God, he first put the monk to the sword; then wanted to kill the boy, but no instrument and no device had any effect on

him. At last, the boy said to the king: "If you are bent upon killing me, shoot an arrow at me with the word: *Bi-isnii Rabbil-ghulām* (in the name of this boy's Lord) in front of the assembled people, and I shall die." The king did as he was told and the boy died. Thereupon the people cried out that they affirmed faith in the Lord of the boy. The courtiers told the king that the same precisely had happened which he wanted to avoid: the people had forsaken his religion and adopted the boy's religion. At this the king was filled with rage. Consequently, he got pits dug out along the roads, got them filled with fire and ordered all those who refused to renounce the new faith to be thrown into the fire. (Aḥmad, Muslim, Nasā'i. Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, 'Abdur Razzāq, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Ṭabaranī. 'Abd bin Ḥumaid)

The second event has been reported from Ḥaḍrat 'Ali. He says that a king of Iran drank wine and committed adultery with his sister resulting in illicit relations between the two. When the secret became known, the king got the announcement made that God had permitted marriage with the sister. When the people refused to believe in it, he started coercing them into accepting by different kinds of punishment; so much so that he began to cast into the pits of fire every such person who refused to concede it. According to Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, marriage with the prohibited relations among the fireworshippers has begun since then (Ibn Jarir).

The third event has been related by Ibn 'Abbās probably on the basis of the Israelite traditions, saying that the people of Babylon had compelled the children of Israel to give up the religion of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him); so much so that they cast into pits of fire all those who refused to obey. Ibn Jarīr, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid).

The best known event, however, relates to Najrān, which has been related by Ibn Hishām, Ṭabarī, Ibn Khaldūn, the author of *Mu'jam al-Buldān* and other Islamic historians. Its resume is as follows: Tubān As'ad Abū Karib, king of Himyar (Yaman), went to Yathrib once where he embraced Judaism under the influence of the Jews, and brought two of the Jewish scholars of Banī Quraizah with him to Yaman. There he propagated Judaism widely. His son Dhū Nuwās succeeded him and he attacked Najrān which was a stronghold of the Christians in southern Arabia so as to eliminate Christianity and make the people accept Judaism. (Ibn Hishām says that these people were true followers of the Gospel of the Prophet Jesus). In Najrān he invited the people to accept Judaism but they refused to obey. Thereupon he caused a large number of the people to be burnt in the ditches of fire and slew many others with the sword until he had killed nearly twenty thousand of them. Daus Dhū Tha'labān an inhabitant of Najrān escaped and went, according to one tradition, to the Byzantine emperor, and according to another, to the Negus king of Abyssinia, and told him what had happened

According to the first tradition, the emperor wrote to the king of Abyssinia, and according to the second, the Negus requested the emperor to provide him with a naval force. In any case, an Abyssinian army consisting of seventy thousand soldiers under a general called Aryāt, attacked Yaman, Dhū Nuwās was killed, the Jewish rule came to an end, and Yaman become a part of the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia.

The statements of the Islamic historians are not only confirmed by other historical means but they also give many more details. Yaman first came under the Christian Abyssinian domination in 340 A.D. and this domination continued till 378 A.D. The Christian missionaries started entering Yaman in that period. About the same time, a man named Faymiyūn (Phemion), who was a righteous, earnest, ascetic man and possessed miraculous powers, arrived in Yaman and by his preaching against idol-worship converted the people of Najrān to Christianity. These people were ruled by three chiefs: *Sayyid*, who was the principal chief like the tribal elders and responsible for external affairs, political agreements and command of the forces, *'Āqib*, who looked after the internal affairs and *Usquf* (Bishop), the religous guide. In southern Arabia Najrāu commanded great importance, being a major trade and industrial center with tussore, leather and the armament industries. The well-known Yamanite wrapper and cloak *(ḥulla Yamanī)* was also manufactured here. On this very basis, Dhū Nuwas attacked this important place not only for religious but also for political and economic reasons. He put to death Hārithan (called Arethas by the Syrian historians), *Sayyid* of Najrāin, killed his two daughters in front of his wife Roumah and compelled her to drink their blood and then put even her to death. He took out the bones of Bishop Paul from the grave and burnt them, and ordered women, men, children, aged people, priests and monks, all to be thrown into the pits of fire. The total number of the people thus killed has been estimated between twenty and forty thousand. This happened in October, 523 A.D. At last, in 525 A.D. the Abyssinians attacked Yaman and put an end to Dhū Niwās and his Himyarite *kingdom*. This is confirmed by the Hisn Ghurāb inscription which the modern archaeologists have unearthed in Yaman.

In several Christian writings of the 6th century A.D. details of the event relating to the people of the ditch" have been given, some of which are contemporary and reported from eye-witnesses. Authors of three of these books were contemporaries with the event. They were Procopeus, Cosmos Indicopleustis, who was translating Greek book of Ptolemy under command of the Negus Elesboan at that time and resided at Adolis, a city on the sea-coast of Abyssinia, and Johannes Malala from whom several of the later historians have related this event. After this, Johannes of Ephesus (d. 585 A.D) has related the story of the persecution of the Christians of Najran in his history of the Church

from a letter of Bishop Mar Simeon who was a contemporary reporter of this event. Mar Simeon wrote this letter to Abbot von Gabula; in it Simeon has reported this event with reference to the statements of the Yamanite eye-witnesses present on the occasion. This letter was published in 1881 A.D from Rome and in 1890 A.D. in the memoirs of the martyrs of Christianity Jacobian Patriarch Dionysius and Zacharia of Mitylene have in their Syriac histories also related this event. Ya'qūb Sāruji also in his book about the Christians of Najrān has made mention of it. Bishop Pulus of Edessa's elegy on those who perished in Najran, is still extant. An English translation of the Syriac *kitāb al-Himyarin* (Book of the Himyarites) was published in 1924 from London, which confirms the statements of the Muslim historians. In the British Museum there are some Abyssinian manuscripts relating to that period or a period close to it, which support this story. Philby in his travelogue entitled "Arabian Highlands", writes: Among the people of Najran the place is still well known where the event of the people of the ditch (ashāb al-ukhdūd) had taken place. Close by Umm Kharaq there can still be seen some pictures carved in the rocks, and the present day people of Najrān also know the place where the cathedral of Najrān stood.

The Abyssinian Christians after capturing Najrān had built a church here resembling the Ka'bah, by which they wanted to divert pilgrimage from the Ka'bah at Makkah to it. Its priests and keepers wore turbans and regarded it as a sacred sanctuary. The Roman empire also sent monetary aid for this "ka'bah". The priests of this very "Ka'bah" of Najrān had visited the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) under the leadership of their Sayyid, 'Āqib and Bishop for a discussion with him and the famous event of the *mubāhala* (trial through prayer) took place as referred to in Āl-Imran: 61. (For details, see E.N.'s 29 and 55 of Āl-Imrān)

5. In these verses those of Allah Almighty's attributes have been mentioned on account of which He alone deserves that one should believe in Him, and the people who feel displeased at one's believing in Him, are wicked and unjust.

6 "Punishment by burning" has been mentioned separately from the torment of Hell because they had burnt the oppressed people to death by casting them into the pits of fire. Probably this will be a different and severer kind of fire from the fire of Hell in which those people will be burnt.

7. "He is All-Forgiving": If a person repents and reforms himself, he can hope to be received by Allah in His mercy. "He is All-Loving", *i.e.* He has no enmity with His creatures that he would subject them to torment without any reason, but He loves the creatures He has created and punishes them only when they do not give up the attitude of rebellion against Him. "Owner of the Throne"

means that He alone is the Ruler of the Kingdom of the Universe: no one who is a rebel can escape His grip and punishment. The mention of His being "Exalted" is meant to warn man for his meanness when he adopts an attitude of arrogance against such a Being. Last of all, "He is Doer of whatever He wills": no one in the entire universe has the power to obstruct and resist what Allah wills to do.

8. The address is directed to the people who in their false pride of having powerful hosts, are breaking the law of God on His earth. They are being warned, as if to say: "Do you know what evil fate was met before by those who broke the bounds set by Allah on the strength of the power of their hosts?"

9. That is, "The writ of the Qur'ān is unchangeable and imperishable. It is inscribed in the Preserved Tablet of God, which cannot be corrupted in any way. Whatever is written in it, has to be fulfilled; even the whole world together cannot avert its fulfilment.


LXXXVI
AṬ-ṬĀRIQ
الطَّارِق

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LXXXVI

AT-TĀRIQ

الطَّارِق

INTRODUCTION

Name

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

Period of Revelation

The style of its subject-matter resembles that of the earliest Sūrahs revealed at Makkah, but this Sūrah was sent down at a stage when the disbelievers of Makkah were employing all sorts of devices and plans to defeat and frustrate the message of the Qur'ān and Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

Theme and Subject-Matter

It discusses two themes: first that man has to appear before God after death; second that the Qur'ān is a decisive Word which no plan or device of the disbelievers can defeat or frustrate.

First of all, the stars of the heavens have been cited as an evidence that there is nothing in the universe which may continue to exist and survive without a guardian over it. Then man has been asked to consider his own self as to how he has been brought into existence from a mere sperm-drop and shaped into a living human being. Then it has been said that the God, Who has so brought him into existence, has certainly the power to create him once again, and this resurrection will be for the purpose to subject to scrutiny all the secrets of man, which remained hidden in the world. At that time, man will neither be able to escape the consequences of his deeds by his own power, nor will anyone else come to his rescue.

In conclusion, it has been pointed out that just as the falling of rain from the sky and the sprouting of plants and crops from the earth is no child's play but a serious task, so also the truths expressed in the Qur'ān are no jest but a firm and unchangeable reality. The disbelievers are involved in the misunderstanding that their plans and devices will defeat the invitation of the Qur'ān, but they do not know that Allah too is devising a plan which will bring to nought all their scheming and planning. Then in one sentence the discourse has been summed up, with a word of consolation to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and a tacit warning to the disbelievers, saying: "Have patience for a while: let the disbelievers do their worst. Before long they will themselves realize whether they have been able to defeat the Qur'ān by their scheming or the Qur'ān has dominated them in the very place where they are exerting their utmost to defeat it."



وَالسَّمَآءِ وَالطَّارِقِ ۝١ وَمَآ أَدْرٰىكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ ۝٢ النَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ ۝٣ إِنْ
كُلُّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ ۝٤ فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ ۝٥ خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّآءٍ
دَافِقٍ ۝٦ يَّخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَآئِبِ ۝٧ إِنَّهُ عَلٰى رَجْعِهٖ
لَقَادِرٌ ۝٨ يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَآئِرُ ۝٩ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَّلَا نَاصِرٍ ۝١٠ وَ
السَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ ۝١١ وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدْعِ ۝١٢ إِنَّهٗ لَقَوْلٌ فَصْلٌ ۝١٣
وَّمَا هُوَ بِالْهَزْلِ ۝١٤ إِنَّهُمْ يَكِيْدُوْنَ كَيْدًا ۝١٥ وَّأَكِيْدُ كَيْدًا ۝١٦ فَمَهِّلِ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ أَمْهِلْهُمْ رُوَيْدًا ۝١٧

LXXXVI

AṬ-ṬĀRIQ

الطَّارِق

Verses: 17 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

By the heaven and the visitant by night, and what do you know what the visitant by night is? A shining star! There is no soul without a Guardian over it.[1] Then let man at least consider from what he is created.[2] He is created from a spurting fluid that issues forth from between the backbone and the breast-bones.[3] Surely He (the Creator) has the power to create him again.[4] The Day the hidden secrets are held to scrutiny,[5] then man will neither have any power of his own nor any helper. By the heaven that sends down rain,[6] and by the earth that splits (at the sprouting of vegetation), it is a decisive Word: it is no jest.[7] 1-17

These people (i.e. the disbelievers of Makkah) are devising some plans,[8] and I, too, am devising a plan.[9] So leave the disbelievers, O Prophet; leave them to themselves for a while.[10]

---

1. "A Guardian": Allah Almighty Himself, Who is looking after and watching over every creature, big or small, in the earth and heavens. He it is Who has brought everything into existence, Who is maintaining and sustaining everything in its place and position, and Who has taken the responsibility to provide for every creature and to protect it from calamities till an appointed time. On this, an oath has been sworn by the heaven and by every star and planet which appears in the darkness of the night. (Although lexically, *an-najm ath-thāqib* is singular, it does not imply any one star but the star in the generic sense). The oath signifies that the existence of each of the countless stars and planets that shines in the sky at night, testifies to the fact that there is a Being Who has created it, illuminated it, suspended it in space, and thus is watching over it in a manner that neither it falls from its place nor collides with any other of the countless stars in their movements, nor does any other star collide with it.

2. After making man ponder over the heavens, he is now being invited to consider his own self and see how he has been created. Who is it Who selects one spermatozoon from among billions of spermatozoa emitted by the father and combines it at some time with one ovum out of a large number of the ova produced by the mother, and thus causes a particular human being to be conceived? Then, Who is it Who after conception develops it gradually in the mother's womb until it is delivered in the form of a living child? Then, Who is it Who in the mother's womb itself brings about a certain proportion and harmony between its bodily structure and its physical and mental capabilities? Then, Who is it Who watches over it continuously from birth till death—protects it from disease, accidents and calamities and provides him with countless means of life and opportunities for survival in the world of which he is not even conscious, not to speak of having the power to provide these for himself. Is all this happening without the planning and supervision of One God?

3. *"Sulb"* is the backbone and *"tarā'ib"* the breast- bones, i.e. the ribs. Since the procreative fluid in both man and woman is discharged from that part of the body which is between the back and the breast, it is said that man has been created from the fluid issuing out from between the back and the breast. This fluid is produced even in case the hands and feet are cut off. Therefore, it is not correct to say that it issues out from the whole body of man. In fact, the principal organs of the body are its source and all these are located in the trunk. The brain has not been mentioned separately because the back-bone is that part of the brain through

which connection between the body and the brain is established. (Also see Appendix I).

4. That is, His bringing man into existence and watching over him from the time conception takes place until death, is a clear proof that He can create him once again after death. If He had the power to create him in the first instance and man stays alive in the world by His power alone, what rational arguments can be presented for the conjecture that He does not have the power to do the same thing a second time? To deny this power man will even have to deny that God has brought him into existence, and the one who denies this may well come out one day with the claim that all books in the world have been printed accidentally, all cities of the world have been built accidentally, and there has occurred on the earth an explosion by chance which made all the factories start functioning automatically. The fact is that the creation of man, the structure of his body, the existence of the powers and capabilities working within him, and his survival as a living being -- all this is a much more complex process than all those works that have come to be accomplished through man, or are still in the process of being accomplished. If such a complex work with such wisdom, proportion and order could be accomplished just through a chance accident, what else could not be regarded as accidental by a mentally deranged person?

5. "The hidden secrets": the acts of every person which remained a secret to the world as well as those affairs which came before the world only in their apparent form, but the intentions, aims and secret motives working behind them remained hidden from the people. On the Resurrection Day all this will be laid bare and not only will the acts and deeds of every person be examined but it will also be seen what was his motive and intention and object of so acting. Likewise, it also remained hidden from the world, even from the doer of the act himself, what effects and influences of his act appeared in the world, to what extent they spread and for how long they continued to work. This secret too will be revealed on the Resurrection Day and it will be fully examined as to what were the consequences of the seed that a person sowed in the world, what fruit it bore and for how long it affected the later generations for better or for worse.

