

# Lessons from Surah At-Tariq to Surah Al-Layl

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**Part I**  
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## **Part II**

# **Tazkirah from Surah At-Tariq to Surah Al-Layl**

**a) Surah At-Tariq (Verses 1-4): The Protector of Every Single One of Us**

We will begin our discussion by looking at Surah at-Tariq, which literally means, the Night-Visitant, referring to the star. InshaAllah, we will further explain the concept of at-Tariq as we progress further in our discussion.

This is a Makkiyyah surah, comprising of 17 verses, in which any attempt to understand this surah must be made by looking at not only the contents, but also the context of how the surah was revealed. Immediately after the da'wah was begun by Rasulullah SAW, there was already unhappiness among the Musyrikun elites, including Rasulullah SAW's uncle, Abu Lahab, knowing that the new teachings brought by Rasulullah SAW deviated immensely from their forefathers' teachings — believing in idolatry and rejecting the day of resurrection. As we shall see in this surah InshaAllah, the elite Musyrikuns, either in a small or large scale, began to plot ways of harming Rasulullah SAW as well as how to kill him without serious ramifications.

This surah is divided into five parts, we will discuss part one until part three in this session, and the remaining verses will be discussed in the next session, InshaAllah. Let's look at the first part of the verse, which comprises of four verses altogether.

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ

1. *By the Sky and the Night-Visitant (therein);-*

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ

2. *And what will explain to thee what the Night-Visitant is?-*

النَّجْمِ النَّاقِبِ

3. *(It is) the Star of piercing brightness;-*

إِنَّ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ لَمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ

4. *There is no soul but has a protector over it.*

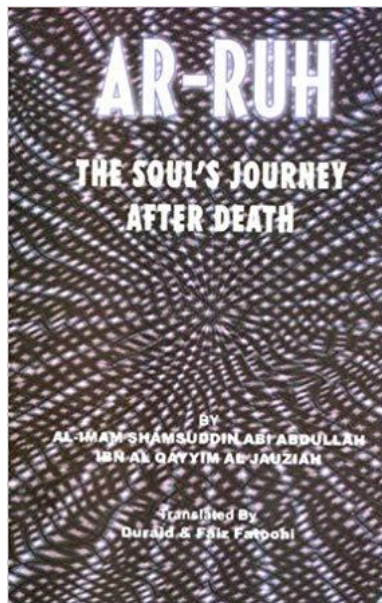
To understand verses 1-4, we shall discuss it as follows: a) the concept of oath, Qasam and b) the concept of responding to the oath, Jawwabul Qasam. When Allah SWT begins a surah with a Qasam, it is not to be seen as trivial. Not only is the oath important, the point that Allah SWT wants to make is shadowed by the Qasam. The first verse is about the Qasam (Tariq), where Allah SWT later on explained the meaning of Tariq. In the first verse, Allah SWT took an oath by pointing to His sky as a creation to be borne witness as the point in which Allah SWT wants to make.

It is the sky where Allah SWT mentions the word Tariq, which its meaning is later explained in verse 3, that is, the star of piercing brightness. This implies that the light of the star penetrates the earth. Why, in verse two, does Allah SWT ask, “And what will explain to thee what the Night-Visitant is?” According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, when Allah SWT makes such a rhetorical question, it means that humans cannot know the answer because of their ghaflah (forgetfulness), although they see the light of the star, not only can they not truly understand the meaning behind it, they hardly think about Allah SWT, The Almighty God is behind such creation. The first three verses, as mentioned earlier, is about Allah SWT’s oath before Allah SWT makes His points. Hence, what are the points? The points that Allah SWT wants to make is specifically in verse 4.

إِنَّ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ

4. *There is no soul but has a protector over it.*

According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, ulamas differ in terms of the specific meaning of this verse. However, the point that Allah SWT would like to make here is that none of us in this world are not guarded or protected. Ulamas differ in terms of who is protecting or guarding here, and what exactly are the things that the protector protects or guards.



*Ar-Ruh: The Soul's Journey After Death, by Imam Shamsuddin Abi Abdullah*

Majority of ulamas state that the souls are protected by angels. As we know, even when we are still in our mother’s womb are we protected by the angels. However, there are also mentions of Allah SWT Himself as The Protector of mankind. Usually, the verse in Ayatul Kursi is used to explain such mentions.

... وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ (255)

... *His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Most Great. (Surah al-Baqarah: 255)*

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan further explained that by looking at the structure of the ayat and the words used, not only is it proper to say that it was the angels, but the angels or malaikah in this context is protecting not ourselves, but the information concerning the good and the bad deeds which we do in this life. We know about the malaikah known as Raqiban Atid whose role is to write about our deeds, and this is basically the meaning of the verse.

We might want to know why for instance does Allah SWT take oath over the At-Tariq, the star piercing with brightness? The knowledge on stars very much influence knowledge on astronomy and astrology. Based on this knowledge, all forms of activities are influenced or guided by the stars up in the sky it may be. Hence, the Qasam and Jawabul Qasam is directly and indirectly connected, even though some might think that it is metaphorically connected. Allah SWT in Surah al-Waqiah for instance, made a Qasam using the star, knowing that stars were used for reference during night journeys, especially for the Arabs. This implies that without stars, they will not have guidance.

In Surah al-Waqiah, Allah SWT mentions the Quran as the guide (Jawabul Qasam) and the star as a symbolic for guidance (Qasam). The verse is as follows:

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ

*Then I swear by the setting of the stars, (Surah al-Waqiah: 75)*

Insyallah, we only managed to discuss one part of Surah at-Tariq in today's session. However, we hope that Allah SWT gives us hidayah to help us understand this surah, especially on the fact that we are not alone in this world, but rather guided or protected by angels. May Allah SWT forgive us for the wrongdoings and mistakes that we have committed in the process of understanding this surah and doing this tazkirah.



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*We understand how Allah SWT relate with the knowledge of astronomy and astrology, and how with such knowledge people were able to understand how the stars in whatever degree influence the movements of this world, including mankind as well.*

**b) Surah At-Tariq (Verses 5-10): Allah SWT's Power of Giving Life in This World and The World After**

We will continue discussing on some important messages in Surah At-Tariq, and InshaAllah, we will begin today with verse 5 and end with verse 10. However, before we do that, let us remind ourselves on the context of the revelation of this Surah. Allah SWT had revealed it not only during times of persecution and oppression, but also during the commencing of the plot to destroy the Message of Islam as well as the plans made to kill the Prophet SAW himself. We should also inform ourselves that this Surah preaches about the important pillars of Iman. While in the previous session we have talked about the angel who protect and guide us, in this session, InshaAllah, we will talk about believing in Resurrection and the World After.

We stopped the previous session with the discussion on verse 4, in which Allah mentioned that every one of us has their own protector. We will begin today's discussion on these verses by grouping verses 5-7 in order to continue the flow of each verse. The verses are as follows:

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ

*5. Now let man but think from what he is created!*

خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ

*6. He is created from a drop emitted-*

يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ

*7. Proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs:*

In general, there is nothing unusual about the interpretation of verses 5-7. There are many verses in the Quran which talk about human creation. An example would be in the following verses, which are verses 7 to 9 from Surah As-Sajdah:

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ (7)

*Who perfected everything which He created and began the creation of man from clay. (Surah as-Sajdah: 7)*

ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ مَهِينٍ (8)

*Then He made his posterity out of the extract of a liquid disdained. (Surah as-Sajdah: 8)*

ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِهِ ۖ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۗ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ  
(9)

*Then He proportioned him and breathed into him from His [created] soul and made for you hearing and vision and hearts; little are you grateful. (Surah as-Sajdah: 9)*

However, according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, the letter “ف” from “فَأَنْظُرُ” should be worthy of our attention, in which the message should be read as one that is close to the message of the previous verse. Seeing that it is not easy for mankind to understand the message which says that there is a connection between the stars and the activities in this world, Allah SWT asked mankind, especially those who reject Islam, to look at His very own creations. These creations come from the fluids between the backbone and the ribs.

Let us discuss a little on the word “الْإِنْسَانَ” in verse 5, as opposed to the word “نَفْسٍ” in verse 4 from the previous session, as well as the concept of “الصُّلْبُ” and “التَّرَائِبُ”, also located in verse 5. As a general rule, the word “*insan*” is used when the Quranic message is dealing with physical creations, while the word “*nafs*” commonly refers to the spiritual dimension, such as in verse 4 when Allah SWT said that each one of us creations has our own protector. The protector is of course not of this world, but the spiritual world instead.



*In verse 4, Allah SWT said “There is no soul but has a protector over it”. The protector is of course not of this world, but the spiritual world instead. Wallahua'lam.*

In fact, some ulamas have discussed about 3 different levels of the spiritual world by only referring to the word “*nafs*”, such as “*nafs al-ammara bissu*”, “*nafs al-lawwamah*”, and “*nafs al-mutmainnah*”. According to this belief, the term “*nafs*” refers to the lower spiritual level of

mankind, and as the level goes higher, the term “*qalb*” is commonly used, and as it goes further upwards, the term “*ruh*” is commonly applied. This implies that “*qalb*” refers to “*nafs al-lawwamah*” which influences us mankind to go lower, even if we want to reach higher. “*Ruh*” on the other hand refers to “*nafs al-mutmainnah*”, as found in verses 27 and 28 of Surah Al-Fajr, which describes how “*nafs al-mutmainnah*” has the *redha* of Allah SWT. The verse we are speaking of is as follows:

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ (27)

*[To the righteous it will be said], "O reassured soul, (Surah al-Fajr: 27)*

ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً (28)

*Return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him], (Surah al-Fajr: 28)*

If we look at verses 6 and 7, Allah SWT mentioned that the sperm or semen comes from “*الصُّلْبُ*” and “*النَّوْءُ*”, which in accordance to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, can be understood as something in our body, situated in between two bones. “*الصُّلْبُ*” basically refers to an important part of our spinal cord. Wallahua’lam.

In short, the message that comes with these verses is clear. For those who reject Allah SWT, they should understand not only that humans would not even be able to be alive without their creator, but should also be humble, knowing how they were made or created. Let us now look at verses 8-10 before we move on with the discussions on those verses.

إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ

8. Surely ((Allah)) is able to bring him back (to life)!

يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ

9. The Day that (all) things secret will be tested,

فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَلَا نَاصِرٍ

10. (Man) will have no power, and no helper.

Majority of ulamas explained that the meaning of these verses are very clear. They speak of the Day of Resurrection, in which Allah SWT will recreate us once our bodies have been destroyed as they were buried, or for whatever reason. These verses explain clearly on an important pillar of Iman, which is believing in the World After, which ends with either the punishment of Hellfire or

the reward of Paradise. During that Day, all secrets will be revealed, and those who rejected Allah SWT will have no power to even help themselves.

However, Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan provided a different dimension to the meaning or interpretation of the verse. We should understand that the *mufasirun* may have different interpretations on certain verses. Still, all of them agree on the fact that there are boundaries or limits on the difference in interpretations, and one of those is that the interpretation should breach the linguistic meaning of the verse. Of course, there are also many other criterias of interpreting the Quran. Therefore, it is not strange that ulamas may refer to the exegesis of the Quran from different groups. An example would be the exegesis of al-Zama'shari (Mu'tazilite) called "*Al-Kashshaaf 'an Haqa'iq at-Tanzil*", or the "*Tafsir al-Mizan*" by Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i (Shi'ite), or Ruh al-Ma'ani by Imam al-Alusi (Sunni). Wallahua'lam.



Following a discussion by Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan who explained the meaning of verses 8-10 based on the previous message, as well as the message afterwards which we will discuss later on, these verses are not exactly about the life in the World After, but instead about this world. This is so because according to him, since the previous verses talked about Allah's power to create mankind from the fluid produced between two bones, the next process should be the life in this world. This surah is about the rejection towards the Muslims, oppression and the secret plot of killing Rasulullah SAW and Islam. Hence, when Allah SWT talked about the "secret" in verse 9, it means that Allah will reveal their plot, not exactly the one in the World After. Wallahua'lam.

For laymen like us, the least we can do at this point is understand 3 things. First, activities in space influence our activities, directly or indirectly, through the concept of "at-Tariq" which pierces through earth. Second, each one of us has our own guard or protector, which monitors on the deeds that we do, Third, Allah SWT is The Great Creator. Not only can he create us from nothingness, but he can also resurrect us in the World After. May Allah SWT give barakah to our efforts in this tazkirah series. Aamiin.

c) **Surah At-Tariq (Verses 11-17): Allah SWT's Plans are Incomparable to the Humans'**

Praise be to Allah SWT, The Lord of The Universe, for giving us the time to further discuss our tazkirah. For this session, we shall look at several verses, starting from verse 11 until verse 17. InsyaAllah, we shall divide them into two parts. By taking together verses 11, 12, 13 and 14 we shall be able to see the flow much easier. It is the same approach that we used to discuss Surah At-Tariq from part a) until this part c). The first few verses, 11 and 12 is also another form of Qasam (oath). Hence, in any verses with oath, we should also look at the point, which is in the Jawabul Qasam (response to the oath). Let us look at the verse:

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ

11. *By the Firmament which returns (in its round),*

وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدْعِ

12. *And by the Earth which opens out (for the gushing of springs or the sprouting of vegetation),-*

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ فَصْلٍ

13. *Behold this is the Word that distinguishes (Good from Evil):*

وَمَا هُوَ بِالْهَزْلِ

14. *It is not a thing for amusement.*

Verses 11 and 12 tells us that something from above (Sama') falls down and goes up in rotation. Majority of ulamas refer this to rain. The next verse, verse 12 is still about the Qasam, in which Allah SWT talks about this Earth being benefited from the rain. So what is the Jawabul Qasam? It is specifically mentioned in verse 13, when Allah SWT said that this Word (Quran), is the truth that distinguishes good and evil. What is the relationship between The Word (revelation) and rain? As mentioned earlier, the Qasam and the point is always connected. Rain and revelations both come from above.



*Rain can be said to have similarities with the Revelation. Rain and revelations both technically comes down from above. Rain benefits certain types of soil, just like how revelations benefit certain types of people.*

Rain will only benefit the earth depending on the type of earth. Revelations shall only benefit mankind depending on the type of people. There are hadiths mentioning about the different types of earth, emblematic to the heart of mankind, such as the ones compiled by Imam Muslim in his Qitabul Fadha'il. The hadith is also mentioned in Sahih Bukhari, which is as follows:-

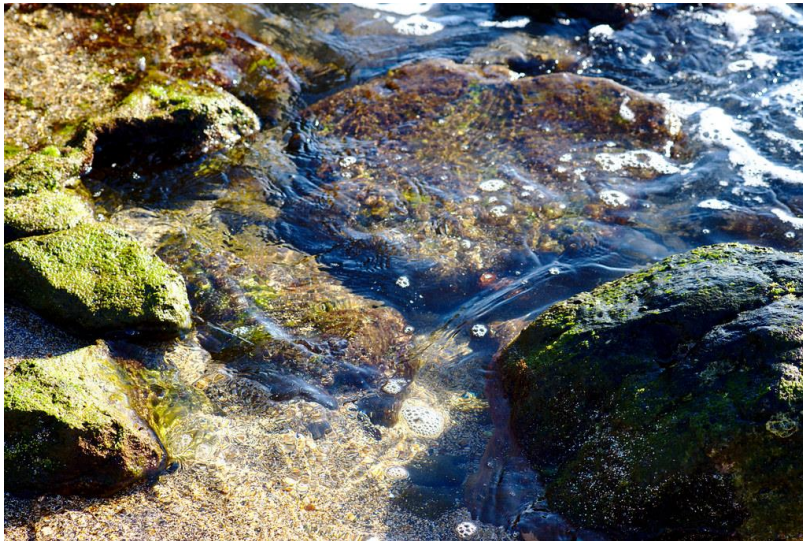
*The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The example of guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was fertile soil that absorbed rain water and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it was hard and held the rain water and Allah benefited the people with it and they utilized it for drinking, making their animals drink from it and for irrigation of the land for cultivation. (And) a portion of it was barren which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation (then that land gave no benefits). The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah's religion and gets benefit (from the knowledge) which Allah has revealed through me (the Prophets and learns and then teaches others. The last example is that of a person who does not care for it and does not take Allah's guidance revealed through me (He is like that barren land.)"*

We have already discussed about the pillars of Iman in the first part, which involves believing in angels, while the second part involves believing in the World After. In this part, Allah SWT teaches us the importance of believing in The Quran as part of our pillars of Iman. If we do believe in the Quran, which we should, we must not read the Quran just for the sake of reading it, or reading the Quran while thinking when will it end, implying lack of concentration and Khusyu'. The Quran is a guidance to us. However, if our heart is hardened, we will not obtain benefits from it.

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan reminds us not to understand the Quran the way some other people understand reading books, even other religious books. When we recite the Quran and other books,

we should not just look at them comparatively or in specific case studies only. We should by right seek guidance from reciting the Quran, because through it we can distinguish between good and evil. Verse 14 warns those who treat the Quran as a form of amusement instead of guidance, Wallahua'lam.

In fact, in Surah Al-Baqarah, Allah SWT mentions just how hard the hearts of the Jewish people were, even after explaining many stories about Allah SWT's powers and miracles. In the end, they ended up rejecting the message of Islam. Verse 74 of Surah al-Baqarah explains how the heart is analogous to stones, and how certain stones are better, because it can trap water for consumption, while some stones are completely useless.



*Even stones can be useful and carry benefits. Some stones trap water and filter them for consumption of not only humans, but also animals in the wild.*

Below is the verse:

ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشَقَّقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ (74)

*Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder. For indeed, there are stones from which rivers burst forth, and there are some of them that split open and water comes out, and there are some of them that fall down for fear of Allah . And Allah is not unaware of what you do. (Surah al-Baqarah: 74)*

Insyallah, we now move to the last parts of Surah at-Tariq. As we have discussed in our previous part, this surah is targeted for the disbelievers who not only rejected the message of truth and



oppressed the Muslims, they also made plots after plots of destroying Islam and killing Rasulullah SAW. The following verses, 15 until 17 explains the important story of Surah at-Tariq, especially in the context of how the surah was revealed. Let us look at the verses:-

إِنَّهُمْ يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا

15. *As for them, they are but plotting a scheme,*

وَأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا

16. *And I am planning a scheme.*

فَمَهْلِ الْكَافِرِينَ أَمْهَلُهُمْ رُؤْيَا

17. *Therefore grant a delay to the Unbelievers: Give respite to them gently (for awhile).*

Obviously, “they” in this verse refers to the Musyrikun during the Meccan times. However, this does not mean that we cannot benefit from this verse in terms of the current context. What is important is for us to understand that each one of us has a protector, the main Jawabul Qasam of this surah, in which Allah SWT in the last parts of Surah at-Tariq explains that Rasulullah SAW had a protector, and Allah SWT himself protected him. The second point based on the Jawabul Qasam is about the Quran itself as a revelation distinguishing between good and evil. Allah SWT definitely knows what is in His Plan.

Although there were discussions by ulama in which the last part importantly referred to the plot among the Quraisy to kill Rasulullah SAW before the migration, we should understand that the verse linguistically speaks about many plots, in which Allah SWT has His own plot to protect Rasulullah SAW. As we learn in this sirah, not only are the elites of the Musyrikun who plan to kill Rasulullah SAW following the ideas of Syaitan failed to kill him, as we also know in the sirah, Rasulullah SAW and Islam continued to gain success from one war to another. From Badr to Uhud to Khandaq, until the Fathul Makkah in 8 Hijrah, followed by Hunayn and Tabuk.

The message that we should learn here is that we should have the confidence that if we are on the side of truth, we will always be protected and Allah SWT is the best protector. May Allah SWT forgive the mistakes that we have committed as we try to understand this surah in our discussion, Aamiin.

**d) Surah Al-A'la (Verses 1-8): Allah Made the Quran Easy for Us**

In this part, InshaAllah, we will discuss one of the most commonly recited surah in prayers, especially during Ramadhan, as people perform Salat at-Tarawih and Salat al-Witr. The surah begins with words of exaltation to Allah SWT, it is Surah Al-A'la, the 87th chapter of the Quran, comprising of 19 verses. Before we zero in on the contents of the surah, let us talk about the context of the surah first.

It was revealed during the Meccan period, in which Rasulullah SAW felt a strong burden when surahs after surahs were revealed to him. It was up until there was a point that he had a feeling he may forget some of the verses. At the same time, the Quraysh Musyrikun continued to strongly reject the Message of Truth and refuse to worship Allah SWT with the highest of exaltations. In fact, their heart for the worldly things were cemented.

In the discussion on this surah, we will also take the time to mention the beauty of Allah SWT's names, such as the 99 names of Allah. Furthermore, in this surah, not only were the Quraysh Musyrikun who had some idea on Prophet Ibrahim were the target of the revelation, but also Jews in Madina who occasionally visited Mecca. One of the notable Jews was Ka'b ibn Asyraf. We should also understand that Christians also existed around the area of Hijaz. Let us start looking at the contents of the surah. We shall have a look at 5 verses at once before going to the discussion.

سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى

*1. Glorify the name of thy Guardian-Lord Most High,*

الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى

*2. Who hath created, and further, given order and proportion;*

وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى

*3. Who hath ordained laws. And granted guidance;*

وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَى

*4. And Who bringeth out the (green and luscious) pasture,*

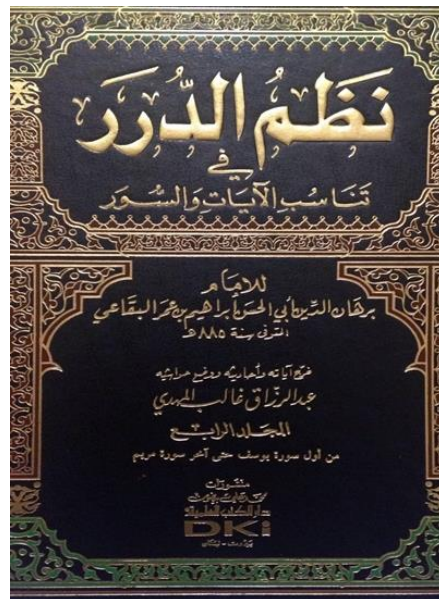
فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَى

*5. And then doth make it (but) swarthy stubble.*

Let us focus on the 1st verse since this is the verse which ulamas had given the most explanation of. The *dzikr* we make during *sajdah* or prostration was inspired from the first verse of this surah

when Rasulullah SAW asked the sahabah to recite the *dzikr* the way we do today when performing *sajdah*. In addition, Sayyidina Ali RA had always made a *dzikr*, “*subhana rabbiyal a'la*” whenever this surah was recited by others. When he was asked by the sahabah, he replied by saying that he was just doing what the Prophet SAW instructed him to. The first verse of this surah is uniquely different compared to other chapters with similar *al-mushabihat* (exaltations), such as in Surah Saf, Surah Al-Hasyr, Surah Al-Hadid, Surah Al-Jumu'ah and Surah At-Taghabun.

In this surah, *fi'l amal* (instructions) were used, in which Rasulullah SAW himself was asked to exalt Allah SWT by mentioning His name with the highest of glorifications. Other than that, Imam al-Biq'a'i, in his book, “*Nazm ad-Durar fi Tanasub al-Ayat wa as-Suwar*”, mentioned that while at the end of the previous surah, Surah At-Tariq, Allah SWT asked Rasulullah SAW to take it easy with the plots of the Musyrikun, because Allah actually wanted him to give focus on exalting Allah and not to be worried with the *makhluk*. The letter “ك” in the word “رَبِّكَ” refers to Rasulullah SAW. Therefore, by default, the instructions were directed to Rasulullah. However, as his followers, the instructions are now directed to us. Next, we should also get benefit from this 1st verse by increasing our knowledge on Allah SWT's Beautiful Names, such as Ar-Rahman, Ar-Rahim, Al-Malik, Al-Quddus, As-Salam, etc.



Moving on, let us turn to verses 2 and 3, in which the niche is relatively similar, which is to inform us that Allah SWT is The Creator who made us with perfection, and Allah SWT is The Planner Who guides His creations to follow what He had planned. Both of these verses should inform us clearly that not only did Allah SWT create all of mankind, but Allah SWT also guides His creations to make sure that they do or perform things the way He had planned them to. This is to say that not only is Allah SWT in charge of our body and mind, but He is also in charge of our behaviors and actions.

Verses 4 and 5 should be read together in order to identify their actual meaning. According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, although ulamas agree on how the contents of the verses are analogous to the nature of the world, they differ on the exact interpretation of the verses. One group of ulama explained that the verses are on the temporal nature of this world, in which it is greenish at the beginning, and swarthy at the end. Another group of ulama said that they explain about the progression of this world towards maturity; from something greenish to something which had completely ripened. Wallahua'lam.

We have mentioned earlier that one of the contexts of this surah being revealed was that Rasulullah SAW was worried that he would not be able to remember the verses which were revealed to him. Verses 6-8 informs us about Allah SWT convincing Rasulullah SAW that he will not forget, unless He wants the Prophet SAW to forget. The verses are as follows:

سَنُفِّرُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَىٰ

6. *By degrees shall We teach thee to declare (the Message), so thou shalt not forget,*

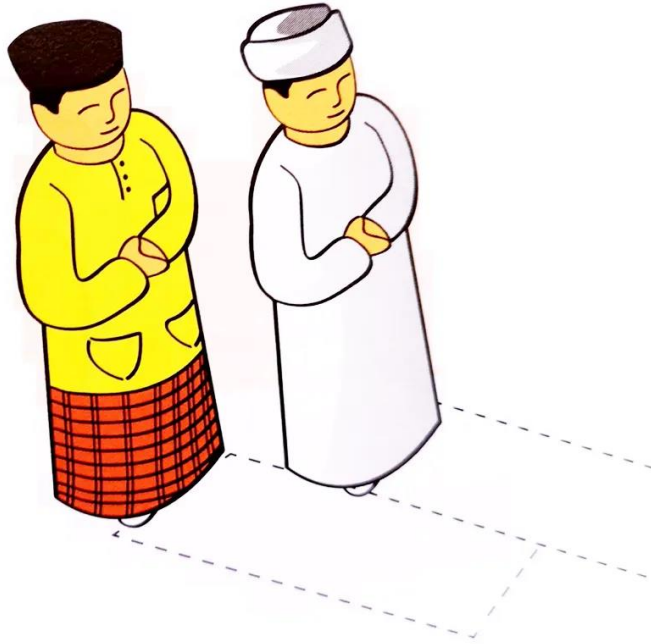
إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَىٰ

7. *Except as Allah wills: For He knoweth what is manifest and what is hidden.*

وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ

8. *And We will make it easy for thee (to follow) the simple (Path).*

We know that in our tradition, there are examples of verses Allah SWT had abrogated (*mansuh*), and there are exceptional situations when Rasulullah SAW forgot to recite certain verses, especially during *solah*. As mentioned in this surah (verse 3), these were already in Allah's plans. For instance, after Rasulullah had completed a *solah*, he looked for Ubay ibn Ka'b, the sahabi who was known for his sharp recitation of the Quran and asked him why did he not help him recite the Quran, knowing that he had forgotten the verses. Ubay said "who am I to remind you, ya Rasulullah". Rasulullah then told him to remind him the next time something similar occurs. Of course, through this event, we are able to learn that the *makmum* are able to correct the recitation of the Imam if they find it necessary.



*There was a time when Rasulullah SAW forgot certain verses when he was leading a congregation. Once the prayer ended, he asked Ubay ibn Ka'b why did he not remind him or correct his recitation. From that moment, we know that the makmum can correct the Imam's recitation during a congregation.*

Below are examples of verses that were abrogated.