6. The words *dhāt ar-raj'e* have been used for the sky. Literally *raj'e* means to return, but metaphorically this word is used for the rain in Arabic, for the rain does not fall just once, but returns over and over again in the season and sometimes out of season as well. Another reason for calling the rain *raj'e* is that water rises as vapour from the oceans of the earth and then falls back as rain on the same earth.

7. That is, just as the falling of rain from the sky and the splitting of the earth to put out shoots is no jest but a serious reality, so also the news which the

Qur'an gives that man has to return to his God is no jest but a definite and decisive reality and an unchangeable truth which has to be fulfilled.

8. That is, these disbelievers are devising every kind of plan to defeat the invitation of the Qur'an; they wish to blow out this candle; they are creating all sorts of doubts in the people's minds; they are inventing false accusations against the Prophet who has brought it, so as to frustrate his mission in the world and perpetuate the drakness of ignorance and unbelief which he is struggling so hard to remove.

9. That is, "I am planning that none of their devices should succeed so that they are utterly defeated in their designs, and the light which they are trying their utmost to put out, spreads far and wide.

10. That is, "Leave them for a while to have their will. Before long the result will be before them and they will realize how far their scheming has become successful against My plan."

APPENDIX I

(In continuation of E.N. 3 of At-Tāriq)

In connection with our explanation of vv. 6-7 of Sūrah At-Tāriq, as given in E.N. 3, a doctor wrote to us:

"I have read your explanation carefully several times but have not been able to understand it fully. As far as the practical observation is concerned, the procreative fluid is produced by the testes. The fluid then empties into the epididymis, which leads into the vas deferens immediately before the vas enters the body of the prostate gland, where it is supplied with mucus and is discharged. How it issues forth from between the back-bone and the breast-bones, I have not been able to understand. However, control over it is exercised by a nervous system which is spread like a net-work between the breast-bone and the back-bone. But that too only to a certain extent: it is controlled by the mucus of another gland located in the brain. But the question here relates to its issuing forth (which can only take place through a tube). I would request for a detailed commentary of this point. I have given you this trouble (for which I hope to be excused) only because you believe in scientific knowledge.

In reply to this we wrote in the issue of the *Tarjumān al- Qur'ān* for November, 1971:

"As you are a doctor you can better understand that although different parts of the body have their own separate functions, no part can perform its function by itself but only in coordination with the other parts. No doubt, the seminal fluid is produced by the testes from where it is emitted through a particular channel. But if the stomach, liver, lungs heart, brain, kidney, etc. are not performing their respective functions rightly, the system of the production of the seminal liquid and its emission cannot work by itself. Let us understand this by an example. Urine forms in the kidney, is emptied into the bladder from where it is discharged through the outlet of the urinary tract. But by what process? If the organs which produce blood and circulate it throughout the body are not functioning properly, can the kidney by itself separate those elements from the blood, which make up urine, and send it to the bladder? That is why, the Qur'an does not say that the seminal fluid issues from the back-bone and the breast-bones,

but has said: "It issues forth from the part of the body which is located between the two." This does not negate the fact that the production of the seminal fluid and its emission has a mechanism which functions through particular parts of the body, but it shows that this mechanism is not independent: it performs its function in consequence of the combind work of the organism placed by Allah between the *sulb* (back-bone) and the *tarā'ib* (breast-bones) That is why, I have pointed out that the whole body is not involved in it, for even if the hands and feet are cut off, this system continues to work. However, if any one organ out of the principal organs located between the backbone and the breast-bones, is eliminated, the system cannot continue its function."

After reading the Question and the Answer, two doctors from two different places have provided some medical information which is given below:

"According to modern Embryology, it is an established fact that the testes in the foetus, the glands which produce seminal fluid, are located close to the kidneys between the backbone and the breast bones, from where they gradually descend into the scrotum later. This happens before birth and sometimes a little after it. But even then the source of their netves and veins remains the same, *i.e.* between the backbone and the breast-bones. Even their artery shoots out from the aorta located close to the backbone and traversing the whole stomach supplies them with blood. Thus, in fact, the testes are a part of the back, which on account of their inability to endure the high temperature of the body, have been transferred to the scrotum. Furthermore, although the seminal fluid is produced by the testes and stored in seminal vesicles, yet its emissiom is motivated from between the backbone and the breast-bones. On stimulation from the brain the trigger action causes seminal vesicles to contract and this causes ejaculation of the seminal fluid. Thus, it will be seen that the Qur'ānic statement conforms to modern research of medical science on the subject.



LXXXVII

AL-A'LĀ

الاَعلٰی

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXXVII

AL-A'LĀ

الأعلى

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *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 Tā 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.

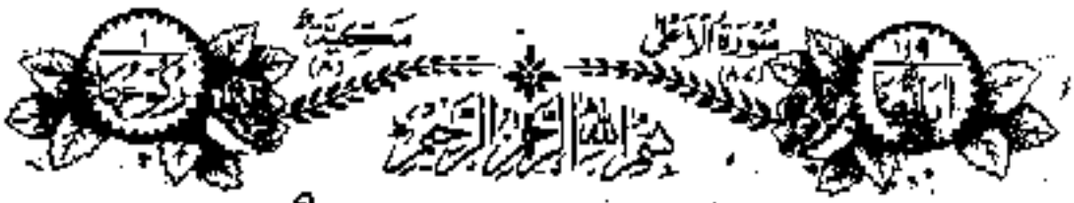
In the first verse, the doctrine of *Tauhīd* has been compressed into a single sentence, saying that Allah's name should be glorified and exalted, *i.e.* He should not be remembered by any name which might reflect a deficiency, fault, weakness, or an aspect of likeness, with created beings, for the root 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'ān but in the books of the Prophets Abraham and Moses too, it had been brought to the notice of man.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْاَعْلَى ۝١ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ فَسَوّٰى ۝٢ وَالَّذِيْ قَدَّرَ فَهَدٰى ۝٣
وَالَّذِيْٓ اَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعٰى ۝٤ فَجَعَلَهٗ غُثَآءً اَحْوٰى ۝٥ سَنُقْرِئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسٰٓى ۝٦
اِلَّا مَا شَآءَ اللّٰهُ ۭ اِنَّهٗ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفٰى ۝٧ وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرٰى ۝٨
فَذَكِّرْ اِنْ نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرٰى ۝٩ سَيَذَّكَّرُ مَنْ يَّخْشٰى ۝١٠ وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْاَشْقَى ۝١١
الَّذِيْ يَصْلَى النَّارَ الْكُبْرٰى ۝١٢ ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوْتُ فِيْهَا وَلَا يَحْيٰى ۝١٣ قَدْ اَفْلَحَ
مَنْ تَزَكّٰى ۝١٤ وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهٖ فَصَلّٰى ۝١٥ بَلْ تُؤْثِرُوْنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا ۝١٦
وَالْاٰخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَّاَبْقٰى ۝١٧ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْاُوْلٰى ۝١٨ صُحُفِ
اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَمُوْسٰى ۝١٩

LXXXVII

AL-A'LĀ

الاَعلٰی

Verses: 19 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

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

We shall enable you to recite; then you shall not forget[7] except what Allah wills.[8] He knows what is open and also what is hidden.[9] 6-7

And We give you the facility of the easy way; therefore, admonish them if admonition be profitable.[10] He who fears will accept the admonition,[11] and it will be shunned by the most wretched one, 8-13

who shall enter the Great Fire, wherein he shall neither die nor live.[12]

14-19 Truly successful was he who purified himself,[13] and remembered the name of his Lord,[14] then prayed.[15] But you (O men,) prefer the life of this world,[16] although the Hereafter is better and more lasting.[17] The same had been said in the former Books, the Books of Abraham and Moses.[18]

---

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), Rahīm (Compassionate), Karīm (Generous), Samī' (Hearing), Basīr (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 Imam 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 *Hadīth*, it has been reported from Hadrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir Juhanī that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had enjoined recitation of *Subhāna Rabbi-yal-A'lā* in the *sajdah* on the basis of this very verse, and the recitation of *Subhāna Rabbi-yal-'Āzīm* in *rukū'* on the basis of the last verse of

Sūrah *Al-Wāqi'ah, viz. Fa-sabbih bi-ismi-Rabbi-kal-'Azīm.*" (Musnad Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Hibbān, Hākim, 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" (*taqdīr*). 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-Hijr. 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-Naḥl, E.N. 23 of Ṭā Hā, E.N.'s 2, 3 of Ar-Raḥmān, E.N. 5 of Ad-Dahr)

5. The word *mar'ā* 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 this 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'ān in other ways. For example see Yūnus: 24, Al-Kahf: 45, Al-Ḥadīd: 20.

7. Ḥākim has related from Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abi 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 Tā Hā: 114 and Al-Qiyāmah: 16-19 above. This verse proves that just as the Qur'ān 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'ān 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'ān, thus: "O Muhammad! We may, if We so will, take back from you all of what We have revealed to you." (Banī Isrā'īl: 86). Another meaning also can be: "Your forgeting 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 Ḥadrat 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 misguidance for him and guiding him to true successes 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 Abu 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 endeavors 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
AL-GHĀSHIYA
الغاشيه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

LXXXVIII

AL-GHĀSHIYA

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.

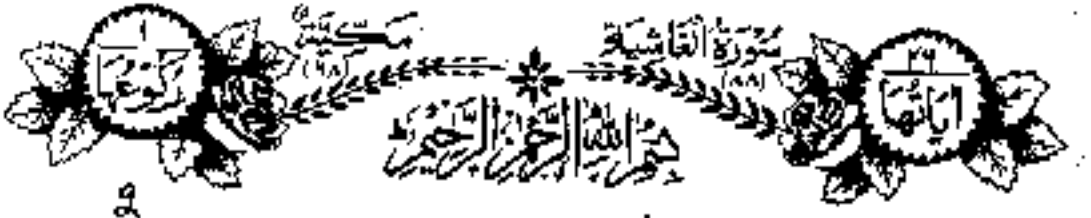
Theme and Subject-Matter

To understand the subject-matter well one should keep in view the fact that in the initial stage the preaching of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) mostly centered 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 the 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 over whelming calamity will descend?" immediately after is 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 susuffer 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 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 streatched 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 اَتٰىكَ حَدِيْثُ الْغَاشِيَةِ ۝١ وُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ ۝٢ عَامِلَةٌ
نَّاصِبَةٌ ۝٣ تَصْلٰى نَارًا حَامِيَةً ۝٤ تُسْقٰى مِنْ عَيْنٍ اٰنِيَةٍ ۝٥ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ
طَعَامٌ اِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيْعٍ ۝٦ لَّا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِيْ مِنْ جُوْعٍ ۝٧ وُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ
نَّاعِمَةٌ ۝٨ لِّسَعْيِهَا رَاضِيَةٌ ۝٩ فِيْ جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ۝١٠ لَّا تَسْمَعُ فِيْهَا لَاغِيَةً ۝١١
فِيْهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ ۝١٢ فِيْهَا سُرُرٌ مَّرْفُوْعَةٌ ۝١٣ وَّاَكْوَابٌ مَّوْضُوْعَةٌ ۝١٤ وَّنَمَارِقُ
مَصْفُوْفَةٌ ۝١٥ وَّزَرَابِيُّ مَبْثُوْثَةٌ ۝١٦ اَفَلَا يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَى الْاِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ ۝١٧
وَاِلَى السَّمَآءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ ۝١٨ وَاِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ ۝١٩ وَاِلَى الْاَرْضِ
كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ ۝٢٠ فَذَكِّرْ ۗ اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ ۝٢١ لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيْطِرٍ ۝٢٢
اِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلّٰى وَكَفَرَ ۝٢٣ فَيُعَذِّبُهُ اللّٰهُ الْعَذَابَ الْاَكْبَرَ ۝٢٤ اِنَّ اِلَيْنَآ
اِيَابَهُمْ ۝٢٥ ثُمَّ اِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ ۝٢٦

LXXXVIII
AL-GHĀSHIYA

الغاشيه

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?[1] Some faces[2] 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,[3] which will neither fatten nor satisfy hunger. Some faces on that Day shall be joyful, well-pleased with their endeavours,[4] in a lofty Garden; there they shall hear no idle talk.[5] In it there will be running springs; in it there will be raised couches; goblets set forth;[6] 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?' 17-20

Well, (O Prophet,) go on admonishing them, for you are only an admonisher: you are not there to coerce them.[8] 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

---

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'ān 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'ān as a major blessing of Paradise. (For explanation, see E.N. 38 of Maryam, E.N. 18 of At-Tūr, E.N. 13 of Al-Wāqi'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 existing 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 he 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, Al-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-Powerful, 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

اَلفَجْر

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

LXXXIX
AL-FAJR
اَلْفَجْرْ

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 'Ad 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 'Ād 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 misdeeds.

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.

سُوْرَةُ الْفَجْرِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

وَالْفَجْرِ ۙ﴿١﴾ وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ ۙ﴿٢﴾ وَّالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ ۙ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّيْلِ اِذَا يَسْرِ ۚ﴿٤﴾ هَلْ
فِيْ ذٰلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِّذِيْ حِجْرٍ ۗ﴿٥﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ ۙ﴿٦﴾ اِرَمَ
ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ ۙ﴿٧﴾ الَّتِيْ لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ ۙ﴿٨﴾ وَثَمُوْدَ الَّذِيْنَ جَابُوا
الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ ۙ﴿٩﴾ وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْاَوْتَادِ ۙ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِيْنَ طَغَوْا فِي الْبِلَادِ ۙ﴿١١﴾
فَاَكْثَرُوْا فِيْهَا الْفَسَادَ ۙ﴿١٢﴾ فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ ۗ﴿١٣﴾ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ
لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ ۗ﴿١٤﴾ فَاَمَّا الْاِنْسَانُ اِذَا مَا ابْتَلٰىهُ رَبُّهٗ فَاَكْرَمَهٗ وَنَعَّمَهٗ ۙ فَيَقُوْلُ
رَبِّيْٓ اَكْرَمَنِ ۗ﴿١٥﴾ وَاَمَّآ اِذَا مَا ابْتَلٰىهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهٗ ۙ فَيَقُوْلُ رَبِّيْٓ
اَهَانَنِ ۗ﴿١٦﴾ كَلَّا بَلْ لَّا تُكْرِمُوْنَ الْيَتِيْمَ ۗ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا تَحٰٓضُّوْنَ عَلٰى طَعَامِ
الْمِسْكِيْنِ ۗ﴿١٨﴾ وَتَاْكُلُوْنَ التُّرَاثَ اَكْلًا لَّمًّا ۗ﴿١٩﴾ وَّتُحِبُّوْنَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا ۗ﴿٢٠﴾
كَلَّآ اِذَا دُكَّتِ الْاَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا ۗ﴿٢١﴾ وَّجَآءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا ۗ﴿٢٢﴾ وَ
جِايْٓءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ ۙ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّتَذَكَّرُ الْاِنْسَانُ وَاَنّٰى لَهُ الذِّكْرٰى ۗ﴿٢٣﴾
يَقُوْلُ يٰلَيْتَنِيْ قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِيْ ۗ﴿٢٤﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا يُعَذِّبُ عَذَابَهٗٓ اَحَدٌ ۗ﴿٢٥﴾ وَّلَا
يُوْثِقُ وَثَاقَهٗٓ اَحَدٌ ۗ﴿٢٦﴾ يٰٓاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ۗ﴿٢٧﴾ ارْجِعِيْٓ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ
رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ۗ﴿٢٨﴾ فَادْخُلِيْ فِيْ عِبٰدِيْ ۗ﴿٢٩﴾ وَادْخُلِيْ جَنَّتِيْ ۗ﴿٣٠﴾

LXXXIX

AL-FAJR

اَلْفَجْر

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?[1] 1-5

Have you[2] not seen how your Lord dealt with ʿĀd Iram of lofty pillars,[3] the like of whom no nation was created in the lands of the world?[4] And with Thamūd who had hewed out the rocks in the valley?[5] And with Pharaoh of the stakes.[6] 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.[7] 6-14

As for man,[8] 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."[9] Indeed not![10] But you do not treat the orphan with respect,[11] and you do not urge one another to feed the poor,[12] and you devour the whole inheritance greedily,[13] and you love the wealth with all your hearts.[14] Indeed not![15] When the earth is incessantly pounded to become a sand-desert, and your Lord comes[16] 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?[17] 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

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

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 Muhammad (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 Muhammad (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 God; 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 evil 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 be 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'ān and we have explained it everywhere accordingly. For example, see E.N.'s 5, 6 of Al-A'rāf, 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 Ṣuād, E.N. 80 of Al-Mu'min, E.N.'s 33, 34 of Ad-Dukhān, E.N.'s 27, 28 of Al-Jāthiah, E.N. 17 of Qaf, E.N. 21 of Adh-Dhāriyāt).