### **ABROGATED**

*i. It is prescribed, when death approaches any of you, if he leave any goods that he make a bequest to parents and next of kin, according to reasonable usage; this is due from the Allah-fearing.1).*

*(Al-Baqarah: 180)*

*ii. Let no man guilty of adultery or fornication marry and but a woman similarly guilty, or an Unbeliever: nor let any but such a man or an Unbeliever marry such a woman: to the Believers such a thing is forbidden.*

*(An-Nur: 3)*

### **ABROGATOR**

*i. From what is left by parents and those nearest related there is a share for men and a share for women, whether the property be small or large,-a determinate share.*

*(An-Nisa': 7)*

*ii. Marry those among you who are single, or the virtuous ones among yourselves, male or female: if they are in poverty, Allah will give them means out of His grace: for Allah encompasseth all, and he knoweth all things.*

*(An-Nur: 32)*

Insyallah, as indicated in verses 7 and 8 of Surah Al-A'la, Allah SWT knows of what is obvious and what is hidden, and Allah SWT made Rasulullah's life easy, as well as our lives. Therefore, all of the abrogations had already been planned by Allah SWT, and all that Allah SWT had done was to make our lives easier, provided that we follow the syari'ah. Insyallah, may we be amongst the people who are serious to know and learn, as well as memorise the Quran, and we should have a strong conviction that Allah will make our lives easier if we really follow his laws and regulations.

e) **Surah Al-A'la (Verses 9-19): Continuation of The Message of Truth**

Insyallah, in this part we will straight away discuss ayat 9 to 19 of Surah al-Alaq, which generally informs us of how Rasulullah SAW felt a huge burden on him when revelations after revelations were sent down, thinking that he could not remember the surahs revealed to him. Allah SWT taught him and made his life easier. We too hope that Allah SWT will guide us and make our efforts in understanding and memorizing the Quran an easy process, Aamiin.

After Allah SWT mentioned about Him knowing what is obvious and what is hidden about the revelations and how He will make Rasulullah SAW easy, Allah SWT asks Rasulullah SAW and ourselves to remember the Quran and also make da'wah about it. Verse 9 precisely explains about this instruction:-

فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَىٰ

9. Therefore give admonition in case the admonition profits (the hearer).

According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, when the word **فَذَكِّرْ** (admonition) is used, there are basically three processes for those who want to make da'wah. The first is effort, the second is the individual's own practice, and thirdly the process of da'wah itself. The ayat clearly mentions that our role is to make da'wah when we know that there is potential to get the message across, Wallahua'lam.

The following verses, 10 and 11 speaks clearly about the attitudes of two different people when it comes to admonition. Let us look at the verses which are as follows:-

سَيَذَكَّرُ مَن يَخْشَىٰ

10. The admonition will be received by those who fear ((Allah)):

وَيَجْتَنِبُهَا الْأَشْقَىٰ

11. But it will be avoided by those most unfortunate ones,

From the two verses, we can learn that those who are guided by Allah SWT will make the effort of making sure that he receives guidance from the admonition. As for those whom Allah SWT has misguided, they will find ways of avoiding themselves from such guidance. There are many verses in the Quran mentioning us that Allah SWT will guide those whom He wants to guide. One specific example is in Surah an-Nur, where at the end of verse 35 the following is mentioned:-

... نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (35)

... Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things. (Surah an-Nur: 35)

As discussed in previous sessions, this surah targets not only the Musyrikuns in Mecca, but also the Jews and the Christian surrounding Hijaz. As we shall see at the end of this surah, Allah SWT mentions of the previous prophets, especially Abraham and Moses. However, before we look further into it, let us look at what Allah SWT says for those who avoid admonition as mentioned in the following two verses (12 and 13):-

الَّذِي يَصَلِّي النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى

12. Who will enter the Great Fire,

ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ

13. In which they will then neither die nor live.

The verse that informs of the punishments of Hellfire is almost everywhere in the Quran. This has made some people accuse Islam of being a religion with a scary nature, centered on punishments, hence even causing Islamophobia to bud.



*Islamophobia, by Chris Allen*



However, psychologically speaking, the purpose of the surah is to guide people to do good, therefore they can enter paradise without The Counting. No one has been punished in Hellfire, and with Allah SWT's blessing, which is obviously more in The World After compared to this world, mankind should not see the verses as something scary.

In another lecture Shaykh Yasir Qadhi once mentioned that if in this world, with only 1% of Allah SWT's rahmah, the Non-Muslims should be optimistic in The World After because Allah SWT has 99% rahmah in The World After compared to the 1% of this world. Below is the hadith mentioning this distribution of rahmah:-

*Salman al-Farisi reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Verily, on the day Allah created the heavens and earth, he created one hundred parts of mercy. Each part can fill what is between the heaven and earth. He made one part of mercy for the earth, from it a mother has compassion for her child, animals and birds have compassion for each other. On the Day of Resurrection, he will perfect this mercy."*

*In another narration, the Prophet said, "From one part of mercy the creation is merciful between themselves, and ninety-nine parts are for the Day of Resurrection."*

*Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2753*

*Grade: Sahih (authentic) according to Muslim*

The following two verses mentions what are the ibadahs performed by those who are guided by Allah SWT. It is to begin by cleansing their hearts and remembering Allah SWT as well as performing Salah. The two verses are as follows:-

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى

14. *But those will prosper who purify themselves,*

وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى

15. *And glorify the name of their Guardian-Lord, and (lift their hearts) in prayer.*

Notice that there is also mentioning of "glorifying the name of their Guardian-Lord". We should also know the 99 beautiful names of Allah SWT as mentioned by many ulamas so that we know that every movement in this world happen under the guidance of Allah SWT. May we be guided by Allah SWT, Aamiin.

We move forward looking at another two ayats explaining the attitude of two other different people; one giving priority to only this world while the other focusing or prioritising the benefits of The World After. The verse is as follows:-

بَلْ تُؤْتِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا

*16. Day (behold), ye prefer the life of this world;*

وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ

*17. But the Hereafter is better and more enduring.*

Our problem is not as bad as the Musyrikun and atheists who reject the idea of resurrection and The World After. However, we still have problems of giving priority to this world than the other. Although we believe that there is paradise which gives us what we want, our mind tells us that “Even though it is true, we cannot obtain now, therefore we should focus on what we can get now. Rather than talking about the palace in paradise, let us focus on how to grab a bungalow in this world”. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan gave an interesting example of how smart people would choose the house instead of the pleasures of staying in a hotel, even though the house may only be given to him for the next 10 years rather than staying in a hotel which is immediate.



Actually, the message of this world being temporal and the next being eternal is not a new message sent by Allah SWT to Rasulallah SAW to mankind. As a matter of fact, such message and the message on the punishments of Hellfire and the rewards of Jannah had descended unto mankind from previous prophets through their books and suhufs. The following verse until the end, verse 19 explains to us of such process.

إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَىٰ

18. *And this is in the Books of the earliest (Revelation),-*

صُّحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ

19. *The Books of Abraham and Moses.*

One might wonder why the name of Jesus (Isa AS) is not mentioned here while the names of Moses and Abraham are stated. As previously mentioned, the Quraysh Musyrikun believed on prophet Ibrahim AS. Many activities such as umrah and hajj, as well as sacrifices practiced by them even during the time of Jahiliyyah were inherited from the ibadah of remembering prophet Ibrahim AS. Hence, his name was mentioned. As for prophet Moses AS, it is quite clear, as the Jews who stayed in Medina came in contact with the people of Mecca for the purpose of visit and business such as Ka'b ibn Ashraf mentioned in the previous part. Obviously, for the Christians staying in Hijjaz, the story of Prophet Moses is also known to them in the Old Testament. They too follow the teachings of Prophet Moses, Wallahua'lam.

InsyaAllah, we already end this surah. We hope to get the clear message from this surah, which first, is to make da'wah and also ask for Allah SWT's guidance. Secondly, to purify ourselves by performing salah. Thirdly, to give ourselves to `the World After without neglecting the benefits of this world. May Allah SWT bless our efforts, Aamiin.

**f) Surah Al-Ghashiyah (Verses 1-16): The Tortures of Hellfire and the Rewards of Jannah**

Give thanks to Allah SWT for endowing us the strength to continue with our tazkirah series. Aamiin. We are now entering the next surah, Surah Al-Ghashiyah (Surah 88), which means the overwhelming event, referring to the Resurrection Day. We should mention at the outset that the miracle of Rasulullah SAW is not the teaching of the Quran alone, but also the sequencing of it. Rasulullah SAW organized every chapters and verses accordingly. We have discussed how Surah At-Tariq (86) relates to Surah Al-Buruj (85) and how Surah Al-A'la (87) relates to Surah At-Tariq.

In this part, we are going to discuss how Surah Al-Ghashiyah relates to Surah Al-A'la. This surah begins by praising Rasulullah SAW, and at the same time reprimanding the Musyrikun and Kafirun for their arrogance and ignorance. Allah SWT, immediately afterwards, mentioned the scenario of Hellfire for those who disbelief and the scenario of the Paradise for those who believe.

Let us have a look at the 1st verse before we look at the other verses which we will bunch into one relatively huge group. The verse is as follows:

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْعَاشِيَةِ

1. *Has the story reached thee of the overwhelming (Event)?*

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan explained the *balaghah* (rhetoric) aspect of this verse when Allah SWT directly said to Rasulullah SAW in the form of a question, mentioning that Rasulullah had already informed them about the punishment of Hellfire and the reward of Jannah. It is like how a father asks his child “didn’t you manage to complete the task?”

If we recall in the previous surah, Rasulullah SAW was tasked to perform da’wah, and to tell people about the punishment of Hellfire, in which for those who made this world as a priority, that would be the outcome. As we shall notice, from verse 2 to verse 7, Allah SWT portrays the situation of Hellfire for those who refused to listen to the teachings of Rasulullah SAW. The verses are as follows:

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ

2. *Some faces, that Day, will be humiliated,*

عَامِلَةٌ نَاصِبَةٌ

3. *Labouring (hard), weary,-*

تَصَلَّىٰ نَارًا حَامِيَةً

4. *The while they enter the Blazing Fire,-*

تُسْقَى مِنْ عَيْنٍ آتِيَةٍ

5. *The while they are given, to drink, of a boiling hot spring,*

لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيحٍ

6. *No food will there be for them but a bitter Dhari'*

لَا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنْ جُوعٍ

7. *Which will neither nourish nor satisfy hunger.*



*This plant is called dhari', and is also known as Hell's Plant. It is said that this is the plant mentioned in the verse. Wallahua'lam*

After Allah SWT had provided the image of Hellfire for those who disobey Him, He illustrates the image of Paradise for those who follow the footsteps of Rasulullah SAW, in which, in the previous surah, they are among the people who perform da'wah, cleanse and purify their hearts, make remembrance (*dzikr*) to Allah SWT, as well as perform solah. Interestingly, as we shall see, immediately after this, Allah SWT describes the image of Paradise, generally with the same structure of verse as He had mentioned with the Hellfire.



The verses 8-16 below teach us about the environment of the Paradise for those who follow the teachings and footsteps of Rasulullah SAW. The verses are as follows:

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَاعِمَةٌ

8. (Other) faces that Day will be joyful,

لِسَعْيِهَا رَاضِيَةٌ

9. Pleased with their striving,-

فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ

10. In a Garden on high,

لَا تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا لَاغِيَةً

11. Where they shall hear no (word) of vanity:

فِيهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ

12. Therein will be a bubbling spring:

فِيهَا سُرُرٌ مَّرْفُوعَةٌ

13. Therein will be Thrones (of dignity), raised on high,

وَأَكْوَابُ مَوْضُوعَةٌ

14. *Goblets placed (ready),*

وَنَمَارِقُ مَصْفُوفَةٌ

15. *And cushions set in rows,*

وَزَرَائِبُ مَبْنُوتَةٌ

16. *And rich carpets (all) spread out.*

In the next tazkirah, we will further describe the interpretations and meanings of Surah Al-Ghashiyah. We hope that from this part, Allah SWT will raise our Iman, so that we will be amongst the people who follow the teachings and footsteps of Rasulullah SAW, heading to Paradise, and not amongst those who are headed to Hellfire.

**g) Surah Al-Ghashiyah (Verses 17-26): What We Can Learn from Camels**

Insyallah, with Him, The Supreme Bestower (Al-Wahhab), we are able to move on to the next part of Surah Al-Ghashiyah (Overwhelming Event), chapter 88 of the Quran, located in Juz Amma. In case some of us are still unclear as to why this section of the Quran is called Juz Amma, we just need to take a look at the first verse of the first chapter in the Juz Amma, which is Surah An-Naba'. The verse itself begins with the word "عَمَّ".

In this tazkirah, Insyallah, we will continue our discussion on Surah Al-Ghashiyah from verse 17 to verse 26. However, prior to that, let us discuss something related to our discussion in this part, it involves a verse from Surah Al-A'la, which is as follows:

فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَىٰ

*So remind, if the reminder should benefit;  
(Al-A'la: 9)*

In Surah Al-Ghashiyah, just like its previous surah (Surah Al-A'la) Allah SWT continues to tell the Prophet SAW to just proceed with the da'wah without getting worried about the outcome. We as Muslims should follow the footsteps of Rasulullah SAW and continue spreading the Message of Truth. Before we zero in on our discussion, let us take a look at the verses first. Verses 17-20 are as follows:

أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ

*17. Do they not look at the Camels, how they are made?-*

وَأِلَى السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ

*18. And at the Sky, how it is raised high?-*

وَأِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ

*19. And at the Mountains, how they are fixed firm?-*

وَأِلَى الْأَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ

*20. And at the Earth, how it is spread out?-*

In these 4 verses, Allah SWT asked the enemies of Islam to observe the worldly phenomenons so that they would be guided by Allah, if they actually open their hearts. Some of us may wonder why camels are mentioned in verse 17, because the sky, mountains and lands are natural



phenomena which Allah SWT always mentions in the Quran. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan once said that when Allah SWT explained about the tortures of Hellfire, it was described that the disbelievers would have nothing to eat except thorny plants called *dhari'*. The disbelievers made fun of this description by saying that even a camel can handle eating such a plant.