3. 'Ād Iram implies the ancient tribe of 'Ād, who have been called *'Ād Ulā* in the Qur'ān and Arabian history. In Sūrah An-Najm, it has been said: "And that We destroyed the ancient people of 'Ad" (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 'Ad 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'ān; another are the Aramaeans, 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-ul-'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'ān 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 Suād: 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 punishment 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 Rabbuka* 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 sacrifice 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 *sharh sadr*. (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

اَلْبَلَدْ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

XC

AL-BALAD

اَلْبَلَدْ

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 abbridged 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 intentions 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.



لَآ اُقْسِمُ بِهٰذَا الْبَلَدِ ۙ﴿۱﴾ وَ اَنْتَ حِلٌّۢ بِهٰذَا الْبَلَدِ ۙ﴿۲﴾ وَ وَالِدٍ وَّ مَا وَلَدَ ۙ﴿۳﴾ لَقَدْ
خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ فِيْ كَبَدٍ ؕ﴿۴﴾ اَيَحْسَبُ اَنْ لَّنْ يَّقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ اَحَدٌ ۘ﴿۵﴾ يَقُوْلُ
اَهْلَكْتُ مَالًا لُّبَدًا ؕ﴿۶﴾ اَيَحْسَبُ اَنْ لَّمْ يَرَهٗۤ اَحَدٌ ۘ﴿۷﴾ اَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ عَيْنَيْنِ ۙ﴿۸﴾
وَ لِسَانًا وَّ شَفَتَيْنِ ۙ﴿۹﴾ وَ هَدَيْنٰهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ۚ﴿۱۰﴾ فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ ۚ﴿۱۱﴾ وَ مَاۤ
اَدْرٰىكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ ؕ﴿۱۲﴾ فَكُّ رَقَبَةٍ ۙ﴿۱۳﴾ اَوْ اِطْعٰمٌ فِيْ يَوْمٍ ذِيْ مَسْغَبَةٍ ۙ﴿۱۴﴾
يَّتِيْمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ۙ﴿۱۵﴾ اَوْ مِسْكِيْنًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ؕ﴿۱۶﴾ ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَ تَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَ تَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ ؕ﴿۱۷﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ ؕ﴿۱۸﴾
وَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا هُمْ اَصْحٰبُ الْمَشْئَمَةِ ؕ﴿۱۹﴾ عَلَيْهِمْ نَارٌ مُّؤْصَدَةٌ ؕ﴿۲۰﴾

XC

AL-BALAD

اَلْبَلَدْ

Verses: 20 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Nay![1] I swear by this City,[2] while you (O Prophet), have been made lawful in this City.[3] And I swear by father and the children he begot[4] that We have indeed created man in toil[5]. Does he think that no one will have power over him?[6] He says, "I have squandered heaps of wealth."[7] Does he think that no one has seen him?[8] Have We not given him two eyes, and a tongue and two lips,[9] and shown him both the highways (of good and evil)?[10] Yet he has not attempted the steep pass.[11] 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.[12] Then (besides) one should be of those who have believed[13] and exhorted one another to patience and exhorted one another to mercy (for God's creatures).[14] 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.[15] They shall have a Fire enveloping them.[16] 1-20

---

1. As we have explained in E.N.1 of Sūrah Al-Qiyāmah above, to begin a discourse with a "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. Muhammad (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 a 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 wrongs. "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 Sūrah 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. Iqtiḥām* 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 *aḥadīth* 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 Husain (Imām Zain al-'Ābedin) asked Sa'd bin Marjānah, the reporter of this *Ḥadīth*: "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 often thousand *dirhams* for the slave. On the basis of this verse, Imām Abu 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 *aḥādīth*, one of which is this *Ḥadīth* 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." (Bukharī, 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*). Ḥaḍrat 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 Aḥmad).

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'ān 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. 124-5.)" In Sūrah An-Naḥl: "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). Whoever studies the Qur'ān, 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 stops 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; abstenation 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 quailty 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 Muhammad, 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. Hadrat 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." (Buhkārī, Muslim).

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Ās says that the holy Prophet said: "The Rahman (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'īd 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 resspect 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 Ahmad, Tirmidhī).

Ḥaḍrat 'Iyād bin Humād 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 Bashir 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'anic 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-Wāqi'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
الشَّمْس

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

XCI

ASH-SHAMS

الشَّمْس

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 understand 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 Sālih (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, Muhammad (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 Sālih (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.

سُوْرَةُ الشَّمْسِ (٩١) مَكِّيَّةٌ (٢٩) — رُكُوْعُهَا ١ — اٰيَاتُهَا ١٥

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحٰىهَا ۝١ وَالْقَمَرِ اِذَا تَلٰىهَا ۝٢ وَالنَّهَارِ اِذَا جَلّٰىهَا ۝٣
وَالَّيْلِ اِذَا يَغْشٰىهَا ۝٤ وَالسَّمَآءِ وَمَا بَنٰىهَا ۝٥ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا طَحٰىهَا ۝٦
وَنَفْسٍ وَّمَا سَوّٰىهَا ۝٧ فَاَلْهَمَهَا فُجُوْرَهَا وَتَقْوٰىهَا ۝٨ قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ
زَكّٰىهَا ۝٩ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰىهَا ۝١٠ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُوْدُ بِطَغْوٰىهَآ ۝١١ اِذِ
انْۢبَعَثَ اَشْقٰىهَا ۝١٢ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ نَاقَةَ اللّٰهِ وَسُقْيٰهَا ۝١٣
فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَعَقَرُوْهَا ۝١٤ فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذَنْۢبِهِمْ فَسَوّٰىهَا ۝١٥
وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبٰهَا ۝١٦

XCI

ASH-SHAMS

الشَّمْس

Verses :15 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

By the sun and his brightness,[1] 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),[2] and by the heaven and Him Who estabished it,[3] and by the earth and Him Who spread it, and by the human self and Him Who balanced it,[4] then inspired it with its wickedness and its piety;[5] Truly successful is he who purified his self and a failure he who suppressed it [6] 1-10

Thamūd[7] belied (the Truth) because of their transgression.[8] 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."[9] But they belied what he said and killed the she-camel.[10] 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). [11] 11-15

---

1. The word *duhā* 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 *duhā* 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 *man* or *alladhī*, 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 of lifeless things and irrational creatures. For in the Qur'ān itself there are numerous instances that *mā* has been used in the meaning of *man*, e.g. *we lā antum 'ābidūna mā a'bud* ("nor are you the worshippers of Him Whom I worship"), *fankihū mā tābā lakum-min-an-nisā'* ("so, marry from among the women those whom you like") *wa lā tankihū mā nakaha abāā'ukum min-nisa'* ("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 *Hadīth*, 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 *Hadīth*, 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 Ahmad; 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 endowed 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 understaud well that Allah has blessed every creature with natural inspiration according to its position and nature, as has been pointed out in Sūrah Tā 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 beehive 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 or 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 even 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 expediencies, 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 *taqwā*, 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 *taqwā* 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,

Tazkiyah 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 *tadsīyah*, 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 he a farce. Therefore, the correct commentary is that which Qatādah, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid and Sa'īd bin Jubair have given, saying that the subject *zakkāhā* and *dassāhā* is man and not God. As for the *Hadīth* which Ibn Abī Ḥātim has related on the authority of Juwaybir bin Sa'īd 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 *Ḥadīth*, and Ḍaḥḥāk did not meet Ibn 'Abbās. However, the *Hadīth* which Imām Aḥmad, Muslim, Nasā'ī 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 Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Imām Aḥmad from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah. It actually means that man can only desire and seek *taqva* and *tazkīyah;* 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 *tazkīyah*, 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 or 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 exprressed 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 *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* not 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 Ḥijāz 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 hamstrung her. (Al-A'rāf 73, Ash-Shu'arā: 134-156; 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
اللَّيل

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XCII

AL-LAIL

الّيل

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 Surahs 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 onto 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 un-informed 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 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.

سُوْرَةُ اللَّيْلِ (٩٢) مَكِّيَّةٌ (١٩) — رُكُوْعُهَا ١ — اٰيَاتُهَا ٢١

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

وَالَّيْلِ اِذَا يَغْشٰى ۙ﴿١﴾ وَالنَّهَارِ اِذَا تَجَلّٰى ۙ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْاُنْثٰى ۙ﴿٣﴾
اِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتّٰى ؕ﴿٤﴾ فَاَمَّا مَنْ اَعْطٰى وَاتَّقٰى ۙ﴿٥﴾ وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنٰى ۙ﴿٦﴾
فَسَنُيَسِّرُهٗ لِلْيُسْرٰى ؕ﴿٧﴾ وَاَمَّا مَنْۢ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنٰى ۙ﴿٨﴾ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنٰى ۙ﴿٩﴾
فَسَنُيَسِّرُهٗ لِلْعُسْرٰى ؕ﴿١٠﴾ وَمَا يُغْنِيْ عَنْهُ مَالُهٗۤ اِذَا تَرَدّٰى ؕ﴿١١﴾ اِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدٰى ۙ﴿١٢﴾
وَاِنَّ لَنَا لَلْاٰخِرَةَ وَالْاُوْلٰى ؕ﴿١٣﴾ فَاَنْذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظّٰى ۚ﴿١٤﴾ لَا يَصْلٰىهَاۤ اِلَّا
الْاَشْقَى ۙ﴿١٥﴾ الَّذِيْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلّٰى ؕ﴿١٦﴾ وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْاَتْقَى ۙ﴿١٧﴾ الَّذِيْ يُؤْتِيْ مَالَهٗ
يَتَزَكّٰى ۚ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا لِاَحَدٍ عِنْدَهٗ مِنْ نِّعْمَةٍ تُجْزٰۤى ۙ﴿١٩﴾ اِلَّا ابْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ
الْاَعْلٰى ۚ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضٰى ؕ﴿٢١﴾

XCII

AL-LAIL

اللَّيل

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.[1] So he who gave wealth (in God's Way) and avoided (God's disobedience), and believed in goodness,[2] for him We shall facilitate the easy way.[3] As for him who was niggardly and lived as though he was independent (of God) and belied goodness,[4] for him We shall facilitate the hard way.[5] And what will his wealth avail him when he perishes?[6] 1-11

Indeed, it is for Us to tell the Way,[7] and, indeed, Ours are both the Hereafter and this present life.[8] 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.[9] 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,[10] and He will certainly be well-pleased (with him)[11]. 12-21

---

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 divided 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 *Tauhīd*, 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 Sharī'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 consience 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 Sūrah 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. 86). This then is the way in which there is nothing but joy and tranquillity for man, for 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, and 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 *Zakat* 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 endeavourings 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 anjoyments 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 ways", 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, *salāt* 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 *salāt,* they come reluctantly and they expend in the way of Allah with unwilling hearts." (At-Taubah: 54), and that: "There are such among them, who regard what they expend in the way of Allah as a penalty." (At-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 of 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-Naḥl; 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 pious 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 Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Siddīq (may Allah bless him). He would purchase 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 Jarīr 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

AḌ-ḌUHĀ

الضُّحٰى

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XCIII

AḌ-ḌUHĀ

الضُّحٰى

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name *Aḍ-Ḍuhā* 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 (*Waḥī*), 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 Revelatiom. 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 nced for long gaps

Theme and Subject-Matter

Its theme is to consolc the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and its object to remove his anxiety and distress, which had been caused by the suspension of Revelation. First of all sweaing 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.



وَالضُّحٰى ۝١ وَالَّيْلِ اِذَا سَجٰى ۝٢ مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلٰى ۝٣ وَلَلْاٰخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ
لَّكَ مِنَ الْاُوْلٰى ۝٤ وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيْكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضٰى ۝٥ اَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيْمًا
فَاٰوٰى ۝٦ وَوَجَدَكَ ضَآلًّا فَهَدٰى ۝٧ وَوَجَدَكَ عَآئِلًا فَاَغْنٰى ۝٨ فَاَمَّا الْيَتِيْمَ
فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ۝٩ وَاَمَّا السَّآئِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ۝١٠ وَاَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ۝١١

XCIII

AḌ-ḌUḤĀ

الضُّحٰى

Verses: 11 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

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

of your Lord.[11]

1. Here, the word *duhā* 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 *duhā* 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 differenent 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 revelation 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, Tabarānī, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid, Sa'īd bin Mansūr, Ibn Mardūyah). Other traditions show that Umm Jamil, 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 *mursal* 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 tha 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 days 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 *Awsaṭ* 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 *Lā ilāha ill-allāh-u Muhammad 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 nation sunk in paganism might have completely changed in only 33 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, Abu Ṭālib, became his guardian and treated him with such rare love that one 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 *ḍāāllan* as used in the original is derived from *ḍalālat*, 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 *ḍāāllah* which stands alone and lonely in the desert; the word *ḍalāl* 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 dāāllan* 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 anyway 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. *Ḍalāl* 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, Ḥaḍrat Khadījah, 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." Ḥaḍrat Abud-Dardā', Ḥasan Baṣrī, Sufyān Thauri and some other scholars have preferred this second meaning, for in view of the order and sequence this instruction corresponds to: *wa wajadaka ḍāālllan 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 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 peoples 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
NASHRAḤ
اَلَمْ نَشْرَح

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

XCIV

ALAM-NASHRAḤ

اَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah is so designated after the first sentence.