*Camels have a layer of small cylindrical flesh in their mouth which helps them eat thorny plants like the cactus.*

The torture is mentioned in verses 6 and 7, which we have talked about in the last session. Let us take a look at the verses again. The verses are as follows:

لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيعٍ

6. No food will there be for them but a bitter Dhari'

لَا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنْ جُوعٍ

7. Which will neither nourish nor satisfy hunger.

Some of us may be familiar with the word “*jamal*” which means “camel”, but in this case, Allah SWT used the word “الإبل”. In fact, there are many different words used in the Arabic language to refer to camels. It is said that some ulamas made a joke saying that if you do not know the meaning of a word in Arabic, the word probably refers to a camel. Camels, or “الإبل” are very obedient animals, following their owner’s instructions at all times, but human beings are so arrogant, to the point of rejecting The Creator Himself, like the case of the Musyrikun idolaters referred to in this surah.

There is a hadith which advise us to adhere to the Sunnah and the path of the rightly-guided caliphs, and Rasulullah SAW's analogy to such characteristic was that of a camel. The hadith is as follows:

***Sunan Ibn Majah, Chapter 1, Hadith no: 43***

***Narrated / Authority Of: Abdur Rahman bin Amr As-Sulami***

*that he heard Al-Irbad bin Sariyah say: "The Messenger of Allah (saw) delivered a moving speech to us which made our eyes overflow with tears and made our hearts melt. We said: 'O Messenger of Allah, this is a speech of farewell. What do you enjoin upon us?' He said: 'I am leaving you upon a (path of) brightness whose night is like its day. No one will deviate from it after I am gone but one who is doomed. Whoever among you lives will see great conflict. I urge you to adhere to what you know of my Sunnah and the path of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, and cling stubbornly to it. And you must obey, even if (your leader is) an Abyssinian slave. For the true believer is like a camel with a ring in its nose; wherever it is driven, it complies.'" (Sahih)*



*Camels are known for their obedience, even though a small portion of them may be otherwise.*

InsyaAllah, we will now move to the next part of the discussion, focusing on the verses which talks about reminding and performing da'wah. There verses are as follows:

فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ

21. Therefore do thou give admonition, for thou art one to admonish.

لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ

22. Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs.

إِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ وَكَفَرَ

23. But if any turn away and reject Allah,-

فَيُعَذِّبُهُ اللَّهُ الْعَذَابَ الْأَكْبَرَ

24. Allah will punish him with a mighty Punishment,

These four verses vividly mention that Rasulullah SAW's role is to inform or to remind. It is not in his role to make sure that they follow the Path of The Truth. That is obviously under Allah SWT's decision. We may have heard of the story of Abu Talib, Rasulullah's uncle. Despite all the efforts done by Rasulullah SAW to persuade him into becoming a Muslim, it was not in Allah SWT's plan, therefore even the Prophet was not able to do anything. We too have the responsibility to make da'wah, although it does not mean we have the ticket to become a *da'i* who is not concerned with others. When we perform da'wah, we want to make sure that we do it wholeheartedly. We should not just listen to what other people say, but what Allah SWT wants us to do instead. Towards the end of this surah, Allah SWT tied the beginning and the end of the surah together and talked about Al-Ghashiyah, saying that we will end up returning to Him, and some will come to see Him for counting (*hisab*). Below are the verses which end this surah:

إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ

25. For to Us will be their return;

ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ

26. Then it will be for Us to call them to account.

InshaAllah, we will obtain benefits from our discussion on not only this surah, but also the surah linked to this surah, Surah Al-A'la. With that, we end this surah.

## h) Surah Al-Fajr (Verses 1-14): Allah Is in the “Watch Tower”

In this part we will InshaAllah look at Surah Al-Fajr, Surah 89 from Juz Ammar which comprises of 30 ayat altogether. However for the purpose of having an in-depth analysis, we will only discuss verses from 1 to 14 only. In general, this Surah comprises of 3 parts, the first concerns how the 3 previous nations (‘Ad, Thamud and Firaun) were in Allah SWT’s watch and later destroyed due to their arrogance and remaining as disbelievers. Second concerns the characteristics of people who are arrogant and do not care about those who are in need, including the orphans. Finally, the third part of this Surah deals with the situation of 2 opposite people, the believers and the disbelievers on the day of resurrection. Let us begin the first part by zeroing into the first four ayat which is as follows:

وَالْفَجْرِ

1. *By the break of Day*

وَاللَّيْلِ عَشْرٍ

2. *By the Nights twice five;*

وَالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ

3. *By the even and odd (contrasted);*

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ

4. *And by the Night when it passeth away;-*

Obviously the first four ayat of Surah Al-Fajr is about Allah SWT’s oath (Qasam) just like many other surahs which begins with a Qasam. As we have already mentioned in many other discussions, when Allah SWT make a Qasam, Allah will respond with a Jawabbul Qasam. The point that Allah wants to make is stated clearly in the response. Let us try to understand the 4 verses of Qasam before we try to understand what the point is.

The word Fajr is commonly explained as the beginning. Not only is it about the beginning of the day, it can be the beginning of life and metaphorically be the beginning of Islam itself. According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, not only among ulamas, but also among sahabah and tabi’in, the phrase “The Nights twice five” can be understood as either the last ten nights of Ramadan or the first ten nights of Zulhijjah in which in both times we are expected to at least triple our Ibadah towards Allah. About the contrast between what is even and what is odd, the interpretation among Ulamas are even more diverse. Basically, some say that it is a contrast between male and female,

day and night, this world and the next world, Wallahualam. And lastly Allah SWT made Qasam about the last wanted night which is the precious time for people to perform Qiamullail.



We should understand that by internalising the four Qasam alone we should by right be able to purify our hearts, make dhikr and perform solah so we can be guided believers. However for those who reject Allah SWT, especially among the Musyrikuns, who reject during the time in which this revelation was sent down all Allah SWT, Qasam meant nothing to them. Hence in verse 5 Allah said to the effect that if they are unable to internalize what has been said, by right the following event should strike their hearts. Let us look at the fifth verse before we explain any further:

هَلْ فِي ذَلِكَ قَسَمٍ لِّذِي حِجْرٍ

5. *Is there (not) in these an adjuration (or evidence) for those who understand?*

The word Hija (understand) is important in this context. The fact for those who reject Allah SWT, they cannot internalize the truth possibly because they want to see the facts and figures in front of their eyes. Allah SWT informed them (the Quraysh Musyrikun) about 3 important events. These events relate to the Firaun, 'Ad and Thamud, which are already known to them. The story of the legend of Firaun were of course known by many people and the legend of the Jews in Hijaz made them obsessed with the story even more. The Thamud nation belonged to Prophet Saleh AS. It was situated just outside of the northern region of Hijaz. The nation of 'Ad was in the southern region towards the end of the Arabian Peninsula. The nation belonged to Prophet Hud AS. Let us look at ayat 6 until 13 before we provide some explanation about the story behind the 3 events:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ

6. *Seest thou not how thy Lord dealt with the 'Ad (people),-*

إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ

7. *Of the (city of) Iram, with lofty pillars,*

الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ

8. *The like of which were not produced in (all) the land?*

The Above ayat concern about the Ad' people

وَتَمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ

9. *And with the Thamud (people), who cut out (huge) rocks in the valley?-*

The above ayat concern about the Thamud people

وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ

10. *And with Pharaoh, lord of stakes?*

The verses above clearly concerns the Firaun people. The following verses (11-13) mentions the worst characteristics of the 3 “civilizations”:

الَّذِينَ طَغَوْا فِي الْبِلَادِ

11. *(All) these transgressed beyond bounds in the lands,*

فَأَكْثَرُوا فِيهَا الْفَسَادَ

12. *And heaped therein mischief (on mischief).*

فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ

13. *Therefore did thy Lord pour on them a scourge of diverse chastisements*

The words “الْبِلَادِ” and “الْفَسَادَ” is important in our discussion in which in the 3 lands or cities (الْبِلَادِ), we were told about their great achievements in architecture, especially the construction of huge buildings. However, Allah SWT watched them and were ready to punish them when they refused to follow the prophet’s message (Hud AS to ‘Ad, Moses AS to Firaun and Saleh AS to Thamud). Instead, they committed mischievous behaviour (الْفَسَادَ) and Allah SWT destroyed their nation and power completely.



We should go back to verse 6 when Allah SWT was referring to Rasulallah SAW (أَلَمْ تَرَ). Allah SWT told Rasulallah to see all the phenomena discussed above. Of course, the purpose is to inform those who reject the message of truth among the Musyrikun Idolaters during the Meccan time. In our time, it is our role to learn how the people of the past were destroyed due to their arrogance. We have a duty to spread the message of truth to others and tell them that a lot of nations were destroyed when they rejected the message of truth. We know that the Musyrikun idolaters were not destroyed like the people of ‘Ad, Thamud and Firaun, but Allah is watching and He has the power to destroy whatever civilization He wants to destroy at any point in time. The following ayat (14) informs us of how Allah SWT is in the watch. Which means that we have to be alert as well.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمُرْصَادِ

*14. For thy Lord is (as a Guardian) on a watch-tower.*

May we be guided by Allah SWT with the knowledge that He endowed to us in this part. We hope that the small efforts that we have made will be rewarded with Jannah without Counting. With that we end this tazkirah.

**i) Surah Al-Fajr (Verses 15-20): Allah SWT's Great Tests**

As we have already discussed, this Surah begins with 4 verses of oaths in which Allah SWT used the oaths to ask people to reflect on them so that they can get benefit from the oaths. However the corrupted heart and mind made us blind and dumb with the powerful message that Allah SWT presented in these oaths. Hence Allah SWT asked mankind to use their intellect as a boulder to reflect, hoping that the boulder can be used to protect them, not to go against them. Allah SWT already provided 3 cases on how civilizations will crash because of their failing to use the heart and mind to reflect on Allah SWT's power. Instead of using their heart and mind, they commit bad deeds in this world and commit fasad.

In this part, instead of looking at the grand scale of nationhood, Allah SWT deal with mankind at the individual level, explaining the filthy characteristics of a person after Allah SWT endowed them with high status and wealth without realising that everything Allah had given, whether good or bad are nothing else other than His great test. Let us look at two verses (15 and 16) which is as follows to understand the filthy characteristics of the individual:

فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ

15. Now, as for man, when his Lord trieth him, giving him honour and gifts, then saith he, (puffed up), "My Lord hath honoured me."

وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ

16. But when He trieth him, restricting his subsistence for him, then saith he (in despair), "My Lord hath humiliated me!"

On the surface, the two verses seem to be contrasting each other. But as we go deeper, we will see that they are the reflections of the same person with filthy characteristics. The first is about being arrogant when he is given honour and wealth, telling himself and showing off to others that he is a person of such and such, because Allah SWT honoured him. He or she has forgotten that Allah SWT not only tested mankind through hardships such as illnesses, politics, war and disaster, Allah SWT also test mankind with fortune and privilege.





In the state of arrogance the person as in the end of the ayyat said, look I'm honoured by Allah SWT, forgetting that Allah SWT not only gave him honour but also wealth. May we be protected from such filthy character, Aamiin. The ayat 16 on the other hand, tells us another characteristic of the same person. When Allah SWT restricts his sustenance, he or she turns to anger and complain and giving an improper statement, saying that they are downgraded or humiliated by Allah SWT, putting the blame on Allah SWT instead. This is a situation where a person fails to recognise how great is Allah SWT's test, not only through giving fortune but also through hardships.

Indeed there are many Surahs in the Quran, telling us about the nature of tests in this world and this world is in fact also known as Darul Ibtala', the land of tests. In the first part of surah Al-Mulk for instance, when Allah SWT talked about his dominion, He also said that this world is a test for us. Below are the aforementioned verses:

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (1)

*Blessed is He in whose hand is dominion, and He is over all things competent (Surah al-Mulk: 1)*

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ (2)

*[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed - and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving - (Surah al-Mulk: 2)*

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا<sup>ط</sup> مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَوتٍ<sup>ط</sup> فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ  
هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ (3)

[And] who created seven heavens in layers. You do not see in the creation of the Most Merciful any inconsistency. So return [your] vision [to the sky]; do you see any breaks? (Surah al-Mulk: 3)

ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ (4)

Then return [your] vision twice again. [Your] vision will return to you humbled while it is fatigued. (Surah al-Mulk: 4)

Now we turn our discussion to the second part of this tazkirah focusing on ayat 17 until 20. Let us take the 4 verses together in order to obtain benefit from it without going through it one by one specifically. After all, we are not experts to have a discussion in detail, below is the ayat:

كَأَلَّا<sup>ط</sup> بَلٍ لَا تُكْرِمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ

17. Nay, nay! but ye honour not the orphans!

وَلَا تَحَاضُّونَ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ

18. Nor do ye encourage one another to feed the poor!-

وَتَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَمًّا

19. And ye devour inheritance - all with greed,

وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا

20. And ye love wealth with inordinate love!

We should check ourselves especially on our thoughts and actions regarding the orphanage by asking the following questions.

1. Do we know who the orphans are in our housing area?
2. What type of contributions can we make to help them?
3. Importantly, do we see them with honour when Allah SWT has already honoured us.

Allah SWT put the question of honour first because we might think that we have done a good thing to help the orphans or the poor but we still have the problem of ego by thinking that we are better than them and that they owe respect towards us.



We may give 10 ringgit to the poor people, but we don't want them to get close to us. We do not see people with lower status than us with honour, we see them as someone inferior. Allah SWT in the first part of Surah Al-Ma'un mention how filthy people with such character are. Below are the verses in Surah Al-Maun:

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْإِيمَانِ

*Have you seen the one who denies the Recompense? (Surah al-Ma'un: 1)*

فَذُلُّكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ

*For that is the one who drives away the orphan (Surah al-Ma'un: 2)*

وَلَا يَحْضُرُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ

*And does not encourage the feeding of the poor. (Surah al-Ma'un: 3)*

Coming back to Surah Al-Fajr, especially verses 19 and 20, Allah SWT talked about the disease of those whose mind is attached to wealth and honour. Those with the disease become greedy, wanting to devour whatever wealth that comes their way. In short, Allah SWT explains that there nothing in their hearts except for their love of wealth. We may be people with poor ability and fail to understand the meaning behind Allah SWT's 4 Qasam in this ayat, but we should at least ask for Allah SWT's help so that we can understand how bad are the people who reject Allah SWT like the Firaun, Ad' and Thamud.