Period of Revelation

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

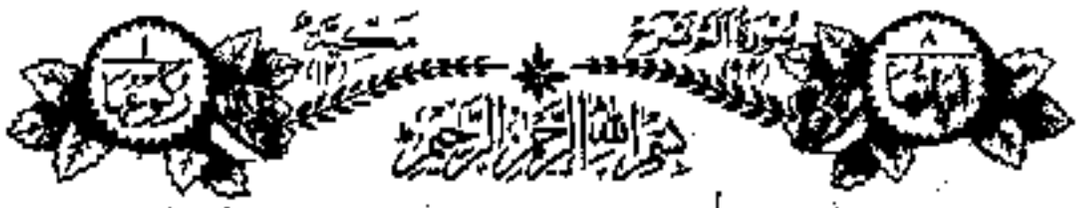
Theme and Subject Matter

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-Ḍuhā* 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 ṣadr* (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 *Aḍ-Ḍuhā*, 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-Muzzammil:



أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ ۝١ وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ ۝٢ الَّذِيْ أَنْقَضَ
ظَهْرَكَ ۝٣ وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ ۝٤ فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ۝٥ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ
يُسْرًا ۝٦ فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانْصَبْ ۝٧ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ ۝٨

XCIV

ALAM-NASHRAH

اَلَم نَشْرَح

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?[1] And removed from you the heavy burden that was weighing down your back,[2] and exalted your renown for you.[3] So, the fact is that along with every hardship there is also ease. Indeed, with every hardship there is also ease![4] Hence, when you are free, devote yourself to the labour of worship, and turn all your attention to your Lord.[5] 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 *sharh sadr* (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 sadrahū lil-Islām*)"; and in Sūrah Az-Zumar; 22: "Can the person whose breast Allah has opened for Islam (*sharahallāhu sadrahū lil-Islām*) and he is walking in the light shown by his Lord.." At both these places *sharh sadr* 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-lī sadrī*) 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 *sharh sadr* 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 ploytheistic Arabs, Christians, Jews and fire-worshippers as false, and was not even satisfied with the *hanīfiyyat* 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.'s of As-Sajdah). 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 worldy 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 *Ḥadîth*. But the fact is that the proof of that miracle is dependent only on the traditions of the *Ḥadith*, 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 sadr*. 'Allāma Ālūsī in the *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī* says: "In the sight of the research scholars it is a weak thing to regard *sharḥ ṣadr* as *shaqq sadr*."

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 *Tauhīd*, 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 pilgrimage 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. 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'ān 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 Madīnah 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 become 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 Muḥammad ar-Rasūl-Allāh* 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 Muḥammad (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'na 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 *Ḥadīth* 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 Jarir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Musnad Abū Ya'lā, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Hibbān 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

AT-TĪN

اَلتِّين

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XCV

AT-TĪN

اَلتِّين

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been so named after the very first word *attīn*.

Period of Revelation

According to Qatādah, this Sūrah is Madanī. Two different views have been reported from Ibn 'Abbās: first that it is a Makkī Sūrah and second that it is Madanī. But the majority of scholars regard it as a Makkī revelation, a manifest symbol of which is the use of the words *hādh-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

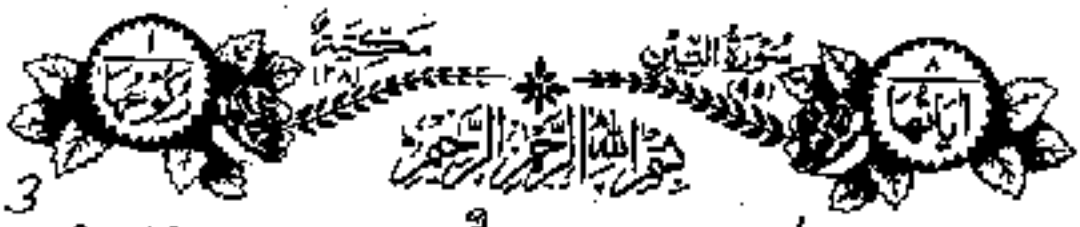
conflict had started between Islam and unbelief. Moreover, it reflects the same style of the earliest revelations of Makkah period in which briefly and succinctly the people have been made to realize that the judgement of the Hereafter is necessary and absolutely rational.

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-Ḥijr: 28, 29, An-Naml: 62, Suād: 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-Aḥzāb: 72); and at still others that: "We honoured the children of Adam and exalted them above many of Our other creatures (Banī Isrā'īl: 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?



وَ التِّيْنِ وَ الزَّيْتُوْنِ ۙ﴿۱﴾ وَ طُوْرِ سِيْنِيْنَ ۙ﴿۲﴾ وَ هٰذَا الْبَلَدِ الْاَمِيْنِ ۙ﴿۳﴾ لَقَدْ
خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ فِيْۤ اَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيْمٍ ۖ﴿۴﴾ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنٰهُ اَسْفَلَ سٰفِلِيْنَ ۙ﴿۵﴾ اِلَّا
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَلَهُمْ اَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُوْنٍ ؕ﴿۶﴾ فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ
بَعْدُ بِالدِّيْنِ ؕ﴿۷﴾ اَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِاَحْكَمِ الْحٰكِمِيْنَ ۧ﴿۸﴾

XCV
AT-TĪN
اَلتِّين

Verses:8

Revealed at Makkah

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

By the fig and the olive[1] and the Mount Sinai[2] and this City of peace (Makkah), We have indeed created man in the finest of moulds,[3] then We reversed him to the lowest of the low,[4] except those who believed and did good works. For them there is a reward unending.[5] Therefore, (O Prophet,) who can after this belie you concerning the rewards and punishments?[6] Is not Allah the best of all judges?[7] 1-8

1. There has been much difference of opinion among the commentators about the explanation of this verse. Hasan Basrī, 'Ikrimah, 'Atā' bin Abī Rabāh, 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 Hātim and Hākim have cited a statement from Hadrat '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 *tīn* 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 *tīn* and *zaytūn* to imply some places. Ka'b Abhār, Qatadah and Ibn Zaid say that *tīn* implies Damascus and *zaytūn* Bait al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). A view of Ibn 'Abbās has been cited by Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Hātim and Ibn Mardūyah to the effect that *tīn* implies the mosque of the Prophet Noah, which he built on Mt. Judi, and *zaytūn* implies Bait al-Maqdis, but hearing the words *wat-tīn 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'an that *tīn* 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 *tīn* 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 *tīn* 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*. *Sinīn* is another name for the Sinai Peninsula. It is called Sainā or Sīnā as well as Sīnīn. In the Qur'ān itself at one place the words *Tūr-i-Sīnīn*, have been used. Since the land in which Mt. Sinai is located is well known as Sinā, 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 these excellencies and unique merits of mankind's 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 argument 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 sāfilīn* 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 *sāfilīn* to imply being cast into the lowest stage of Hell interpret this verse to mean: "the people also 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 *Wat-tīn waz-zaytūn* and reaches *Alais-Allāh-u bi-aḥkami-l-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

العَلَق

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XCVI
AL-'ALAQ
العَلَق

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 Ḥaḍrat 'A'ishah, which Imām

Aḥmad, Bukhāri, Muslim and other traditionists have related with several chains of authorities, is one of the most authentic *Aḥādīth* on the subject. In it Hadrat 'Ā'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 Imam Az-Zuhrī, who had it from Hadrat 'Urwah bin Zubair, who had it from Hadrat 'Ā'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 Hadrat 'Ā'ishah has used the word *tahannuth*, which Imām Zuhrī 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 Hadrat Khadījah 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 Hadrat 'Ā'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 kalladhī khalaqa*: (Read in the name of your Lord Who created) till he reached *mā lam ya'lam* (what he did not know)." Hadrat 'Ā'ishah says: "Then the Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) returned home to Hadrat Khadījah 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. Ḥadrat Khadījah 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 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 efficet of which one 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 Prorphets life and how sublime was His character before Prophethood. Ḥadrat Khadījah 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 Allāh'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 *Nāmus* 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 Hadrat Abū Huraira, which mention the foolish behaviour of Abū Jahl.

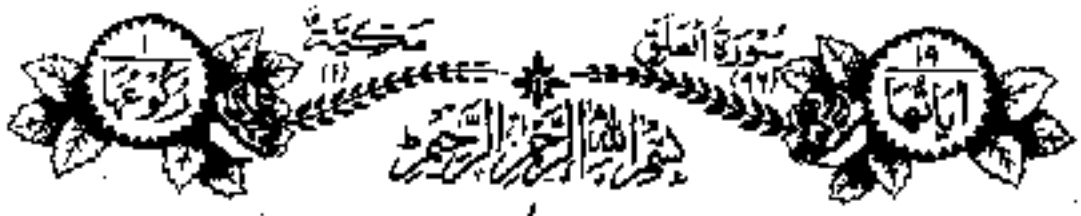
Hadrat Abū Huraira says that Abū Jahl asked the people of Quraish: "Does Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) set his face on the ground before you?" When they replied in the affirmative, he said: "By Lāt and 'Uzzā., if I ever caught him in that act of worship., I would set my foot on 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." (Ahmad, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Abū Nu'aim Isfahānī, Baihaqī).

According to Ibn 'Abbās, Abu 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, Tirmidhi, Nasā'ī: 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, Ṭirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ṭabarāni, Ibn Mardūyah).

Because of these very incidents the portion of this Sūrah beginning with *Kallā inn-al-insāna la-yatghā* 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.



اِقْرَاْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَ ۚ﴿۱﴾ خَلَقَ الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۚ﴿۲﴾
اِقْرَاْ وَ رَبُّكَ الْاَكْرَمُ ۙ﴿۳﴾ الَّذِیْ عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۙ﴿۴﴾ عَلَّمَ الْاِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ
یَعْلَمْ ؕ﴿۵﴾ كَلَّاۤ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لَیَطْغٰۤی ۙ﴿۶﴾ اَنْ رَّاٰهُ اسْتَغْنٰی ؕ﴿۷﴾ اِنَّ اِلٰی
رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعٰی ؕ﴿۸﴾ اَرَءَیْتَ الَّذِیْ یَنْهٰی ۙ﴿۹﴾ عَبْدًا اِذَا صَلّٰی ؕ﴿۱۰﴾ اَرَءَیْتَ
اِنْ كَانَ عَلَی الْهُدٰۤی ۙ﴿۱۱﴾ اَوْ اَمَرَ بِالتَّقْوٰی ؕ﴿۱۲﴾ اَرَءَیْتَ اِنْ كَذَّبَ وَ
تَوَلّٰی ؕ﴿۱۳﴾ اَلَمْ یَعْلَمْ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ یَرٰی ؕ﴿۱۴﴾ كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَّمْ یَنْتَهِ ۙ
لَنَسْفَعًۢا بِالنَّاصِیَةِ ۙ﴿۱۵﴾ نَاصِیَةٍ كَاذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ ۚ﴿۱۶﴾ فَلْیَدْعُ
نَادِیَهٗ ۙ﴿۱۷﴾ سَنَدْعُ الزَّبَانِیَةَ ۙ﴿۱۸﴾ كَلَّا ؕ لَا تُطِعْهُ وَ اسْجُدْ
وَ اقْتَرِبْ ۩﴿۱۹﴾

السجدة ١٩

XCVI
AL-'ALAQ

Verses: 19 العَلَق *Revealed at Makkah*

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

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

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

What do you think: if (the Servant) be on the right path, or be exorting to piety? What do you think; if the one forbidding be belying

(the Truth) and turning away? Does he not know that Allah sees?[11] By no means![12] If he does not desist, We shall drag him by his forelock, the forelock that is lying and utterly sinful.[13] So let him call his band of supporters;[14] We, too, shall call the angels of torment.[15] Nay, never! Do not obey him, and prostrate yourself and draw closer (to your Lord).[16]

---

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": *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-Hajj: 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 Ḥadīth reported by Ḥadrat 'Ā'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-Ḥarām* to the distant Temple." (Banī Isrā'īl: 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 forbidder 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 Muhammad (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 Abu Jahl on his foolish behaviour, he had retorted: "O Muhammad, 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

الْقَدْر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XCVII

AL-QADR

الْقَدْر

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-Muḥīṭ* 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 Makkī revelation, and the same view has Imām Suyūtī 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

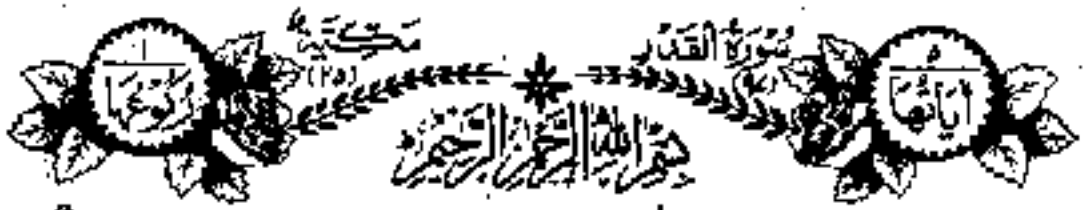
Its theme is to acquaint man with the value, worth and importance of the Qur'ān. Its being placed just after Sūrah Al-'Alaq in the arrangement of the Qur'ān by itself explains that the Holy Book, the revelation of which began with the first five verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq, was sent down in a destiny-making 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 Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) himself, but We Ourself 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-ḥakīm:* 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.



إِنَّآ أَنزَلْنَٰهُ فِى لَيْلَةِ ٱلْقَدْرِ ۝١ وَمَآ أَدْرَىٰكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ ٱلْقَدْرِ ۝٢ لَيْلَةُ
ٱلْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ۝٣ تَنَزَّلُ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ وَٱلرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ
رَبِّهِم مِّن كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ۝٤ سَلَٰمٌ هِىَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ ٱلْفَجْرِ ۝٥

XCVII
AL-QADR
الْقَدْر

Verses: 65 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

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

1. The words in the original are *anzalnā-hu;* "We Ourself 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 Ḥātim, 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 'Abbas 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 pence) 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 (*taqdīr*)...*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 Zuhrī 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 it 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 *Aḥādīth* which have been reported in this connection:

According to Ḥaḍrat Abu Hurairah, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said, in connection with *Lailat-ul qadr*, that it is the 27th night. (Abū Da'ūd Tayālisī). According to another tradition from Ḥadrat 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. (Ahmad, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Ḥibbān).

When Hadrat Abū Zarr was asked about it, he said: "Hadrat 'Umar, Hadrat Hudhaifah 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-al-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 Ramadān 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'ī).

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 a great Companions like Ḥaḍrat Mu'āwiyah, Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbas 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 Ramadān 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 excellencies 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-ut-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

اَلْبَيِّنَه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XCVIII

AL-BAYYINAH

الْبَيِّنَه

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 Midīnah, 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. Hadrat 'Ā'ishah regards it as a Makkī Sūrah.

Abū Hayyān, author of *Bahr al-Muhīt*, and 'Abdul Mun'im ibn al-Faras, author of *Ahkām 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 .

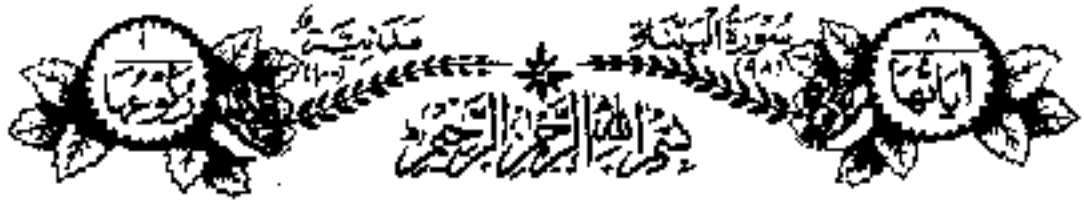
First of all, the need of sending a Messenger has been explained, saying: The people of the world, be they from among the followers of the earlier scriptures or from among the idolaters, could not possibly be freed from their state of unbelief, until a Messenger was sent whose appearance by itself should 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 true service to Allah be adopted, apart from all other ways, no one else's worship, service or obedience be mixed with His, the *salāt* 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.



لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ وَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ مُنْفَكِّيْنَ حَتّٰى
تَاْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ ۙ﴿۱﴾ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ يَتْلُوْا صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً ۙ﴿۲﴾ فِيْهَا كُتُبٌ
قَيِّمَةٌ ؕ﴿۳﴾ وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْهُمُ
الْبَيِّنَةُ ؕ﴿۴﴾ وَمَاۤ اُمِرُوْۤا اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ ۙ۬ حُنَفَآءَ
وَ يُقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَ يُؤْتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَ ذٰلِكَ دِيْنُ الْقَيِّمَةِ ؕ﴿۵﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا مِنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ وَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ فِيْ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ
هُمْ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ ؕ﴿۶﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ
الْبَرِيَّةِ ؕ﴿۷﴾ جَزَآؤُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ
خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَاۤ اَبَدًا ؕ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ وَ رَضُوْا عَنْهُ ؕ ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهٗ ؕ﴿۸﴾

XCVIII

AL-BAYYINAH

اَلْبَيِّنَه

Verses: 8 *Revealed at Madinah*

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

The disbelievers[1] from among the people of the Book and the *mushriks*[2] would not desist (from their unbelief) until the clear evidence should come to them,[3] (that is,) a Messenger[4] from Allah, who should recite to them holy scriptures[5] 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[6] 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 *salāt* and to pay the *zakāt*: for this alone is the most true and right religion.[7] 4-5

Those who have disbelieved[8] 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.[9] As for those who believed and did righteous works, they are indeed the best of all creatures.[10] 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.[11] 6-8

---

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 did not acknowledge another; others rejected the

Hereafter. In short, there were different kinds of *kufr* 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 *kufr*, but that those who were involved in *kufr* 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-Ḥajj: 30, where it has been said *Fajtanib-ur-rijsa min al-authān*, 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 *kufr* 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'an has the term *"mushrik"* been used for them, but they have been mentioned as *"alladhīna ūtū-ul-Kitāba"* (those who were given the Book), or by the words Jews and Christians. For they believed in the principle of *Tauḥīd* (Oueness 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 *Tauḥīd*. This distinction between the two groups holds good not only in the use of the term but also in the Sharī'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'ān at different places in different ways, *e.g.* in Sūrah An-Naḥl: 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'ān in spite of being un-lettered, 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 errors 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 Muhammad (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 belief 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 *din 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 Muhammad (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 resolved for him with Allah.


XCIX
AZ-ZILZĀL
الزِّلزال

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XCIX

AZ-ZILZĀL

الزِّلزال

INTRODUCTION

Name

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

Period of Revelation

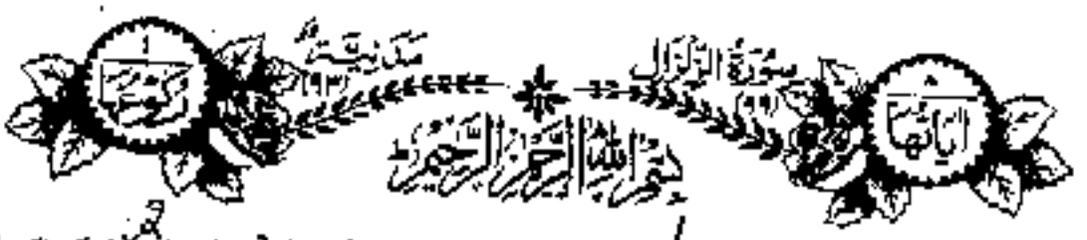
Whether or not it was revealed, at Makkah or Madīnah, is disputed. Ibn Mas'ūd, 'Atā', Jābir and Mujāhid say that it is a Makkī Sūrah and a statement of Ibn 'Abbās also supports this view. On the contrary, Qatādah and Muqātil say that it is Madanī and another

statement of Ibn 'Abbās also has been cited in support of this view. That it is a Madanī Sūrah is reasoned from a tradition from Hadrat Abu Sa'īd Khudri, which Ibn Abī 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 yara,* 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 Madanī is that Hadrat 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 Madanī Sūrah. However, the practice that the Companion's 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 Hadrat 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.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا ۝١ وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا ۝٢ وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ
مَا لَهَا ۝٣ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا ۝٤ بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا ۝٥ يَوْمَئِذٍ
يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ ۝٦ فَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ
خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ۝٧ وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ۝٨



XCIX
AZ-ZILZĀL

الزِّلزال

Verses: 8

Revealed at Madīnah

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

When the earth is shaken with her utmost shaking,[1] and the earth casts out all the burdens from within her,[2] and man says, "What has befallen her?"[3]— On that Day shall she relate whatever had happened (on her),[4] for your Lord shall have commanded her (to do so). On that daymen shall turn up in sundry groups[5] to be shown their deeds.[6] 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.[7] 1-8

1. *Zalzalah* means to shake violently over and over again. Thus, *zulzilat-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 *zilzālahā* has been added, which literally means "its being shaken". It mean: "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 ?" 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 Hadrat 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 Ḥadrat Rabī'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)*. Ḥadrat 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 Ḥadrat 'Ali it is related that when he distributed the money of the *Bait al-Māl* (public treasury) among the needy ones and thus emptied 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, loudspeaker, 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 it 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 record in which the two recording angels are recording his each word and deed. (Qāf: 17-18, Al-Infiṭār: 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." (Banī 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 Mīm 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-'Ādiyat below. That is why with the production of such absolute, clear and undeniable proofs, man 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 with 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 *Ḥadīth*.

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-yuraw' jazā'a a'mālahum* (so as to be shown the rewards of their deeds) but *li-yuraw' 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-Ḥāqqah: 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 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 *Ḥadīth*, 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 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 *Ḥadīth*, 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 there 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-Ahqāf: 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 ten-fold 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-Qasas: 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-Ahqāf: 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 Hadrat 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 Jarīr, Ibn Abī

Ḥātim, Ṭabarānī in *Al-Ausaṭ*, 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 Mardūyah). 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-lī khaṭī'atī yaum ad-dīn*: '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 (*Rūh al-Ma'ānī*).

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 not 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 'Adi, in an authentic tradition, the Holy Prophet's 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 Bukhārī 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'ī 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 Ahmad 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

العٰدِيٰت

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

C

AL-'ĀDIYĀT

العٰدِيٰت

INTRODUCTION

Name'

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

Period of Revelation

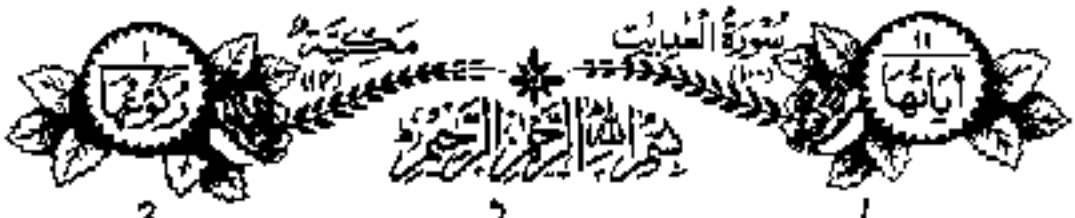
Whether it is a Makkī or a Madanī Sūrah is disputed. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Jābir, Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Ikrimah and 'Atā' say that it is Makkī. Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik and Qatādah say that it is Madanī; and

from Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās two views have been reported, first that it is a Makkī Sūrah, and second that it is Madanī. But the subject-matter of the Sūrah and its style clearly indicate that it is not only Makkī 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.



وَالْعٰدِيٰتِ ضَبْحًا ۝١ فَالْمُوْرِيٰتِ قَدْحًا ۝٢ فَالْمُغِيْرٰتِ صُبْحًا ۝٣ فَاَثَرْنَ بِهٖ
نَقْعًا ۝٤ فَوَسَطْنَ بِهٖ جَمْعًا ۝٥ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهٖ لَكَنُوْدٌ ۝٦ وَاِنَّهٗ عَلٰى ذٰلِكَ
لَشَهِيْدٌ ۝٧ وَاِنَّهٗ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيْدٌ ۝٨ اَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ اِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِى الْقُبُوْرِ ۝٩
وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِى الصُّدُوْرِ ۝١٠ اِنَّ رَبَّهُمْ بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيْرٌ ۝١١

C

AL-'ĀDIYĀT

العٰدِيٰت

Verses: 11 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

By the (horses) who run with panting breath;[1] then dash off sparks (with their hoofs);[2] then charge suddenly in the morning;[3] then raise up dust in doing so; then penetrate into a host in a body! Verily, man is ungrateful to his Lord;[4] and he himself is a witness to it;[5] and he loves the worldly wealth with all his heart.[6] But, does he not know the time when all that lies (buried) in the graves shall be brought out,[7] and all that lies (hidden) in the breasts shall be divulged and examined?[8] Surely, their Lord on that Day shall be well informed of them.[9] 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-'Ādiyāt* (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 *dabh* 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'." Imam Rāzi says: "The words of these verses proclaim that horses are meant, for the sound of *dabh* (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 bloodshed, 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 agrument 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 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 *hussila mā fiṣ-ṣudūr* have been used. *Taḥṣīl* means to bring out something in the open, and to sort out different things from one another. Thus, the use of *taḥṣīl* concerning hidden secrets of the hearts coutains 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 punishement or reward he deserves.


CI
AL-QĀRI'AH
القارِعَة

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CI

AL-QĀRI'AH

القارِعَة

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.



اَلْقَارِعَةُ ۝١ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ ۝٢ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ ۝٣ يَوْمَ يَكُوْنُ النَّاسُ
كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوْثِ ۝٤ وَتَكُوْنُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوْشِ ۝٥ فَاَمَّا مَنْ
ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِيْنُهٗ ۝٦ فَهُوَ فِيْ عِيْشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ ۝٧ وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِيْنُهٗ ۝٨
فَاُمُّهٗ هَاوِيَةٌ ۝٩ وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا هِيَهْ ۝١٠ نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ ۝١١

CI
AL-QĀRI'AH

القارِعَة

Verses: 11 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

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

---

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 for the Resurrection and in Sūrah Al-Hāāqqah too the Resurrection 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 *mawāzīn* in the original can be plural of *mauzūn* as well as of *mīzan*. In the first case, *mawāzīn* would imply the deeds which might have some weight in the sight of Allah and be, thus, worthy of appreciation; in the second case, *mawāzīn* would imply scales of a balance. In the first case, the meaning of the *mawāzīn'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 *mawāzīn'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 (*wazn*); accordingly, the weight's being heavy or light implies the good deeds being heavy or light. In any case, whether *mawāzīn* is taken in the meaning of *mauzūn* or of *mizān*, or of *wazn*, 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 whose all 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 in 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 hāwiyah:* "his mother will be *hāwiyah.*" *Hāwiyah* is from *hawā*, which means to fall from a height to a depth, and *hāwiyah* is the deep pit into which something falls. Hell has been called *Hāwiyah* 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 *Hāwiyah*", 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-TAKĀTHUR

التَّكاثُر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CII

AT-TAKĀTHUR

التَّكاثُر

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 Suyūti. 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 Abu Buraidah as saying that this Sūrah was sent down concerning the two tribes, Banī Ḥārithah and Banī al-Harth, of the Anṣār. The two tribes had first recounted the glories and illustrious deeds of their living men; then they had gone to the graveyard and bragged of the glorious deeds of their dead. Thereupon the Divine Revelation *Alhākum at-takathur* 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 Jarir have cited this view of Hadrat 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 āt-takāthur* was sent down." This *Ḥadīth* has been regarded as an argument for Sūrah At-Takāthur to be a Madanī Sūrah on the ground that Hadrat Ubayy had become a Muslim in Madinah. But Hadrat 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 Jarīr, Tirmidhī, 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 Madīnah; no mention of it was ever made at Makkah. But this is wrong. In the Makkī Sūrahs of the Qur'ān, the torment of the grave has been mentioned at many places so clearly that there can he no room for any such doubt; for

example, see Al-An'ām: 93, An-Naḥl: 28, 'Al-Mu'minūn: 99-100, Al-Mu'min: 45-46, which are all Makkī 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 Makkī 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 Makkī. In our opinion this is not only a Makkī 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."



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

أَلْهٰىكُمُ التَّكَاثُرُ ۝١ حَتّٰى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ ۝٢ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝٣ ثُمَّ كَلَّا
سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝٤ كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِيْنِ ۝٥ لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيْمَ ۝٦ ثُمَّ
لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِيْنِ ۝٧ ثُمَّ لَتُسْـَٔلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيْمِ ۝٨

CII
AT-TAKĀTHUR
التَّكاثُر

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,[1] until (in the same craze) you reach the graves.[2] By no means! Soon you shall know![3] 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.[4] 1-8

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, *alhakum 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 *alhakum 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, *takathur* 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.

Hadrat 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'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, 'Abd bin Humaid, Baihaqi in *Ash-Shu'ab).*

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah has reported that the Holy Prophet once asked Hadrat Abu Bakr and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar to accompany him to the place of Abul-Haitham bin at-Taihān 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, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, 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 Ḥadrat 'Umar and by Imām Aḥmad from Abū 'Asīb, the Holy Prophet's freed slave. Ibn Ḥibbān 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

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CIII
AL-'ASR
العَصْر

INTRODUCTION

Name

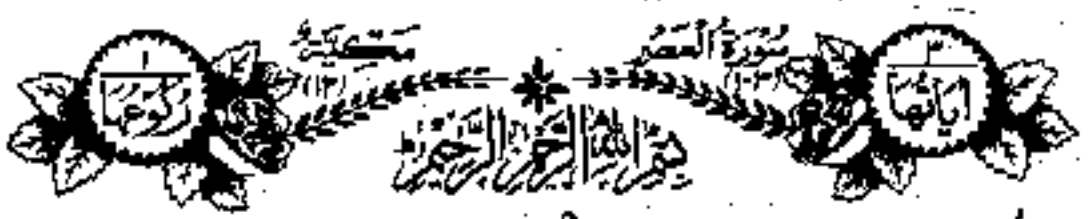
The Sūrah takes its name from word *al-'aṣr* occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Although Mujāhid, Qatādah and Muqātil regard it as a Madanī Sūrah, yet a great majority of the commentators opine that it is Makkī; 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-Dārimi Abū Madinah, 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 ۝١ إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ۝٢ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَ
تَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ ۙ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ۝٣

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.[1] 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 186,000 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 Rāzī 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-'aṣr-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 antire 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 *falāḥ* (true success). And just as its concept of *falāḥ* 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 *falāḥ* 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-Ḥajj, 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 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, Aṣ-Ṣaff: 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 *saddaqa-hū wa'tamada 'alai-hi:* "affirmed him and put faith in him", and *āmana bi-hī* means *aiqana bi-hī:* "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-Ḥujurāt: 15)

"Those who said: 'Allah is our Lord', and then stood steadfast by it." (Hā Mīm 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*) *Ṣaliḥāt* 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'ān, 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 perfrom 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 believeing 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 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 a 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'rāf, 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

الهُمَزه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CIV
AL-HUMAZAH
الهُمَزه

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 Makkī Sūrah; a study of its subject-matter and style shows that this too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

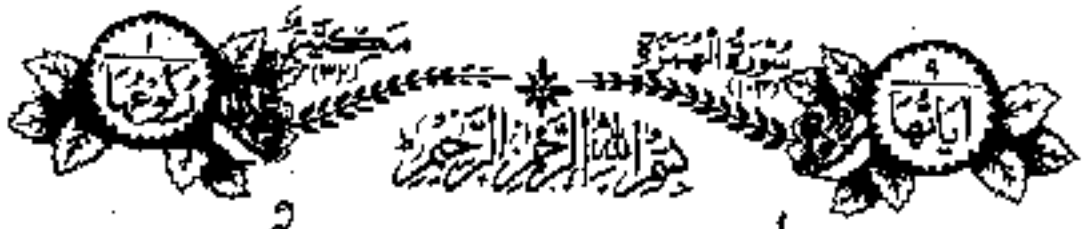
Theme and Subject-Matter

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-Zilzāl, 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 materialistic 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-'Asr 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?"



وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ ۝١ الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ ۝٢ يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ
أَخْلَدَهُ ۝٣ كَلَّا لَيُنۢبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ ۝٤ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحُطَمَةُ ۝٥ نَارُ
اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَةُ ۝٦ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْـِٔدَةِ ۝٧ إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِم مُّؤْصَدَةٌ ۝٨
فِي عَمَدٍ مُّمَدَّدَةٍ ۝٩

CIV
AL-HUMAZAH

الْهُمَزَه

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[1], who gathers wealth and counts it over and over again.[2] He thinks that his wealth will remain with him for ever.[3] Nay, never! He will be cast[4] into the crushing place.[5] And what do you know what the crushing place is? It is the Fire of Allah,[6] kindled brightly, which shall rise up to the hearts.[7] It will be covered down on them[8] (in a way that) they shall be (enclosed) by tall columns.[9] 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-yunbádhanna. 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 *ḥutamah* in the original is from *ḥatm*, 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. *Tattali'u* is from *iṭṭala'a*, which means to climb and mount to the top, and also to be aware and informed. *Af'idah* is plural of *fuwād*, 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-in-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 'Abbas, the flames of the fire shall be rising high like tall columns.


CV
AL-FĪL
اَلفِيل

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

CV
AL-FĪL
اَلفِيل

INTRODUCTION

Name

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

Period of Revelation

This is unanimously a Makkī 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 Augustas 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. III of The Meaning of the Qur'ān, Vol. II). 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. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr says that it was led by two commanders, Aryāt and Abrahah, and according to Muḥammad bin Isḥāq, 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 sovereignty 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 Hīrah 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 Muḥammad 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."[1] Ibn Kathīr writes that he 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. Muhammad 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 it on fire. 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 Habīb 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 Tā'if, Banī Thaqīf 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 Abrahah with his men, and 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.

---

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.

Abrahah accepted the offer, and Banī Thaqīf sent Abu Righāl as guide with him. When they reached al-Mghammas. (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 Banī Thaqīf 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 Isḥāq, from al-Mughammas Abrahah 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. Abrahah 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 Muttalib. The envoy went to him and delivered Abrahah's message. 'Abdul Muṭṭalib replied: "We have no power to fight Abrahah. This is Allah's House. If He wills He will save His House." The envoy asked him to go with him to Abrahah. He agreed and accompanied him to the king. Now 'Abdul Muṭṭalib was such a dignified and handsome man that when Abrahah saw him he was much impressed; he got up of 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 it rested between the owner of Ka'bah 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 Baihaqi, he states that when Abrahah reached As-Sifāh (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 Muttalib 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 Isḥāq 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."

Suhailī 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 Jarīr 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, Mahmūd, 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 Muhammad bin Isḥāq 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 Habīb, 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.[1]

This event took place at Muhassir by the Muḥassab 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 Muhammad Baqir, and he from Hadrat 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. Imam 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 Muhassir. In the verses of Nufail bin Ḥabib, which Ibn Isḥāq has cited, he describes this event as an eye-witness:

"Would that you had seen, O Ruḍaina, but you would not see,
What we saw by the valley of Muḥassab.

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:

---

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.

"The sixty thousand returned not home,

Nor did their sick man (Abrahah) survive on return.

'Ād 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."

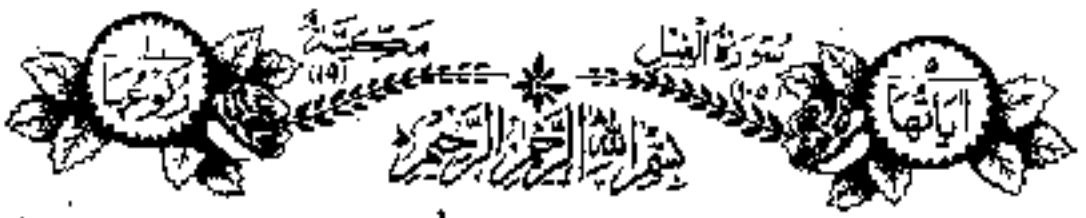
Not only this, but according to Hadrat Umm Hāni and Hadrat Zubair bin al 'Awwām, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "The Quraish did not worship anyone but Allah, the Only and One, for ten years (and according to others, for seven years. Umm Ḥāni's tradition has been related by Imām Bukhārī in his History and by Ṭabarāni, Ḥākim, Ibn Mardūyah and Baihaqī in their collections of *Aḥādīth*. Ḥadrat Zubair's statement has been related by Ṭabarāni, Ibn Mardūyah and Ibn 'Asākir, and this is further confirmed by the *mursal* tradition of Ḥadrat Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab, which Khatīb 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 Muharram 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 Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) was giving. For the only message that he gave was that 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.



اَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِاَصْحٰبِ الْفِيْلِ ﴿١﴾ اَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِيْ
تَضْلِيْلٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَّاَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا اَبَابِيْلَ ﴿٣﴾ تَرْمِيْهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّنْ
سِجِّيْلٍ ﴿٤﴾ فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّاْكُوْلٍ ﴿٥﴾

CV

AL-FĪL

اَلْفِيل

Verses:5

Revealed at Makkah

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

Have you not seen[1] how your Lord dealt with the people of the elephant?[2] Did He not cause their plan[3] to end in vain?[4] and sent down on them swarms of birds,[5] which pelted them with stones of baked clay[6] Then He rendered them like straw eaten up by cattle.[7] 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'ān 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 Ibrāhīm: 19, Al-Ḥajj: 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, *fī taḍlīl* 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 aḍ-ḍalīl"* (the king who lost and wasted), for he had lost the kingdom left by his father.

5. *Abābīl* 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'īd 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 Tihamah (the land between Hijaz 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 wich 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 ḥijārat-im-min sijjīl* means "stones of *sijjīl* type." Ibn 'Abbās says that *sijjīl* 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-Ḥijr: 74, it has been said that stones of baked clay (*sijjīl*) 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 (*ḥijārat-im-min tin*).

Maulanā Hamid-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 *tarmīhim* 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 Ḥajj, 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 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 Muharram 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 *tarmihim bi-ḥijārat-im min-sijjīl* (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 *'asf* as used in the original has already occurred in verse 12 of Sūrah Ar-Rahmān above: *dhul-'asf war-raihān*: "and corn with husk as well as grain". This shows that *'asf* 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

QUR'AISH

قُرَيش

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CVI

QURAISH

قُرَيش

INTRODUCTION

Name

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

Period of Revelation

Although Ḍaḥḥāk and Kalbi regard it as a Madanī Sūrah, yet a great majority of the commentators are agreed that it is Makki, 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-Fīl 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 Sūrah 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-Fīl in view.

The tribe of Quraish was scattered throughout Ḥijāz until the time of Qusayy bin Kilāb, the ancestor of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace). First of all, Qusayy gathered it in Makkah and this tribe was able to gain authority over the Ka'bah. On that very basis Qusayy was called *mujammi'* (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 Qusayy the offices of the state of Makkah were divided between his sons, 'Abdi Manāf and 'Abd ad-Dar, 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 Muttalib 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.

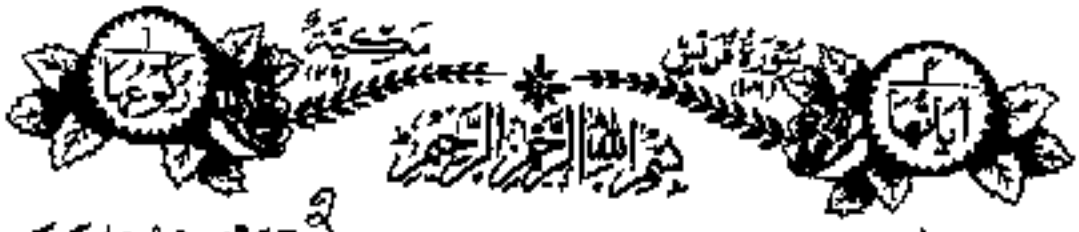
Because of their business relations with Syria, Egypt, 'Irāq, Irān, Yaman and Abyssinia, the Quraish came across such opportunities and their direct contact with the culture and civilization of different countries so enhanced the level of their knowledge and wisdom that no tribe in Arabia could match 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 'Alī 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 Qusayy bin Kilab. 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."



لِاِيْلٰفِ قُرَيْشٍ ۙ اٖلٰفِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَآءِ وَالصَّيْفِ ۚ فَلْيَعْبُدُوْا رَبَّ هٰذَا
الْبَيْتِ ۙ الَّذِيْٓ اَطْعَمَهُمْ مِّنْ جُوْعٍ ۙ وَّاٰمَنَهُمْ مِّنْ خَوْفٍ ۚ

CVI

QURAISH

قُرَيش

Verses: 4

Revealed at Makkah

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

As the Quraish become accustomed,[1] (that is,) accustomed to their journeys in the winter and the summer.[2] so they should worship the Lord of this House,[3] Who has fed them against hunger[4] and made them secure against fear.[5] 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'ī and Farrā', and holding this opinion 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, Khalīl bin Ahmad, Sībawaih and Zamakhsharī say that this is the *lām* of *ta'līl* and it relates to the following sentence: *Fal-ya'budū Rabba hādh 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." (Ibrahīm: 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 become 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 untouched as soon as the word *"ḥarami"* or *"anā min ḥaramillāh"* was heard from him.


CVII
AL-MĀ'ŪN
الماعُون

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CVII
AL-MĀ'ŪN
الماعُون

INTRODUCTION

Name

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

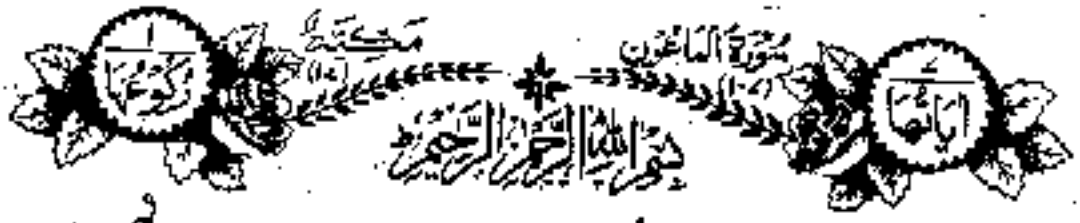
Period of Revelation

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 Hayyān in *al-Muḥīṭ* has cited Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Ḍaḥḥāk 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 Madanī 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.



أَرَءَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالدِّينِ ۝١ فَذَٰلِكَ الَّذِي يَدُعُّ الْيَتِيمَ ۝٢ وَلَا يَحُضُّ
عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ ۝٣ فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُصَلِّينَ ۝٤ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَن صَلَاتِهِمْ
سَاهُونَ ۝٥ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَآءُونَ ۝٦ وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ ۝٧

CVII

AL-MĀ'ŪN

الماعون

Verses: 7 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

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

2. The word *ad-dīn* as 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 orphans 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, Qāḍi Abul Hasan 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 Muhammad (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 yaḥuddu* 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 *ta'ām-il-miskīn* and not *it'ām-il-miskīn*. If *ta'ām-il-miskīn* were the words, the meaning would be that he does not urge (others) to feed the poor. But *ta'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-musallīn* 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 "*muṣallīn*" 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 *ṣalāt*", *i.e.* of those included among Muslims.

9. The words used are *'an-salāt-i-him sāhūn* and not *fī ṣalāt-i-him sāhūn*. In case the words *fī ṣalāt-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 *Sharī'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 ṣalāt-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 perform 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 soullessly 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 believe 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 'Aṭā bin Dinār say: "Thanks to God that he said *'an ṣalāt-i-him* and not *fī ṣalāt-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 Ḥātim, Ṭabarānī in *Ausaṭ*, 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 Ḥākim). Another traditoin 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 Hātim, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī in *Ash-Shu'ab*). In the Qur'ān too the hypocrites have been described thus: "When they rise up for the *salāt*, 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 Ḥanafiyyah, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibn Zaid, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, 'Atā' and Zuhri (may Allah show them mercy) is that it implies the *zakāt* while Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibrāhim Nakha'ī, 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'ī, Bazzār, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ṭabarāni in *Al-Ausat*, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī in *As-Sunan*). Sa'd 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 Ibn 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
الكَوثر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CVIII

AL-KAUTHAR

الكَوثر

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 'Ā'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 Madanī. Imām Suyūtī in *Al-Itqān* has confirmed this same view, and Imām Nawawī in his commentary of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim has also preferred the same. The reason for this assumption is the tradition which traditionists of the rank of Imam Ahmad, 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 Hadrat Anas, Imām Ahmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī 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'rāj* had taken place at Makkah before the *hijrah*. Secondly, when during the *mi'raj* 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 be 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 Makkī revelation and most of the commentators also should have regarded it as Makkī. 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 Madinah or Makkah, and when precisely it was revealed.

Had this tradition of Hadrat 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-Duhā 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 Ad-Duhā 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: "Muhammad (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 'Āṣ 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 'Atiyyah says that 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'aiṭ 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 Hadrat 'Abdullah and next to him three daughters viz. Umm Kulthūm, Fātimah and Ruqayyah. Of them first Hadrat Qāsim died and then Hadrat 'Abdullah. Thereupon 'Āṣ 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 'Ās 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 'Ariyyah that the same kind of meanness was shown by 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'aiṭ by rejoicing at this bereavement of the Holy Prophet. 'Aṭā' 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. Furthermore, 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.



CVIII
AL-KAUTHAR
الكُوثر

Verses : 3 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

(O Prophet,) We have granted you the *Kauthar*[1]. So pray only for your Lord and sacrifice.[2] Indeed, your enemy[3] alone is cut off from the root.[4] 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 Muhammad (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 *Tauhīd* 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 but also granted him from his one daughter, Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah, the natural progeny, who have spread throughout 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 within 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-Fidā* and *Kitāb at-Tahārah;* Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Manāsik* and *Kitāb az-Zuhd*: Musnad Aḥmad: *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-Maghāzī, 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-Imān;* Tirmidhi: *Kitāb al-Fitan).* "I shall be near the middle of the Fountain on the Resurrection Day." Muslim: *Kitāb al-Faḍā'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 be lies 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-'Ās).