More reading materials can be found at [god-consciousness.wixsite.com](http://god-consciousness.wixsite.com)

We should also ask for Allah SWT's help to make us aware and understand that Allah SWT is always in watch so that we can always do good deeds and stay away from evil thoughts. We also ask for Allah SWT's help to open our mind and heart not to look at our status and wealth but rather to look for those who are in need, the orphans and immediately help them as we finish this discussion. We should also ask Allah SWT's help to see them as people with honour so that we can destroy our ego and understand that whatever status and honour that we have is not only temporary but also a test. May Allah SWT make us among those who pass His great test, Aamiin.

**j) Surah Al-Fajr (Verses 21-30): The One in the Hellfire and the One in Allah SWT's Redha**

May Allah SWT continue to bless our efforts and hope that this tazkirah is an evidence in the World After that we have made the effort to spread the message of The Quran, albeit small, Aamiin. In this part, InshaAllah we will wind our discussion of Surah Al-Fajr from verses 21 to 30, they we can be divided into 3 parts.

The first concerns the end of this world. A little bit on the overall surah, Allah SWT begins with 4 Qasam (oath), followed by instructing mankind to use their intellect to see how civilizations after civilizations have fallen due to rejection Allah SWT and the message of truth. We then discuss how the man whom Allah SWT honoured and gave wealth to succumb to failure of Allah SWT's test. The individual ended up being arrogant with his given fortune and complaining whenever he receives something unfortunate. He should realise the fact that both of them came from Allah SWT. As for this part, we will look at 3 verses from ayat 21 until 23, which is as follows:

كَلَّا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا

21. Nay! When the earth is pounded to powder,

وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا

22. And thy Lord cometh, and His angels, rank upon rank,

وَجِيءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ ۚ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَىٰ

23. And Hell, that Day, is brought (face to face),- on that Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance profit him?

There are 2 sub-parts of this group of verses. The first talks about the destruction of the earth, beginning with the total impact and Allah SWT will send down everything disastrous beyond a human being's imagination. Furthermore, Hellfire will brought upon them. However, like the people of 'Ad, Thamud, and Firaun as well as the Musyrikun idolaters, despite messengers after messengers were sent down to them, they not only rejected the message of truth but also persecuted the prophets.

In Surah Al-Ghasyiah we have discussed how Rasulullah SAW had already informed them about the people of The Hellfire and also the people of Paradise. Rasulullah SAW also informed them to submit to nothing but Allah SWT. When the day of destruction inflicted them, Allah SWT as described in the last part of ayat 33 mentioned to us that they began to vividly remember everything about the message of truth. Alas, it was too late. May we be among the people who take every

single detail of the message of Islam seriously, be it through the Quran or through the hadiths, Aamiin.



From the following 3 verses from verse 24 to 26, Allah SWT informs us how a person will terribly regret not following the footsteps of Rasulullah SAW. Before we look at the verse, let us understand that as we read the Quran, we should always carry within us the concept of both fear and hope. That is to say, every time Allah SWT explains about paradise, we hope that Allah SWT will accept us to be among the inhabitants as well as fear that Allah SWT might not see us as worthy. By the same token, when Allah SWT explains about hellfire, we hope that we will not be the one that will be thrown into it as well as fear that we may be the one.

Imam Al-Shauqani for instance, mentioned that we should understand that every story about those who are thrown into hellfire or tortured in the World After were stories involving those who disbelieved and vice versa. It is important to inform ourselves that when we talk to our children who have not attained the age of puberty (baligh), they will straight away enter Jannah if they died early simply because they are not responsible for the sins that they have committed. This is important to avoid the problem of trauma among kids fearing Allah SWT and they only see Allah SWT as a torturer and punisher. Now we turn our attention to the verses (24 - 26) which are as follows:

يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي

24. He will say: "Ah! Would that I had sent forth (good deeds) for (this) my (Future) Life!"

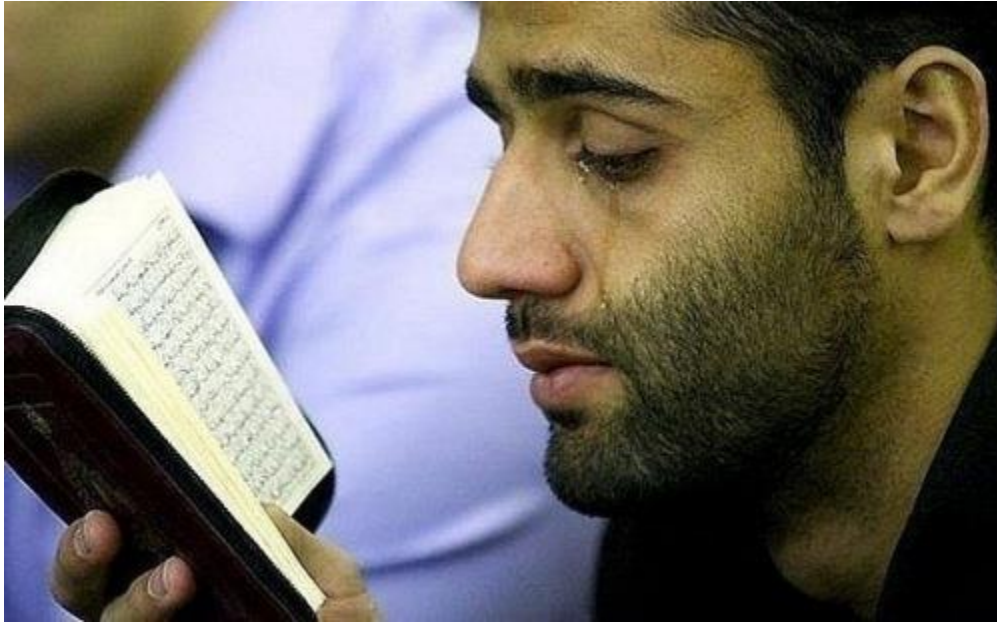
فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُعَذِّبُ عَذَابَهُ أَحَدٌ

25. For, that Day, His Chastisement will be such as none (else) can inflict,

وَلَا يُوثِقُ وَثَاقَهُ أَحَدٌ

26. *And His bonds will be such as none (other) can bind.*

The three verses above can also be divided into 3 parts. The first part mentions how regretful is the person who has invested all their energy only for the sake of achieving worldly matters. The word “يَا لَيْتَنِي” as mentioned by Nouman Ali Khan should bring a graphic image of how terrible the regret that the person suffered due to their poor judgement of the worldly things. Which is why some Ulama cry profusely whenever they recite this verse.



The verse also tells us that the person now realises that the true life is not within this world but instead the world he will be passing on to now which is the World After. The next two verses, 25 and 26 demonstrates the limitless power of Allah SWT and His promise to destroy whatever He wills. This unimaginable power beyond human comprehension has and will once again inflict the disbelievers. May we be protected by Allah SWT from falling into such disbelief, Aamiin. As we recite the 3 verses and also the following 4 verses, we should be able to feel that we might possibly be the one that Allah SWT mentioned. Hence, there is a good reason for some people to cry profusely when reciting the above ayat. They then feel peace and tranquility as they read the following 4 verses:

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ

27. *(To the righteous soul will be said:) "O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction!*

ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً

28. "Come back thou to thy Lord, - well pleased (thyself), and well-pleasing unto Him!

فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي

29. "Enter thou, then, among My devotees!

وَادْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي

30. "Yea, enter thou My Heaven!

In the above verses, Allah SWT not only told the righteous souls (those who believe in the message of truth) directly, but Allah SWT also gives privilege to the person individually to come to him to be close together with pure souls such as the prophets and the Aulia' as well as inviting them to enter His paradise. We have mentioned a few times about Allah SWT's 4 oaths (Qasam) at the beginning of the first four verses of Surah Al-Fajr. A contemporary exegete (mufassir), Shaykh \*Mutawakkil Al-Ta'wali once mentioned that when the Qasam were made, the pure soul should already understood that all 4 Qasam refer to the precious time for them to surrender and worship to Allah SWT. The 4 times (Fajr), the 10 last nights of Ramadhan or the 10 first nights of Zulhijjah, specifically the time during the day or night of the last wanted night.

He also explained that the precious time referred to in the Qasam and Surah Al-Fajr was set before the ayat acknowledging and endowing the believers who used the 4 times to purify their heart, made remembrance to Him and perform salah. May Allah SWT enlighten us so that we can be among the people who benefit from surah Al-Fajr as well as obtain the privilege to have a tranquil soul, receive Allah SWT's Redha, and enter Jannah with the one He has chosen.



**k) Surah Al-Balad (Verses 1-10): Even Showing Off Requires Struggle**

We thank Allah SWT, for up to this point we have covered at least 4 important Surahs from Juz Ammar which are Surah At-Tariq, Al-A'la, Al-Ghasyiah and Al-Fajr. May Allah SWT endow us with more strength so that we can continue to focus on the remaining 3 Surahs in this tazkirah series which are Al-Balad, Asy-Syams, and Al-Lail, Amiin. In this part, we will deal with Surah Al-Balad (surah 90), a surah comprising of 20 ayat which can be broadly divided into 2 discussion. The first concerns Allah SWT's Qasam (Oath) and the people who struggle just to show off. The second mainly concerns those who struggle in the right path, it is then concluded with those who show arrogance towards Allah. We will spend our discussion today on verses 1-10, which in itself can be subdivided into 3 parts, they are about the Qasam, Showing off and it's struggle as well as Allah SWT's warning against them.

To better understand the 3 sub-points above, let us recall some important lessons that we have learned from the previous Surah (Surah Al-Fajr), particularly on those who are arrogant with The Owner and His Nikmat (the benefits they get from this world such as wealth and how they end up terribly being destroyed in the World After). Equally important is how the previous Surah wound up when Allah SWT talked about the righteous people which Allah SWT calls the tranquil soul, to come close to Him, to be together with His slave and enter Jannah. Let us look at the first 4 verses below in order to further explore this surah's Qasam:

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ

1. I do call to witness this City;-

وَأَنْتَ حِلٌّ بِهَذَا الْبَلَدِ

2. And thou art a freeman of this City;-

وَوَالِدٍ وَمَا وَلَدَ

3. And (the mystic ties of) parent and child;-

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ

4. Verily We have created man into toil and struggle.

Surah Al-Fajr, like Surah At-Tariq discussed in this series begins with an oath (Qasam). As we know that in every oath, they will be followed by a response to the oath which is the point of the contention of the Surah. For those who study and teach Tadabbur, the concept of "Mu'sam bihi" and "Mu'sam 'alaihi" is important to referring to the oath and the point from the oath.



The first 3 ayat of this Surah is about the oath and we have to spend quite a bit of time with the 3 oaths in order to understand the ayat. First, the word “الْبَلَدَ” means city which obviously refers to the city of Mecca. This city is different from the cities we have discovered from the previous discussion (inhabited by the people of ‘Ad, Iram, Thamud and Firaun), city which Allah SWT had destroyed along with their people. Mecca is a blessed and tranquil city. Imam Al-Biqā’i, whose work is mostly known for explaining how the end of the previous Surah connects with the beginning of the next Surah, mentioned how the case of tranquil soul at the end of Surah Al-Fajr is related to the tranquil cities, the first verse of Surah Al-Balad.

Second, on the word of “وَأَنْتَ” in the second ayat which refers to Rasulullah SAW. According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, the word “حِلِّ” had been interpreted in many ways by many Ulamas from the time of the sahabah such as Qatada and the Tabi’ins such as Hasan Al-Basri. It is then continue to be interpreted by other exegetes (Mufasssir). Roughly, for laymen like us, we just take the meaning as Rasulullah SAW is the leader of this Meccan city. When The Quran refer to terms such as leaders, it does not only mean city leaders but also spiritual leaders. This implies that while the citizens of Mecca, mostly the Quraysh, had to struggle to obtain power and wealth, Rasulullah SAW had to struggle to put his mind and soul to Allah SWT in order to have a guided life.

The third Qasam basically refers to the whole inhabitants in which all of the children of the earth have to struggle to live in this world. It refers to the children of Adam AS although in other interpretation refers to the children of Ibrahim AS given the fact that the Meccans were direct descendants of Prophet Ibrahim AS.

After Allah SWT made the 3 Qasam, Allah went on to explain the point of this Surah which is in verse 4. Allah SWT says that mankind was created in toil and struggle. We might learn in other Surahs such as in verse 4 of Surah At-Tin, where Allah SWT said that mankind were born to be the best creature. Below is the verse:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

*We have certainly created man in the best of stature; (Surah at-Tin: 4)*

We should understand the context of the Qasam that Allah SWT made. In each Surah, Allah SWT has a different message to teach and a different story to relate to us. Therefore, we cannot understand the Quran by only understanding one part of the Surah without fully grasping its entirety.

As for this Surah (Al-Fajr) Allah SWT talks about the nature of the struggles of 2 types of people, one in the path of Allah and the other away from the path of Allah. In this part we will only focus on those who are on the path against Allah. Allah SWT mentioned again in this Surah that the characteristics of those who are arrogant, such as the one mentioned in the previous Surah, are specifically those who are struggling for honour, wealth and power. The following 3 verses explain their character which also implicitly explains the kind of struggles faced by them to be seen as men or women of honour, power and wealth. Let us look at the verses:

أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَنْ يَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ

*5. Thinketh he, that none hath power over him?*

يَقُولُ أَهْلَكْتُ مَالًا لُبَدًا

*6. He may say (boastfully); Wealth have I squandered in abundance!*

أَيَحْسَبُ أَنْ لَمْ يَرَهُ أَحَدٌ

*7. Thinketh he that none beholdeth him?*

For those who are with power, they have to struggle to make sure that they are and will remain as number one. In his process to be seen as powerful, he forgets that Allah SWT is Al-‘Aziz (The Mighty One) and Al-Mutakkabir (The Dominant). No matter how much they struggled, no one can forever remain as number one. The same goes for the issue of wealth. In fact, in verse 6 above, Allah SWT mentioned that they become boastful or arrogant saying that they have wasted their cash just to get what they want. This implies that just getting what they want and showing it to others is not enough. They also have to show just how much they have wasted or squandered their wealth. Such people are known as the people of the left hand.



As mentioned in the last part of this Surah, Allah tells us that their place is none other than hellfire. Allah SWT gave a metaphorical analogy of their struggle like a steep path (Aqabah), in which they have to climb the mountain of power and wealth with painstaking effort and an overbearing journey. Ayat 7 specifically informs us how they want others to see them as someone with honour and above others, Wallahua'lam. InshaAllah we will discuss about the concept of Aqabah in the next part. Let us underscore the remaining 3 verses, which is as follows:

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ

8. *Have We not made for him a pair of eyes?-*

وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ

9. *And a tongue, and a pair of lips?-*

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ

10. *And shown him the two highways?*

Before we talk about the two highways mentioned in ayat 10, let us discuss how verses 8 and 9 are related with verses 5 and 6. Instead of using their eyes, to witness Allah SWT's miracles, the people of the left hand not only fail to use them, they also struggle to make others see them with honour and wealth. They as for the parallel between verses 6 and 9, they don't use their mouth (tongue and lips) to speak good things and make dakwah. Instead, they struggle using their vocal cords to make others listen just how much wealth they have as well as how their accumulated wealth is nothing to them. The expectation that people will see him as a great person lies generally in verse 7 above.

More reading materials can be found at [god-consciousness.wixsite.com](http://god-consciousness.wixsite.com)

The last verse (verse 10) concerns 2 types of people, Allah SWT had shown them different directions in which both of them are very steep. One path requires the difficult struggle of being seen as a great person by others, whereas the other path requires the difficult struggle of doing good deeds in this world. InsyaAllah, in the next part we will discuss about the concept of Aqabah (steepness) and how difficult it is to embark on the path of the rightly guided people and do good deeds. May Allah SWT give us barakah for our efforts, Amin.

### 1) Surah Al-Balad (Verses 11-20): The Struggle for Humanitarian Work

We shall head into verse 11 by discussing another path, Insyallah to show or guide as opposed to the other guide which we have already discussed in our previous part. As the previous discussion mentions the path of those who were arrogant, for today we shall look at the path of those who are rightly guided, which Allah SWT metaphorically used the word mountain to explain the huge struggle that the person has to endure through if he or she wants to be successful. Let us look at verse 11, 12 and 13 first:-

فَلَا اقْتَحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ

11. But he hath made no haste on the path that is steep.

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ

12. And what will explain to thee the path that is steep?-

فَأَكْرَبَهُ

13. (It is:) freeing the bondman;

We know through our studies in Sirah Rasulullah SAW how great sahabah such as Abu Bakr RA freed many slaves, Bilal Ibn Ra'bah in particular. The word "الْعَقَبَةُ" is important not only in this part's context, but also in the previous part which we had not discussed. To show off that one has something (e.g. power and wealth) requires a different kind of struggle. For example, some people show the fact that they have hundreds of publications. But to show off the fact that they have hundreds of publications require serious struggle. This is what Aqabah means.

Obviously, those who show off has no place in the World-After except for the torture of Hellfire which we shall discuss at the end of this surah. The struggle to do good deeds is different. It is not enough just to free a slave or whatever it is that we can imagine in today's context, such as the forced labour industries involving children or a more common term, sweatshops.



As Allah SWT mentioned in this surah, there are many things that a person has to look into, as contained in the three verses below:

أَوْ إِطْعَامٍ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ

14. Or the giving of food in a day of privation

يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ

15. To the orphan with claims of relationship,

أَوْ مَسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ

16. Or to the indigent (down) in the dust.

Perhaps the equivalence of helping the poor and needy in today's context can be known as humanitarian work, where people go from places to places to help others in solving their standard of living issues. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan once mentioned that if we delve deeper into the verses, such as the phrase “day of privation” (مَسْغَبَةٍ), which implied the economic bad times, we still need to help those in need, even though we ourselves are facing financial issues. For the word “claims of relationship” (مَقْرَبَةٍ), according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, the word Karib not only means relationship, but also those who are close to us, including our neighbours or those in our workplace. We often forget that there are many workers in our office such as the janitor who might struggle to survive and feed their children. Such people are also included as the مَقْرَبَةٍ in this context.

While some claim that they have already paid zakat to the institutions and therefore are no longer responsible to look for individuals who are in need other than the institution itself, it is important to ask ourselves, why are we so stingy to perform alms-giving, even though what we claim might be true, Wallahua'lam. We have discussed in Surah al-Fajr, a verse informing us that we should honor those who are orphaned, and to some extent, the poor and needy. Honoring those not only mean giving them help, but also to equally respect them as human beings the same way we respect others. The attitude of "I have given the money to you, please stay away from me" implies that we think that our act is so virtuous but we forget that Allah SWT asked us to not only help them, but to honor them. Remember, Allah SWT mentioned that to do good deeds is not an easy task. It is steep, referring to the word "العقبة" mentioned earlier.



We are now moving to the last part, which is about those who perform humanitarian work, those who are in the right path climbing the steep mountain. This implies that giving and honoring is not sufficient, as there are other struggles too. The other struggles are mentioned in the following verse:

ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ

17. Then will he be of those who believe, and enjoin patience, (constancy, and self-restraint), and enjoin deeds of kindness and compassion.

The other struggle is to be patient while at the same time informing others to be patient as well. Patience in doing such humanitarian work entails istiqamah (consistence). There are many great challenges to such work. At the individual level, some people may experience the poor showing arrogance, throwing coins of 20 cents or 50 cents, expecting people to at least give them RM5 or RM10. Challenges might also involve our family members, who do not show gratitude to us when



given assistance, and many others. The final struggle is perhaps the most important one which people occasionally forget to commit.

The word “بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ” (compassion) in this verse, according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, not only do we help them, honor them, be patient while informing them to be patient, we also want them to be successful people, not only in this world but also in the Hereafter. That is to say, we should continue spreading the message of da’wah, sharing what we know from the Quran, Hadith and also the ulama in order for all of us to follow the footsteps of sahabah such as Abu Bakr RA, hence following the footsteps of Rasulullah SAW. These people were called by Allah SWT as the Companions of the Right Hand, as mentioned in the next verse:

أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ

*18. Such are the Companions of the Right Hand.*

Allah SWT in Surah al-Waqiah mentioned the reward of the “أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ” Companions of the Right Hand. Some of them include:

بِأَكْوَابٍ وَأَبَارِيقَ وَكَأْسٍ مِنْ مَعِينٍ (18)

*With vessels, pitchers and a cup [of wine] from a flowing spring - (Surah al-Waqiah: 18)*

لَا يُصَدَّعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَا يُنْزَفُونَ (19)

*No headache will they have therefrom, nor will they be intoxicated - (Surah al-Waqiah: 19)*

وَفَاكِهَةٍ مِمَّا يَتَخَيَّرُونَ (20)

*And fruit of what they select (Surah al-Waqiah: 20)*

وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ (21)

*And the meat of fowl, from whatever they desire. (Surah al-Waqiah: 21)*

The remaining verses of Surah al-Balad are related to the Companions of the Left Hand. The verses are as follows:

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا هُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ

*19. But those who reject Our Signs, they are the (unhappy) Companions of the Left Hand.*

## عَلَيْهِمْ نَارٌ مُّؤَصَّدَةٌ

20. *On them will be Fire vaulted over (all round).*

Before we end, let us mention something about “Our Signs” (بِآيَاتِنَا) related to the Companions of the Left Hand. The Signs or miracles of Allah SWT include not only the Quran which we recite every day, but also everything that we see in this world is Allah SWT’s miracle. Hence, metaphorically speaking, we can say that we should read the Quran as we open the book as well as to read the Quran as we see the world. The people of the left hand, as mentioned in previous sessions have also struggled (to climb the steepness of the mountain) to show off their arrogance, but they shall end up being tortured or punished by Hellfire. With that, we end this surah.

**m) Surah As-Syams (Verses 1-10): The Nafs, the Soul and the Body**

May Allah SWT always guide us towards the straight path. In every salah we recite Surah Al-Fatihah, and right in the middle of the surah, we ask Allah to guide us towards the straight path. InshaAllah, in this part we plan to discuss about the straight path and how it relates to our Nafs (Conscience). We also plan to discuss how we InshaAllah, can learn from people whom Allah SWT has guided such as the prophets, sahabah and auliya', Aamiin.

We are going to pursue our discussion with another Surah in Juz Amma, a surah that is moderately short, and the surah that people recite normally as they perform Dhuha prayer. This Surah, Asy-Syams, can be broadly divided into 3 major parts. The first concerns Allah SWT's creations as stated by Allah SWT's Qasam while the second is about our Nafs and how we can balance between the attraction of bodily desire and the importance of soul purification. The third discusses how the people of Thamud have lost their balance when they cling their Nafs too much into worldly things and refuse to recognise Allah SWT's power through His miracles hence destroying their hearts. Let us decide the components of this Surah. The statements about Allah SWT's Qasam can be observed from verses 1 to 8:

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا

1. *By the sun and its brightness*

وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا

2. *And [by] the moon when it follows it*

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّاهَا

3. *And [by] the day when it displays it*

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا

4. *And [by] the night when it covers it*

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا

5. *And [by] the sky and He who constructed it*

وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَّاهَا

6. *And [by] the earth and He who spread it*

Ulamas and exegetes such as Al-Shauqani, Al-Biqā'i and many others have provided detailed accounts on the meaning of the Surah. Their works are referred to by Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan a lot in his discussion. Imam Al-Biqā'i for instance, made a parallel comparison between the light of the sun with a human's Nafs. He tells us that Allah SWT made an oath about the sun and how it relates to our Nafs. InshaAllah we shall soon discuss this afterwards.



Let us look at verses 1-6, in which Allah SWT explains the other creations such as the moon, daytime and nighttime as well as the phenomenon in the sky and earth. Every single one of it has a direct or indirect bearing to The Sun. Hence, the Surah is known as *Asy-Syams* (The Sun). We have already mentioned in many of our previous discussions that whenever Allah SWT make a Qasam, we should not only understand the statements of the Qasam but also the point that Allah SWT is stressing in the Surah. Essentially, the point that Allah SWT is emphasizing in this surah is stated in the following ayat (7 and 8):

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا

*7. And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it*

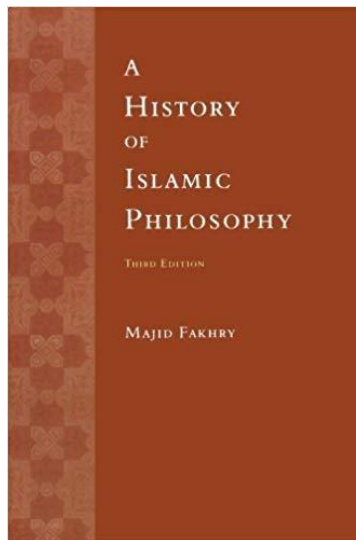
فَأَلَّهَمَّهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

*8. And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness,*

The above 2 verses are important because it tells us that Allah SWT created something in us called nafs (soul) which through it we can obtain inspiration (Ilham) to either do good things or to plunge into doing evil deeds. It is the Nafs that influence our intentions throughout our life just like the sun that influence the whole panorama of other creations, be it during daytime, nighttime, in the sky as well as in the earth. What is enough of the soul has been translated in the above ayat. We

should be clear that no one can understand the concept of soul even though many have claimed to do so.

Actually, many Muslims, especially among those who have been influenced by Greek thought in one hand, and the Indian thought on the other, indulge themselves on the discussion about roh. As a result, some of them ended up deriving into strange conclusions. Those who indulge with Greek thought (neoplatonists) believe in the idea of a supreme intellect, which they speculate it as god. From this intellect, it emanate into lower ranks. From intellect to soul and to the material world, including our body. However, for those who were influenced by Indian thought, they believe that the soul is part of god. If we can purify our souls, we can be unified with god. Concepts such as the unity of being (Wahdatul Wujud), existentialism (Wujudiyah) and Gnosticism (God is everything and everywhere) become a part of their belief, Wallahua'lam. We should avoid ourselves from sliding into the slippery roads of such debate. After all, we are just laymen without any sophisticated tools to venture into the realm.



*A History of Islamic Philosophy, by Majid Fakhry*

Let us welcome our discussion back to the surah, in which Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan wants us to preferably understand the word Nafs as conscience. Let us talk about conscience, where Allah SWT made it proportionate to which path we are walking through, either to do righteous or wicked things. When we say conscience, we are talking about a good thing, conscience do not refer to something negative. When people ask what our conscience is, what people mean to ask is, what does our gut tell us about doing good deeds.

If we follow our previous discussions of the previous Surahs, then we can better understand how Allah SWT always mentioned about the two paths, the right and wrong. In Surah Al-Fajr for instance, Allah SWT mentioned about the worldly achievements of people at a different time, such as during the times of the people of Iram, Thamud and also Firaun. Of course, our gut feelings

would tell us that there is nothing wrong with having such achievements. However, when Allah SWT sent a prophet so that they can worship none other than Allah SWT therefore purifying their hearts (soul), they rejected it even though in their conscience, they know that the messages were just as equally important, if not more than the worldly achievements. Hence, they were destroyed. In Surah Al-Balad, Allah SWT even mentioned about the 2 characteristic of people, in which both of them face something steep (Aqabah). That is to say that the path towards worldly achievements is not an easy task, as it requires sacrifice and a lot of energy and time. Look at how firaun struggled throughout his life to keep his position at a high pedestal. The other path, the path of truth is similarly steep and difficult.