(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 Īlāt) to Sana'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 aṭ-

Ṭayālisi: Ḥadīth No. 995; Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyyāt* Abū Bakr Siddīq 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 Ahmad: *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 *Aḥadīth.* (Bukhārī: *Kitāb ar-Riqaq;* Muslim: *Kitāb at-Tahārah* and *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il;* Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyyāt* Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Ās; Tirmidhi: *Abwāb' Ṣifāt al-Qiyānmah:* Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb az-Zuhd;* Abū Da'ūd: Ṭayālisī, *Ahadith* 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-Tahāra* and *Kitab al-Faḍā'il:* Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyyāt Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Huraīrah;* Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Manāsik.* The *Ḥadīth* 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 Majah, 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 *Ḥadīth*. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Musāqāt, Kitāb ar-Riqaq, Kitāb al-Fitan;* Muslim: *Kitāb at-Taharah, Katāb aṣ-Ṣalāt, Kitāb al-Faḍā'il;* Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb az-Zuhd;* Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyyāt Ibn 'Abbas).*

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 Buhkārī has named the last chapter of his *Kitāb ar-Riqāq* as *Bābun fil hawḍ wa qual-Allāhu innā a'ṭaināk 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 Hadīth. Many traditions have been related on the authority of Hadrat 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 Ahmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd Tāyālisī, 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 " (Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr; according to another tradition of Musnad Ahmad, 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 Ahmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Dārimī, Abū Da'ūd Ṭayālisī, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Ibn Abī Shaibah). Usāmah bin Zaid says that the Holy Prophet once went to visit Ḥaḍrat Usāmah; 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 Jarīr, 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 'Āliysh are found in Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Tirmidhi, Nasā'ī; and the books of Ibn Mardūyah, Ibn Jarīr, 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 *waḥar* 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 blessing, 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 *ṣalāt* 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-Kurzī, 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-Aḍḥā Prayer and the offering of animal sacrifice at Madīnah, he himself gave the first place to the Prayer (*ṣalāt*) and the second to the sacrifice, as commanded in the verses: *Inna ṣalāti wa nusuki* and *fa-ṣalli li-Rabbika wanhar.*

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'an 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 *Ḥadīth*, the *rak'ah* of the Prayer which is not coupled with another *rak'ah* is called *buṭaira'*, 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'ān, 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 Madīnah 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 helplessy. 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, 'Ās bin Wā'il, or 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'ait, 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, and 'Abbāsī, a Hāshmī, a Siddīqī, a Fāruqī, an 'Uthmānī, a Zubairī, or an Ansārī, but no one is an Abū Jahlī or Abū Lahabī. History has proved that not the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) but his enemies were, and are, *abtar*.


CIX
AL-KĀFIRŪN
اَلْكٰفِرُوْن

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

CIX
AL-KĀFIRŪN
الْكٰفِرُوْن

INTRODUCTION

Name

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

Period of Revelation,

Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Hadrat Hasan Basrī and 'Ikrimah say that this Sūrah is Makkī, while Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair says that it is Madanī. Two different views have been reported from Hadrat '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 chief 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 Hadrat '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."[1] Thereupon the revelation came down: *Qul yā-ayyuhal-kāfirūn...* and: *Qul afa-ghair-Allahi...* (Az-Zumar: 64): "Say to them:

---

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.

ignorant people, do you bid me to worship others than Allah?" (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 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 Humaid).

Sa'īd bin Mīnā' (the freed slave of Abul-Bakhtarī) has related that Walīd bin Mughīrah, 'Ās 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 ya-ayyuhal-kāfirūn*...." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 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 Humaid, Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

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 Sūrah 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'ān, 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 Sūrah 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 Sūrah, it can be judged from the following few ahādīth.

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) has related that on many an occasion he heard the Holy Prophet recite Sūrahs Qul Ya-ayyuhal-kāfirūn and Qul Huwa-Allahu ahad 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-ayyuhal 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-ayyuhal kāfirūn* when you go to bed." (Abū Ya'lā, Tabarānī).

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

Both Fardah 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-ayyuhal kāfirūn* to the end and then sleep, for this is immunity from polytheism." (Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi, Nasā'i, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Ḥākim, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī in *Ash-Shu'ab*). A similar request was made by Ḥadrat Jabalah bin Ḥārithah, brother of Ḥadrat Zaid bin Ḥārithah, to the Holy Prophet and to him also he gave the same reply. (Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭabarānī).



قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ۙ لَآ اَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ۙ وَلَآ اَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُوْنَ
مَآ اَعْبُدُ ۚ وَلَآ اَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُّمْ ۙ وَلَآ اَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُوْنَ مَآ
اَعْبُدُ ۙ لَكُمْ دِيْنُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِيْنِ ۧ

CIX
AL-KĀFIRŪN
الكٰفِرُوْن

Verses: 6 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Say: "O disbelievers,[1] I do not worship those whom you worship,[2] nor are you worshippers of Him Whom I worship,[3] nor am I a worshipper of those whom you have worshipped, nor are you worshippers of Him Whom I worship.[4] For you is your religion and for me is mine."[5] 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 *kufr* is also bound to express similarly his disgust with and disapproval of the creed and rites of worship and gods of *kufr*. 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 teachings 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 *kafirs*" 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 Sūrah 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 Muslims 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 *Tauḥīd* 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 *Ḥadīth Qudsī* (*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, Musnad Aḥmad, 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 *ma* in Arabic is generally used for lifeless or unintelligent things, and the word *man* for intellegent 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 (*masdar*) 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 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 study.

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 His 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 Muhammad (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 streagthen 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 sentenses, 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 Makkī 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 dinu kum wa liya din* 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 Imam Abu Ḥanīfah and Imām Shāfe'ī have deduced that *kufr* (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 un-believer 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'ī 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 Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Dāraquṭnī). A *Ḥadīth* with almost the same content has been related by Tirmidhī from Ḥaḍrat Jābir, by Ibn Ḥibban 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 Sarakhsī, 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 liya 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, La yata-wārith 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 Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Abū Da'ūd on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Usāmah bin Zaid.



CX

AN-NAṢR

النَّصْر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CX
AN-NAṢR
النَّصْر

INTRODUCTION

Name

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

Period of Revelation

Hadrat '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.[1] (Muslim, Nasā'i, Ṭabarānī, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Ibn

---

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 Hadrat Barā' bin 'Āzib, saying that it was the last verse of Sūrah An-Nisā', viz *Yastaftūnaka* ... Imām Bukhārī has cited 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 *Tashrīq* 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). Baihaqi in *Kitāb al-Ḥajj* has related from the tradition of Hadrat Sarrā' bint-Nabhān 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 Tashrīq 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-Harām. Then he said: I do not know, I might not meet you here again. Beware, your bloods and your honours are forbidden, until you appear before your Lord, and the 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."

'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 also supported by those traditions which Imām Ahmad, 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 *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* has cited the view of Imām Zuhrī, and Ibn Jarīr in his commentary the view of Ḥaḍrat Sa'īd 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'ī Ibn Mardūyah and Ibn Jarīr have cited another view of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās saying that *Wattaqū yaum-an turja'ūna fī-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'īd bin Jubairs'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-Mustadrak* of Imam 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.

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-Nasr 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 Aḥmad, 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 Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ṭabarāni, Nasā'i, Ibn Abi Ḥātim, 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 Ḥātim, Ibn Mardūyah). A tradition containing almost the same theme has been related by Baihaqī 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 Rahmān 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'a naṣrullāhi wal-fatḥ?'* 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 Hadrat '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 Ahmad, 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 in the implementation of that command.

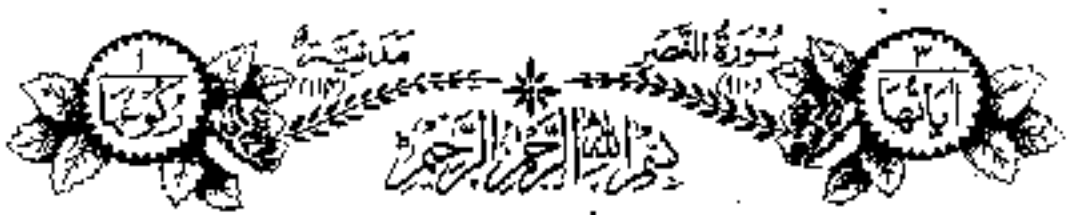
Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says: "The Holy Messenger (upon whom be peace) often used to recite *Subhanak-Allāhumma wa bi-ḥamdika astaghfiruka wa atūbu ilaika* (according to some other traditions, *Subhān Allāhi wa bi ḥamdi-hi astaghfirullāha wa atubu ilaihi)* before his death. I asked: O Messenger of Allah, what 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'a nasrullāhi wal-*

fathu." (Musnad Aḥmad, Muslim, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah). In some other traditions on the same subject Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that the Holy Prophet often recited the following words in his *rukū'* and *sajdah; Subḥānak-Allahumma wa-bi hamdika, Allahumma-aghfirli.* This was the interpretation of the Qur'ān (*i.e.* of Sūrah An-Nasr) that he had made. (Bukhāri Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Jarīr).

Hadrat 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: *Subhān Allāhi wa-bi hamdi-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 Ḥaḍrat '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-hamdik. Allāuhumm-aghfirli, subhānaka Rabbanā wa bi-hamdika, Allahumm aghfirli, innaka anta at-Tawwāb al-Ghafūr.* (Ibn Jarīr, Musnad Ahmad. 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'ī, Ṭabarānī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Mardūyah).



إِذَا جَآءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ ۝١ وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ
اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا ۝٢ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ
تَوَّابًا ۝٣

CX

AN-NASR

النَّصْر

Verses: 3 *Revealed at Madīnah*

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

When Allah's help comes and victory is attained,[1] and (O Prophet,) you see that the people are entering into Allah's Religion in crowds,[2] Then glorify your Lord with His praise,[3] and pray for His forgiveness.[4] 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), 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
اللَّهَب

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CXI

AL-LAHAB

اللهب

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 Abu 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 Abī 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 Muhammad (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 *silah rehmī* (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 *kufr* 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'ān to warn first of all his nearest kinsfolk of the punishment of God, he ascended the Mount Ṣafā one morning and called out aloud: *Yā sabāḥah* (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 Fihr, 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 Ahmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, 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 Jarīr).

In Makkah Abū Lahab was the next door neighbour of the Holy Prophet. Their houses were separated by a wall. Besides him, Ḥakam bin 'As (Father of Marwān), 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'aiṭ, 'Adi bin Ḥamrā' and Ibn al-Asdā' il-Hudhalī 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 Banī 'Abdi Manaf, what kind of neighbourliness is it?" Abī 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 Hātim. 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 Muhammad (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-Isti'āb;* Ibn Hajar: *Al-Iṣābah;* Abū Nu'aim al-Isfahānī: *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 'Abbās ad-Dilī 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:

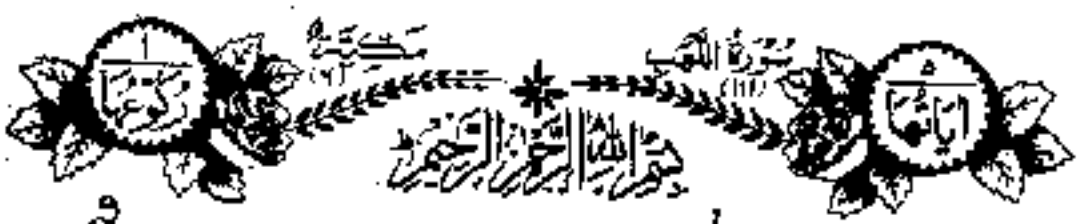
'This fellow is a liar: he has gone astray from his ancestral faith.' I asked: who is he? The people replied: He is his uncle, Abū Lahab." (Musnad Ahmad, Baihaqī). Another tradition from Ḥaḍrat Rabī'ah is to the effect; "I saw that the Holy Prophet went to the halting place of each tribe and said: O 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 Aḥmad, Ṭabarānī). Ṭāriq bin 'Abdullah al-Muḥāribī'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 Abī 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 Abī Tālib approached it to buy some articles 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 Ḥajj 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 by 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 يَدَآ اَبِيْ لَهَبٍ وَّتَبَّ ۝١ مَآ اَغْنٰى عَنْهُ مَالُهٗ وَمَا كَسَبَ ۝٢ سَيَصْلٰى
نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ ۝٣ وَّامْرَاَتُهٗ ۭ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ۝٤ فِيْ جِيْدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّنْ مَّسَدٍ ۝٥

CXI

AL-LAHAB

اللَّهَب

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.[1] His wealth and whatever he earned did not avail him anything.[2] Certainly he shall be cast into a blazing Fire, and (along with him) his wife, too,[3] the bearer of slander.[4] Round her neck will be a rope of palm-fibre.[5] 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 (Kunyat), 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 'Uzza); third, that his *kunyat* goes well with the fate that has been described of him in this Sūrah.

Some commentators have translated *tabbat yadā' Abī 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, 'Utabh 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 Jarir 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-Dhakha'ir wat-Tuḥaf*: He was one of the four richest men of the Quraish, who owned one *qinṭār* (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 *ma 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 Ḥātim). 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 Jamīl. 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 Jamīl 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 Ḥātim, 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-ḥaṭab*, which literally mean: "carrier of the wood". The commentators have given several meanings of it. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas, 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 Baṣrī, Mujāhid and Sufyan Thaurī 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'īd bin Jubair says: The one who is loading himself with the burden of sin, is described idiomatically in Arabic as: *Fulān-un*

yahtatibu 'alā ẓahri-hī (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'īd bin al-Musayyab, Ḥasan Baṣrī and Qatadah 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: *Bashshir-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-IKHLĀṢ
الإخلاص

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CXII
AL-IKHLĀṢ
الإخلاص

INTRODUCTION

Name

Al-Ikhlāṣ is not merely the name of this Sūrah but also the title of its contents, for it deals exclusively with *Tauḥīd*. The other Sūrah 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[1] of your Lord." Thereupon this Sūrah was sent down (Ṭabarānī).

(2) Abul-'Āliyah has related on the authority of Hadrat 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, Tirmidhī, Bukhāri in *At-Tārikh*, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ḥātim, Baihaqi). 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 beduin (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-Ausaṭ*, Baihaqī. Abū Nu'aim in *Al-Ḥilyah*).

(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, Baihaqi in *Al-Asmā' was-Ṣifāt*).

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:

---

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: *Inṣib lanā Rabbuka*: "Tell us of your Lord's lineage."

(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, Iblīs 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) 'Āmir bin aṭ-Ṭufail said to the Holy Prophet: "O Muḥammad, what do you call us to?" The Holy Prophet replied: "To Allah." 'Āmir said: "Then, tell us of what He is made, whether of gold, silver, or iron?" Thereupon this Sūrah was sent down.

(7) Ḍaḥḥāk, 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 Allah'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 Madīnah, sometimes the Christians, and sometime 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 *Ḥadīth* 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 Makkī, 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 Ḥaḍrat Bilāl, made him lie down on burning sand and placed a heavy stone on his chest, Bilāl used to cry *"Ahad, Ahad!"* 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

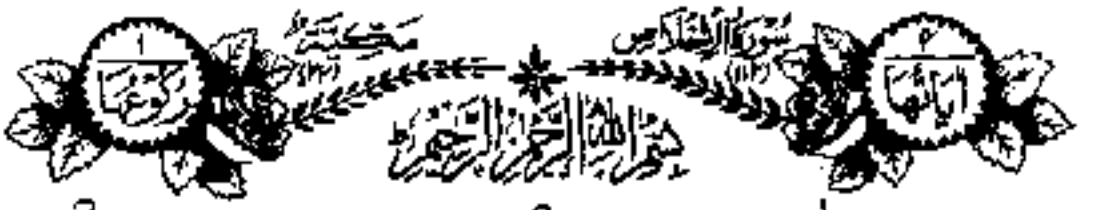
God had a mother and a mother-in-law too. The Jews also claimed to believe in One God, but their God too was not without physical, material and other human qualities and characteristics. He went for a stroll, appeared in human form, wrestled with a servant of His, and was father of a son, Ezra. Besides these religious communities, the Zoroastrians were fire worshippers, and the Sabeans star-worhippers. 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. Tauḥīd*) in four such brief sentences as are immediately 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 *aḥadīth* on this subject have been related in Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i, Ṭirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭabarani 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 Abi Mu'ait, 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: *Tauḥīd*, Apostleship and the Hereafter. This Sūrah teaches *Tauḥīd*, 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 'Ā'ishah has been related in Bukhārī, Muslim and other collections of the *Aḥādīth*, 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 *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 love for this Sūrah has earned you entry into Paradise."



قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ ۝١ اَللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝٢ لَمْ يَلِدْ ۙ وَلَمْ يُوْلَدْ ۝٣ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ كُفُوًا اَحَدٌ ۝٤

CXII
AL-IKHLĀṢ
الإخلاص

Verses: 4 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Say:[1] "He is Allah,[2] the One and Only.[3] Allah is Independent of all and all are dependent on Him.[4] Neither has He an offspring nor is He the offspring of anyone;[5] and none is equal with Him in rank."[6] 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 Abraha 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 hearts 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'an 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 bolongs 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 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-Allah Aḥad* syntactically, but in our opinion its explanation which perfectly corresponds to the context is that *Huwa* is the subject and *Allahu* its predicate, and *Aḥad-un* its second predicate. According to this parsing the sentence means: "He (about Whom you are questioning me) is Allah, is One and only one. 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 *aḥad* 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 aḥad-un* (No one has come to me), or in common questions like *Hal 'indaka aḥad-un* (Is there anyone with you?), or in conditional clauses like *Inja'a-ka aḥad-un* (If someone comes to you), or in counting as *aḥad, ithnān, aḥad'ashar* (one, two, eleven). Apart from these uses, there is no precedent in the pre-Qur'ānic Arabic that the mere word *aḥad* 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 *aḥad-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."

Socondly, 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 (*wāhid*) but *ahad*, 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 *wāhid* is used in Arabic just like the word "one" in English. A collection consisting of great pluralities is collectively called *wāhid* 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 *Ahad* is not used for anyone except Allah. That is why wherever in the Qur'ān the word *wāhid* has been used for Allah, He has been called *Ilāh waḥid* (one Deity), or *Allah-ul-Wāḥid-al-Qahhār*. (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 *samad* 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 *as-Samad* in the verse *Allah-us-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 chieftaincy, 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'bī and Muhammad bin Ka'b al-Kurazī also.

Suddi: "the one to whom the people turn for obtaining the things they need and for help in hardships."

Sa'īd bin Jubair: "He who is perfect in all his attributes and works."

Rabī' bin Jubair: "He who is immune form 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-Ḥamadānī also.

Murrat al-Ḥamadānī'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'ī: "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 "Samad 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 *ahad* 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 *ṣamad* is used for creatures also, *Allah-uṣ-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 *ṣamad* 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 not dependent upon needs; 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 *Aṣ-Ṣamad*, i e. the Only and One Being Who is wholly and perfectly qualified with the attribute of *ṣamad* 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-samad* 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'ān 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 *Aṣ-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-Ikhlāṣ 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-Ṣāāffat: 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-Ṣāāffat: 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: 100-102)

"They say: the Merciful has offspring. Glory be to Allah! They (whom they describe as His offsping) 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 everthing 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'īl: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-Ikhlāṣ 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
مُعَوِّذَتَين
MU'AWWIDHATAYN
AL-FALAQ الفَلَق
AN-NĀS النّاس

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

CXIII-CXIV

MU'AWWIDHATAYN مُعَوِّذَتَين

AN-NĀS النّاس AL-FALAQ الفَلَق

INTRODUCTION

Name

Although these two Sūrahs of the Qur'ān are separate entities and are written in the *Muṣḥaf* 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 Ḥaṣan Basrī, 'Ikrimah, 'Atā' 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 Hadrat '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 'Āmir. 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-Rabb'il-falaq* and *A'ūdhu bi-Rabbin-nās*." This *Ḥadīth* is used as an argument for these Sūrahs to be Madanī because Ḥaḍrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir had become a Muslim in Madīnah after the *hijrah*, as related by Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'i on the basis of his own statement. Other traditions which have lent strength to this view are those related by Ibn Sa'd, Muhiyy-us-Sunnahs Baghawī, Imām Nasafī, Imām Baihaqī, Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar, Hafiz Badr-uddīn 'Aynī, 'Abd bin Humaid 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 'Uyainah also has described these Sūrahs as Madanī.

But, as we have explained in the Introduction to Sūrah Al-Ikhlās, 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 Sūrahs 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 Madīnah

storms of opposition were raised by the hypocrites, Jews and polytheists, the Holy Prophet was instructed to recite these very Sūrahs, 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 Sūrahs. Therefore, in our opinion, the view held by the commentators who describe both these Sūrahs 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 Sūrahs 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 Manaf (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. 33-338).

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 whispers, 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 *Ḥadith* and commentary concerning these Sūrah 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 Ahmad, Bazzar, Tabarānī, Ibn Mardūyah, Abū Ya'lā, 'Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Hanbal, Humaydī, 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 *Muṣḥaf* 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 Qāḍī Abū Bakr Al-Bāqillāni, Qāḍī '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 *Mushaf*, 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 Hazm and Imām Fakhr-uddīn Rāzi, 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 un-scientific.

Now, the question is: How can the blame that attaches to the Qur'ān because of these traditions of Ibn Mas'ūd in his *Musnad,* has several answers which we shall give below in sequence:

(1) Hāfiz Bazzār after relating these traditions of Ibn Mas'ūd in his *Musnad,* has written that he is solitary and isolated in his opinion: no one from among the Companions has supported this view.

(2) The copies of the Qur'ān which the third Caliph, Ḥaḍrat '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 *Musnad* 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 *aḥādīth* 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 *aḥādīth:*

We have cited on the authority of Muslim, Ahmad, Tirmidhī and Nasā'i the tradition of 'Hadrat 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir 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 'Āmir is to the effect that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) recited both these Sūrah 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 Sūrah in the Prayer." Sa'īd bin Mansūr has related, on the authority of Mu'ādh 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 Da'ūd and Nasā'ī this tradition of 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir has been related: "The Holy Prophet said to him: Should I not teach you two such Sūrah 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'awwidhatayn*. Then the Prayers 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 'Āmir, saying that the Holy Prophet exhorted him to recite the *Mu'awwidhāt* (i.e. *Qul Huwa Allahu ahad* and the *Mu'awwidhatayn)* after every prayer. Nasā'ī Ibn Mardūyah and Hākim have related this tradition also from 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir: "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'ūhu 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-Rabbin-nās'* both these Sūrahs." Ibn Mardūyah has related from Hadrat Umm Salamah: "The Sūrahs best liked by Allah are: *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbin-nās.*"

Here, the question arises: what caused Hadrat '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 Hadrat '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 *Sahīh*, Imām Ahmad in his *Musnad*, Hāfiz Abū Bakr al-Humaidī 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 Hubaish, with a slight variation in wording from Hadrat Ubayy bin Ka'b, who held a distinguished place among the Companions on the basis of his knowledge of the Qur'ān. Zirr bin Hubaish states: "I said to Hadrat 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, Hadrat 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 Sūrahs caused Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd the misunderstanding that the Holy Prophet (upon whom by 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 Hadrat Ubayy 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 verbatum to the people, and will not have the permission to drop anthing from the text of the message. Thus, the fact that these two Sūrahs 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 verbatum. It was not merely a command given to him for his person. Besides these two Sūrahs, 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 verbatum; 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 Sūrahs 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 or 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 Sūrahs 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 Sūrahs 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 instruted him to repeat these Sūrahs 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'ān. The Qur'ān mentions the accusation of the disbelievers who said that the Prophet was bewitched (Banī Isrā'īl 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 then 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 is it 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, Ḥumaidi, Baihaqī, Ṭabarānī, Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Mardūyah, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Ḥākim, 'Abd bin Ḥumaid and other traditionalists on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Arqam and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, through so many different and numerous channels that forgery is out of question. Although each tradition by itself is an isolated report *(khabar wāḥid)*, 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'sam, who belonged to the Anṣār tribe of Banī Zurayq.[1] 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 Muḥammad." 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 Labīd 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, Labīd placed this spell in the spathe[2] 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 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

---

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 Ansār of Khazraj. Therefore, either he was from among those who had become Jews from the people of Madīnah, 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.

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 Hadrat 'Ā'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 Hadrat 'Ā'ishah: "My' Lord has told me what I had asked of Him." Hadrat 'Ā'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'sam. 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 Hadrat 'Ali, Ḥaḍrat 'Ammar bin Yāsir and Ḥaḍrat Zubair: They were also joined by Jubair bin Iyās az-Zurqī and Qais bin Mihsan 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 Labib and questioned him. He confessed his guilt and the Holy Prophet let him go, for he never avenged himself 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 to him by Allah in his capacity as 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 phenomenon, 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 Sūrahs 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 *aḥādīth* 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 Aḥad* and the *Mu'awidhatayn)* 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, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah recited these Sūrahs 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 Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'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 Ḥaḍrat '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 Ḥaḍrat Mughirah bin Shu'bah, the Holy Prophet said. "He who got himself treated by branding, or enchanting, became independent of trust in Allah." (Tirmidhī). Hadrat '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 Ḥibbān, 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 *As-Saghīr* has related a tradition on the authority of Ḥaḍrat '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 ahad, Qul a'udhu bi-Rabbil-falaq* and *Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbin-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 Hadrat Ḥasan and Ḥusain: *U'īdhu kumā bi-kalimāt Allāhit-tāmmati min kulli shaitān-in wa hāmmāti-wa min kulli'ayn-in lāmmati:* "I give you in the refuge of Allah's blameless words, from every devil and troublesome thing, and from every evil look." (Bukhārī, Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭirmidhī, Ibn Mājah).

A tradition has been related in Muslim, Muwaṭṭā, Ṭabarānī and Ḥākim 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 *Muwatta* there is the addition: "Uthmān bin Abi al-'Ās said: After that my pain disappeared and now I teach the same formula to the people of my house."

Musnad Aḥmad and Ṭaḥāvī 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 Abu 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 Ahmad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ubadah bin as-Sāmit, 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 'Ā'ishah also in Muslim and Musnad Aḥmad.

Imām Aḥmad in his Musnad has related this tradition from Ḥafṣah, mother of the Faithful: "One day the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) visited me in the house and a woman, named Shifā[1] was sitting

---

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

with me. She used to blow on the people to cure them of blisters. The Holy Prophet said to her: Teach Ḥafṣah also the formula." Imām Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd and 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'ī 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 Aḥmad 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 'Āmr 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 Aḥmad, and Ibn Mājah: "The Holy Prophet granted permission to a family of the Ansār 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 Aḥmad, 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 Aḥmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah and Ḥākim 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

---

the Quraish. This is the same clan to which Ḥaḍrat 'Umar belonged. Thus, she was a relative of Ḥaḍrat Ḥafsah.

told me to drop out such and such words from it, and permitted me to blow with the rest of it."

According to *Mu'wattā*, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr went to the house of his daughter, Ḥaḍrat '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 at-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.[1] 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

---

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.

regular practice of granting amulets as a means of earning their livelihood.

Many people in this regard argue from Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudri's tradition which has been related in Bukhāri, 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 Ḥaḍrat 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. Ḥaḍrat 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 something." They promised to give them a flock of goats (according to some traditions, 30 goats), and Hadrat Abū Sa'īd went and started reciting Sūrah Al-Fātihah and rubbing his saliva on the affected place.[2] 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-Fātihah could also be used for curing such troubles? Take the goats and allocate my share also in it."

But before one uses this *Ḥadīth* or 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

---

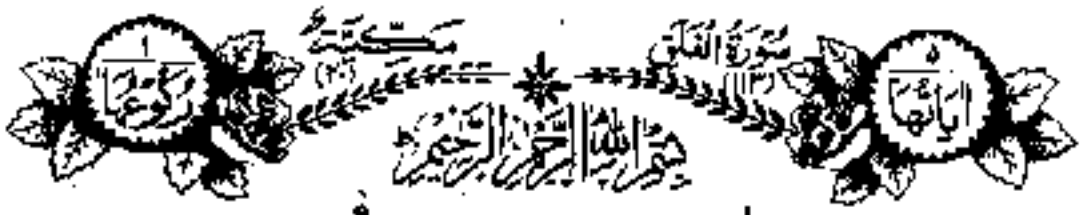
2. There is no mention in the traditions that Sūrah Al-Fātihah was recited by Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī; they do not even mention that Hadrat Abū Sa'id himself had accompanied the expedition, but Tirmidhī has made mention of both these things.

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 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-Fātihah 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 Bukhārī the tradition related on the authority of Hadrat '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-Fātiḥah and the Mu'awwidhatayn

The last thing which is noteworthy with regard to the *Mu''wwidhatayn* 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 Sūrah 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-Fātihah 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.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ۙ﴿۱﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ۙ﴿۲﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ اِذَا
وَقَبَ ۙ﴿۳﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفّٰثٰتِ فِى الْعُقَدِ ۙ﴿۴﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ اِذَا حَسَدَ ۙ﴿۵﴾

CXIII
AL-FALAQ
الفَلَق

Verses: 5 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

. Say:[1] I seek refuge[2] with the Lord of the dawn,[3] from the evil of everything He has created,[4] and from the evil of the darkness of night when it everspreads,[5] and from the evil of the blowers (men or women) into knots,[6] and from the evil of an envious one when he envies."[7] 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 *Hadīth* 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 *Tauhīd* 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 Hadrat '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 Allsh in response, he immediately 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 *Ḥadith*. 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'ud).

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 Ḥumaid 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," (Tirmidhi, Abū Da'ūd).

Anas bin Malik 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-ṣubḥ* is often used for the breaking of dawn, and in the Qur'ān also the words :*Fāliq-ul-iṣbāḥ* (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'ān it has been said: "establish the *ṣalāt* from the declining of the sun to the darkness of the night (*ila ghasaq-il- lail*)." (Banī Isrā'īl: 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. Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah has reported: "Once during a moon-lit night, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) look 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. *Nafath* 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'āts* (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 Zamakhshari 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 *kufr* (unbelief) in the Qur'ān: "Solomon was not involved in *kufr* but the satans who taught magic to the people." (Al-Baqarah: 102). But even if it does not contain any word of *kufr*, 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 battlefield, and slandering simple and chaste Muslim women with un-chastity."

7. *Ḥasad* 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, *ḥasad* 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 *Tauḥīd*, for the heart which enshrines *Tauḥīd*, cannot be affected by anyone else's fear except the fear of Allah.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ ۙ﴿۱﴾ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ ۙ﴿۲﴾ اِلٰهِ النَّاسِ ۙ﴿۳﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ ۙ
الْخَنَّاسِ ۙ﴿۴﴾ الَّذِيْ يُوَسْوِسُ فِيْ صُدُوْرِ النَّاسِ ۙ﴿۵﴾ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَ النَّاسِ ﴿۶﴾

CXIV

AN-NĀS

اَلنَّاس

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,[1] from the evil of the whisperer, who returns over and over again,[2] who whispers (evil) into the hearts of men, whether he be from among the jinn or mankind."[3] 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; 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 all 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-khannas*, 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 misunderstanding 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 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 over burdened 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, Ḥā 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." (Ḥā 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 *Ṭūr.*" 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 *Ḥadīth.* 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 *Ḥadīth,* Imām Aḥmad, Nasā'i, and Ibn Ḥibbān have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Dharr a tradition, saying: "I sat 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'ān*, which I began in Muharram, 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'ān, 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'ān 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'ān or only its translations, and to explain in detail the things which have been stated and mentioned only briefly in the Qur'ān. In the beginning, it was not my purpose to go into the details; therefore, the notes in the first volume (Sūrahs Al-Fatihah 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'ān also is that since the theme whose explanation has remained deficient at one place has recurred also in the subsequent Sūrahs, 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.)