Hence, Allah SWT mentioned in this Surah that he created Nafs (conscience) proportionate to both paths. Therefore, it is up to us to follow which inspires us, the fujuraha (wickedness) or taqwaha (righteousness). Let us look at a Hadith that talks about the concept of Ruh (soul), just to add some of our knowledge as well as make us realise how limited our knowledge is, especially about the concept of truth:

*Abu Huraira reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “The souls are troops collected together. They come close upon what they recognize, and they differ upon what they reject.”*

*Source: Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 3109, Şaḥīḥ Muslim 2638*

The last part of verses for today’s discussion deals about the advantages or benefits of those who correctly used their nafs. Let us look at the ayat first.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

*9. He has succeeded who purifies it,*

وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

*10. And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].*

Allah SWT mentioned those who have successfully made an attempt to use their conscience to purify their hearts as people of Taqwa and vice versa (those who fail and used it as wickedness). As we have discussed in Surah Al-Fajr, we have discussed about the 3 concepts of Nafs (Amarah Bissu, Lawwamah, Mutma’innah) and Allah SWTS invitation for the tranquil soul to enter His paradise. Let us try to understand this discussion on the concept of Nafs (conscience) with the 3 levels of Nafs.

We have already said before that conscience only refers to good things following our gut feeling. Hence, those who use their conscience will not stray themselves into doing Amarah Bissu but instead will always try for the best one, from Lawwamah to Mutma'innah. Hence in this context, the word Nafsu Amarah Bissu should not be understood as a gut feeling because when we define Nafs in this discussion, we are referring it to only good things. We use Nafs to strive to purify our souls, hence it is not a strange thing to notice that the word Nafs is always being translated as soul in the Quran such as the word Nafs in this Surah. Allah SWT in this Surah gave the case of the people of Thamud in order for us to understand the dynamic of Nafs (struggle) between two extremes (the body and soul), which InsyaAllah we will discuss in our next part. With that we end this discussion and may Allah SWT bless our efforts, Aamin.

n) **Surah As-Syams (Verses 11-15): Not Only Camels, But the Quran Itself Is a Miracle**

May Allah continue endowing His blessings on us so we can continue to enjoy, InshaAllah, conducting more tazkirah sessions, Aamiin. In this part, we will take ourselves through a journey on the story of Prophet Saleh AS and a she-camel, as the remaining part of the Surah As-Syams deal mostly about filthy characters of the Musyrikun idolaters.

According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, Allah SWT indeed wanted to inform them that the punishments from Allah will not necessarily be matters of the World After, but if He wanted, the punishments could very well be in front of their eyes. Before we proceed with the story, let us recall on the crux or central focus of this surah, which is finding the balance between the requirement of giving priority to the body as opposed to the soul. Prophet Saleh AS was sent by Allah SWT to the tribe of Thamud, whose engineering technology, as well as architecture of was superb. Construction of buildings were their expertise. However, they were lacking spiritual matters in their life, thus shallow from soul attainment. Let us recite the verses relating to this issue before we proceed, which is as follows:

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَاهَا

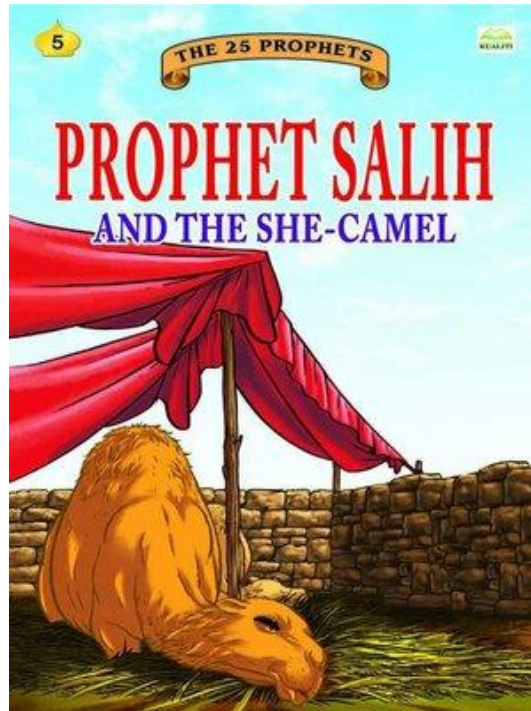
*11. Thamud denied [their prophet] by reason of their transgression,*

إِذِ انبَعَثَ أَشْقَاهَا

*12. When the most wretched of them was sent forth.*

If we notice, there is no specific mention about to whom the story was about, but the story of the she-camel was well known by the Arabs. Therefore, according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, the verses have dual functions and can refer to both Prophet Saleh AS and Prophet Muhammad SAW, where the Thamud denied Prophet Saleh and the Quraysh Musyrikun denied Prophet Muhammad SAW. The story that concerns the she-camel and Prophet Saleh is rather ubiquitous in the Quran.





*Prophet Salih and the She-Camel, by Aniza Anis Sallihudin*

There are around 10 places in which this story can be seen referred to. In fact, in Surah Al-A'raf below, Allah provided a clear snapshot of the story, and perhaps this is the best moment for us to look into it, InsyaAllah.

*"To Thamud people We sent their brother Salih. He said, 'O my people! Worship Allah, you have no other ilah (god) but Him (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah). Indeed there has come to you a clear sign ( the miracle of the coming out of a huge she-camel from the midst of a rock) from your Lord. This she-camel of Allah is a sign unto you so you leave her to graze in Allah's earth, and touch her not with harm, lest a painful torment should size you. Remember when He made you successors after Ad people and gave you habitations in the land, you build for yourselves palaces in plains and carve out homes in the mountains. So remember the graces bestowed upon you from Allah, and do not go about making mischief on the earth.'*

*"The leaders of those who were arrogant among his people said to those who were counted weak to such of them as believed, 'Know you that Salih is one sent from his Lord.' They said, 'We indeed believe in that with which he has been sent.' Those who were arrogant said, 'Verily, we disbelieve in that which you believe in.'*

*"So they killed the she-camel and insolently defied the Commandment of their Lord, and said, 'O Salih! Bring about your threats if you are indeed one of the Messengers (of Allah).'*' So the earthquakes seized them and they lay dead, prostrate in their homes. Then he (Salih) turned from

*them, and said, 'O my people! I have indeed conveyed to you the Message of my Lord, and have give you good advise but you like not good advisers.' "*

**(Al-A'raf: 73-79**

)

The messages from these verses are clear. First, If Allah wanted to befall them with punishments in this world, it could and would certainly have happened to them in this world, hence we shouldn't say that the World After is still far ahead, and so are the punishments. Second, If we haven't received guidance from Allah SWT, no matter whatever miracle Allah create and show in front our eyes, we still wouldn't be able to see Allah's power, even though the Thamud people saw the massive she-camel. Quran is the biggest of miracles, but do we have the eyes to see it? May Allah protect us from misguidance. Third, while it is true that physical development, either body or building is indeed important, what is equally important, if not more important, is spiritual development. Our bodies are made from materials of this world, hence they need food from this world. However, our soul is from the Other World, from the top, hence they need food from the top as well, which was made available through revelation. Wallahua'lam.

Let us continue reciting the verses from Surah As-Syams, which is as follows:

فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا

*13. And the messenger of Allah [Salih] said to them, "[Do not harm] the she-camel of Allah or [prevent her from] her drink."*

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاهَا

*14. But they denied him and hamstrung her. So their Lord brought down upon them destruction for their sin and made it equal [upon all of them].*

وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاهَا

*15. And He does not fear the consequence thereof.*

Allah mentioned that they, the people of Thamud, crushed the she-camel, hence Allah SWT will crush them with the worst of crashes.



The last verse informs us that Allah SWT is not affected by whatever we do in this world. However, we can also take it as we shouldn't think that we are so great and powerful with what we have, such as knowledge, wealth, power, and ownership. In fact, Allah SWT has complete ownership over us. Before we end our discussion, let us say something about what Ibn Umar narrated regarding the location left by the people of Thamud, called Al-Hijr. The area is located at the northern part of Hijaz. The narration is as follows:

*Ibn 'Umar narrated that while the Prophet Muhammad SAW was passing by Thamud's houses on his way to the battle of Tabuk, he stopped together with the people there. The people fetched water from the wells from which the people of Thamud used to drink. They prepared their dough (for baking) and filled their water skins from it (the water from the wells). The Prophet of Allah SAW ordered them to empty the water skins and give the prepared dough to the camels. Then he went away with them until they stopped at the well from which the she-camel (of Salih) used to drink. He warned them against entering upon the people that had been punished, saying "I fear that you may be affected by what afflicted them; so do no enter upon them."*

It should be noted that in another narration, the story took place on the way back from Tabuk. May Allah bless our efforts and may He not make our efforts a diminishing one, Aamiin.

**o) Surah Al-Layl (Verses 1-11): The Art of Giving**

Much have we covered so far in our discussion and we ask Allah to practice much of what we have said so not only we can be people of Jannah, but also people who walk towards the top. In this part we will discuss Surah Al-Layl (Surah 92) which comprises of 21 ayat and was revealed in Mecca. Like previous Surah As-Syams, this Surah also begins with Allah's Qasam (Oath). The previous Surah begins with daytime, in this surah however, Allah SWT begins it by discussing the nighttime. This Surah can be divided into two big parts, where the 1st discussed the two opposite characters (good and evil). The second part discusses about Allah SWT's reward or punishment for such character. Let us now turn our discussion to the first part which can be divided into 3 subheadings which are the Qasam, the good people, and bad people. Let us start by discussing the first subheading, which concerns the Qasam, they are described in verses 1, 2 and 3.

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَىٰ

*1. By the night when it covers*

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّىٰ

*2. And [by] the day when it appears*

وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ

*3. And [by] He who created the male and female,*

Perhaps it is easily noticeable for us to see the pattern of the ayat, 1, 2 and 3 in which Allah SWT mention about the pair of days (night and daytime) and the pair of creation (male and female). Unlike the previous Surah, Allah SWT mentions specific relations such as Qamar, earth, sky, etc. In this ayat Allah did not mention any specificity implying the diversity of things during nighttime and daytime. Allah also did not mention man or woman rather than talking about biological sex between male and female which can involve human and non-humans (plants, animals, etc.), Wallahualam. All this things pointing to the diversity and generality of beings and as we have already discussed in many previous discussions, when Allah made Qasam, we should observe its meanings carefully because the point that Allah SWT want to mention to us closely follow the metaphors in the Qasam. The following ayat which is ayat 4, is the point based on Allah's Qasam, which is the main idea of the Surah. Let us look at ayat 4 which is as below:-

إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّىٰ

*4. Indeed, your efforts are diverse.*

It is very interesting for us because instead of saying Allah SWT's creation in this ayat Allah mentions His effort. On the side note, we should understand that every single minute of any activities that take place must be an outcome of Allah SWT's effort. Or, we could say that Allah SWT is the primary cause of everything, although secondary forces also operate in this world. And this is obviously very high theological point which might test our faith over the concept of free-will or predestinarian. This is so because we might have a problem understanding how is it that every activity, good and bad has a direct effect from Allah's effort. While it is important for us to understand the issue, we should inform ourselves how limited is our brain capability is. Ibn Abbas once said, whosoever tries to unlock Allah secret will end up rejecting Allah.

Let us get back into the content of the verses by looking at the verses that discuss on the good characters of human beings (ayat 5,6 and 7 as follows):

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَاتَّقَىٰ

5. As for he who gives and fears Allah

وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ

6. And believes in the best [reward],

فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ

7. We will ease him toward ease.

Although the basic stories in this part of the ayaat refer to those who perform charity and almsgiving, there are other messages which are equally important in the ayat. Some ulamas refer this ayat to the case of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq who was known during the time of Sirah of Rasulullah SAW to practice extreme almsgiving during the Meccan time. For someone who was wealthy, he only lived a simple and moderate life. The reason for this was, he believed that contributing his wealth to Islam and practicing charity is highly important. The story of Bilal Ibn Rabbah, who was persecuted by his master (Umayyah Ibn Khalaf) and how Abu Bakr RA later freed Bilal is an example of a classic story of how righteous Abu Bakr was during the Meccan time besides the story of him admitting that everything that Rasulullah SAW said cannot be wrong, hence his title.

Ustadh Nouman Ali-Khan mentioned 3 important characteristics in the ayat below which are almsgiving, fearing and being truthful as well as how the 3 characteristics are interconnected. It is not enough for us to do good things in this world such as being philanthropic or benevolent if we have no concept of fear to Allah. We have heard many stories about great people not only in our time but also during Rasulullah SAW's time such as Hatim al-Tai and Ibn Jun'an, who was Sayyidina Aishah's grand-uncle who spent most of his life doing charity. Rasulullah SAW said that the fact

that they fear no god during that time implies that they do good deeds just to get people's recognition. Therefore, they were non on the path of the truth.

The ayat on “وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ” (and believes in the best [reward]) has been interpreted by many different Ulama in many different ways especially on the word “Saddiq” which actually means truth or truthful. What is the truth about the reward here has been understood as prayers, fasting and other types of worship. However, Ustadh Nouman Ali-Khan mention that the truthful in this ayat carry a deeper different meaning in which it tests the human being's ego. There are times when we refuse to admit that we are wrong in front of other people's criticism particularly if we are a man of stature or with a certain position such as a lecturer or teacher. At that point of criticism we will also be rewarded spiritually if we accept the truth of the criticism. Hence it is not enough for us to be generous and to be God-fearing but we have to be truthful as well.

Before we move towards the next part of the ayaat, which discusses those who are involved with evil deeds, let us learn from Surah al-Insan on how we should turn to Allah SWT to ask for his forgiveness after doing good deeds such as alms-giving. The verse is as follows:-

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا

*And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive, (Surah al-Insan:8)*

إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا

*[Saying], "We feed you only for the countenance of Allah . We wish not from you reward or gratitude. (Surah al-Insan: 9)*

إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَبِّنَا يَوْمًا عَبُوسًا قَمْطَرِيرًا

*Indeed, We fear from our Lord a Day austere and distressful." (Surah al-Insan: 10)*

The message is very clear, it is very important for us to do something only for fearing Allah SWT, and not for other purposes. Another important message from Surah al-Layl is that Allah SWT did not mention giving wealth specifically. In general, it mentions about giving. This might include giving our time and energy. If we have people with emotional problems such as arrogance or other different types of mental problem, we can still practice the art of giving, which is giving ourselves to be patient with the problem. May Allah SWT give us the strength to practice the art of many types of giving, Aamiin.



*We may be unable to do or give anything to people with such characteristics (arrogance), however we can still give him our patience. That is the virtuous thing about the art of giving.*

Let us move to the discussion on the opposite characters of people which is the evil one as in the ayat below:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَىٰ

*8. But as for he who withholds and considers himself free of need*

وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ

*9. And denies the best [reward],*

فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَىٰ

*10. We will ease him toward difficulty.*

وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّىٰ

*11. And what will his wealth avail him when he falls?*

In principle, there is no difference of discussion we can derive from this part. It is basically mentioning about the opposite character. Therefore, we do not think that much discussion should be given, except mentioning that there is nothing that can be done about their wealth once they are punished in the world after, implying just how important it is to practice the message of truth (al-Husna).

So far, we have discussed about the human effort, which is diverse. From doing good deeds to evil deeds. An important note from our discussion is that Allah SWT has already informed us of what is good and what is bad through Rasulullah SAW, which is written in the Quran. We should

More reading materials can be found at [god-consciousness.wixsite.com](http://god-consciousness.wixsite.com)

understand that the Quran read by sahabah continues to be read by us until the end of the world. The Quran not only contains the message of truth, it itself is the miracle (two in one). Whosoever rejects the Quran rejects the Message of Truth and Allah SWT's miracle. InsyaAllah in our next part we will discuss this issue in greater detail. With that, we end this part.



**p) Surah Al-Layl (Verses 12-21): The Essential Warnings of the Quran**

We are entering our discussion on the second part of Surah al-Layl, the Surah that tells us how important Allah SWT's message is in The Quran, in which people take it for granted, especially the Quraysh Musyrikun, who not only regarded the message of the Quran as problematic to their forefather's teachings, but they reject it in its entirety.

We should begin by saying that the Quran is different from other forms of Miracles. First, for the other prophets such as Moses, David and Jesus AS, Allah SWT gave them Miracles such as a staff capable of transforming into a snake, a voice that is so melodious, and the supranatural medical healing. Specific to Rasulallah SAW, Allah SWT gave miracles not only in those kinds, such as water being able to flow out of his hands, The Book itself is a surviving extraordinary miracle. The point here is, Moses has miracles, but the Torah is separate from the miracles. As for Rasulallah, the miracles and message are one, which is the Quran.

Before we start looking into the verses, let us remind ourselves that in the previous Surah, As-Syams, Allah SWT tells us the punishment of the Thamuds who reject and kill the she-camel (miracle). In this surah, Allah SWT explains how the Musyrikuns and the disbelievers reject the miracle of The Quran. Let us look at verses 12 and 13, they are as follows:

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَىٰ

*12. Indeed, [incumbent] upon Us is guidance.*

وَإِنَّ لَنَا لَلْآخِرَةَ وَالْأُولَىٰ

*13. And indeed, to Us belongs the Hereafter and the first [life].*

The two verses explain to us that Allah SWT will guide whosoever He wants to guide, and of course for those who ask for Allah SWT's guidance only. In our previous part, we have discussed how Allah SWT guide the righteous people who are willing to donate (wealth, time, energy) and even the attitude to be patient toward others, and how Allah SWT has misguided people who are cheap and stingy, as well as think that they are self-sufficient, hence they are misguided by Allah SWT. May we be guided so that not only do we get the fruits of this world, but also the world after.



*We won't ask the majority's opinion about the truth the way we want to know where North is. The Quran is our spiritual guidance, leading us to the path of the truth.*

The following verse, 14 up until the end of this surah (21) can be divided into two parts. The first concerns those who anger Allah SWT while the second concerns those who follow the righteous path. Let us look at the verse which concerns the people who earn the anger of Allah SWT:

فَأَنْذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظَّى

*14. So I have warned you of a Fire which is blazing.*

لَا يَصْلَاهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى

*15. None will [enter to] burn therein except the most wretched one.*

الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى

*16. Who had denied and turned away.*

These ayats turn to those who are among the left hand, those who deny the message of truth in The Quran. To inform us of how severe Allah SWT's anger is, the verse specifically said "...I have warned..." implying that Allah SWT Himself has directly warned. Usually Allah SWT would have Rasulullah SAW warn the people of the tortures of Hellfire. We should have Allah SWT's protection so that we may not be among the people of the wretched.

One might wonder why although Allah SWT has mentioned many times that people and their civilization will be destroyed, such as the people of 'Ad, Iram, Thamud, and Fir'aun, why is it that the Musyrikuns were not destroyed? Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, in an occasion mentioned that the Musyrikuns actually have no civilization to be proud of, they were known to be illiterate and there is no civilization as great as the 'Ad, Thamud or others, in which they were known for their

advancements in many fields such as architecture. Hence, there was nothing to be destroyed. After all, they are already destroyed people.

It is not a strange thing that in the mid-90s, when countries begin to build their nation state, each country glorified their own culture, language, tradition and beliefs. Iran, with a Persian culture, Turkey with a Turk culture, Syrian with a Syrian culture. The Arab people who had no early civilization have nothing to be proud of. They ended up using Islam as their culture and glorified the Arab nations as Islamic nations. Second, the Musyrikun were not destroyed like the other civilization, because the prophet was born in this society. The Prophet Rasulullah SAW was also the Sign of The Last Hour. The world will be destroyed eventually.

Let us continue by turning our focus to the people of the Right Hand, which is as follows:

وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى

17. *But the righteous one will avoid it -*

الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى

18. *[He] who gives [from] his wealth to purify himself*

وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تُجْرَى

19. *And not [giving] for anyone who has [done him] a favor to be rewarded*

إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَى

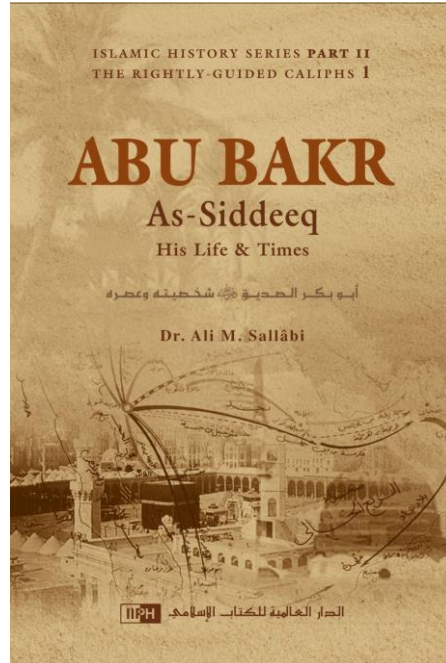
20. *But only seeking the countenance of his Lord, Most High.*

وَأَسْوَفَ يَرْضَى

21. *And he is going to be satisfied.*

We are going to further discuss this part into two subparts, which is giving and purifying as well as seeking countenance of Allah SWT. The end component of Surah al-Layl informs us that as we practice charity, we are indeed purifying our wealth, hence our hearts. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan mentions that the act of living itself is more important than the thing that we give. This is so, because regardless of whether we are poor or rich, we have to pour our hearts into giving. If the thing that we give is more important, it would mean that the rich people can purify their hearts, unlike the poor. If the poor only has two dates, he is obliged to give one date to other people if they notice that someone is really needing it.

The stories of many sahabah with such righteous character of giving is voluminous. The stories of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq obviously is always in the heart of many people. Many mufassir or exegetes say that the earliest scholars refer this surah to Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, but Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan mentions, quoting works of Ibn Kathir, that none of the scholars know who specifically were the people who said that this surah refers to Abu Bakr. Therefore, the best approach is to understand this surah in general, referring to the people of the right hand, although there was nothing wrong to quote Abu Bakr as-Siddiq personally.



On seeking the countenance of Allah SWT, which should be the attitude of those who practice almsgiving, we should understand that in every ibadah that we do, we should ask for Allah SWT's forgiveness and redha. Hence, it is not befitting for us to say Alhamdulillah after we donate our money to others, rather than saying Astaghfirullah, because we do not know whether Allah SWT will guide us or accept our deeds. This also applies at the time when we finish our salah after we make salam. We would say Astaghfirullah rather than Alhamdulillah.

Before we end, let us learn one beautiful message from Shaykh Abdalhakim Murad, when he said something about staying away from others in order to avoid ourselves from getting affected or infected by other people's misdeeds. He said that we should also have in our minds as we want to stay away from others that we don't want others to get affected or inflicted by our own misdeeds rather than talking about other people's misdeeds. With that, we end this Surah. May Allah SWT give barakah for our efforts, Aamiin.

# **Part III**

## **Tazkirah From Surah ad-Dhuha to Surah al-Humazah**

a) **Prologue: The Organization of the 12 Surahs (From Ad-Dhuha to Al-Humazah)**

With Allah SWT's blessings, we will InshaaAllah engage ourselves with Surah Ad-Dhuha until Surah Al-Humazah (12 Surahs). Prior to that, let us start by invoking the Ummul Kitab al-Fatihah.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ  
الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ  
إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ  
اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ  
صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

May we receive benefits on the essential message of Surah al-Fatihah, that is our surrendering to Allah SWT, The Lord of The Universe, and our reliance only to him for guidance towards the straight path.

In this tazkirah series, we ask Allah SWT to increase our knowledge in our effort to cover the next 12 Surahs from the whole 37 Surahs of the Juz Amma. And in the next tazkirah series, we will cover the last 10 Surahs in Juz Amma, in which besides having the divine message on theology (aqidah), the 10 Surahs were also embedded with narrations of Rasulullah SAW's sirah. We organize our thoughts in a different approach in dealing with the organization of the 12 Surahs. In this tazkirah session, we will begin with Surah ad-Dhuha (#93), until Surah al-Humazah (#104). We will divide the 12 Surahs into 4 groups as follow:-

1. Surah ad-Dhuha and Surah al-Insyirah.

These two beautiful Surahs concern directly to Rasulullah SAW's life, especially grievances and upset that inflicted him during the long period of no revelation, as InshaAllah we will discuss in Surah ad-Dhuha. While the next Surah, Surah al-Insyirah tells us when Rasulullah SAW felt down after being continuously rejected not only by the majority of idolaters, but most importantly his close relatives and families.

2. Surah at-Tin (95), Surah al-Alaq, Surah al-Qadr and Surah al-Bayyinah (98).

Ulamas have mentioned that these four bunch of Surahs move in a quartet (four in tandem), and their basic message is about the Quran and the revelations. Surah at-Tin deals with four main prophets and the nature of human beings, as well as why there is need for guidance from

Allah SWT. The next Surah, Surah al-Alaq is about how the Quran was revealed, followed by Surah al-Qadr, when it was revealed and Surah al-Bayyinah, on its main content.

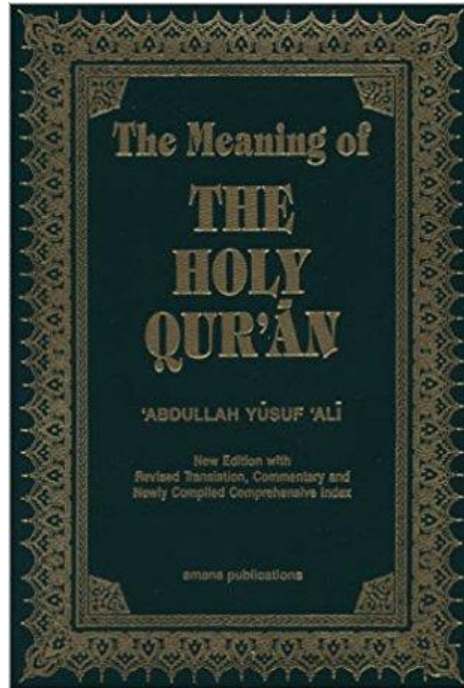
3. Surah al-Zalzalah (99), Surah al-'Adiyat (100), Surah al-Qariah and Surah at-Takathur

These four interwoven Surah is also a quartet. According to ulamas, the message of the last day was revealed in correlation with the message of the human's desire for worldly things. Surah al-Zalzalah speaks of how the Earth is shaken and how terrified the humankind is due to its severe magnitude and scale of disaster. This is followed by Surah al-'Adiyat, which tells us of two filthy characteristics of humankind, those with exceeding ungratefulness and love for wealth. Alternately, in Surah al-Qariah, Allah SWT describes the Last Day with a different focus and emphasis, in which a big rattling sound will hit mankind, whereby those who reject and are ungrateful to Allah SWT will be punished with the fire of intense heat (Narun Hamiyah). This Surah is followed by a similar warning towards those who are diverted by the temptations of worldly abundance (Money, Pride, etc.).

4. Surah al-Asr and Surah al-Humazah

These two Surahs are unique in their own ways. Surah al-Asr tells us of how severe it humans are running out of time, forgetting the purpose of life. While Surah Humazah is the last Surah in the Quran that warns specific human beings of the worst punishment of the hellfire. We make supplications to the Almighty Allah SWT, may we be granted with the right knowledge, and we ask Allah SWT to give us strength and perseverance. Not only to practice the knowledge but to enjoin it with others, while at the same time making the effort of avoiding while doing it with a firm ground and passion, Aamiin.

We are aware that there are many translated versions of the Quran in English, and among the earliest translated was by the great scholar, Abdullah Yusuf Ali. This translation suits well with those who are fond of the Shakespearean language. We center our discussions on this tazkirah session from Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan mostly, and also by others such as Syeikh Yasir Qadhi. As usual, we will use the summary of Ibn Kathir and Tafsir Ahsanul Bayan which is available in numerous exegeses of the Quran. Again, we pray to Allah SWT so that we can be guided to the path of truth, as well as rewarded with Jannah without Hisab.



*Abdullah Yusuf Ali (14 April 1872 – 10 December 1953) was a British-Indian barrister and scholar who wrote a number of books about Islam and whose translation of the Qur'an into English is one of the most widely known and used in the English-speaking world. A supporter of the British war effort during World War I, Ali received a CBE in 1917 for his services to that cause. He died in London in 1953. - Wikipedia*

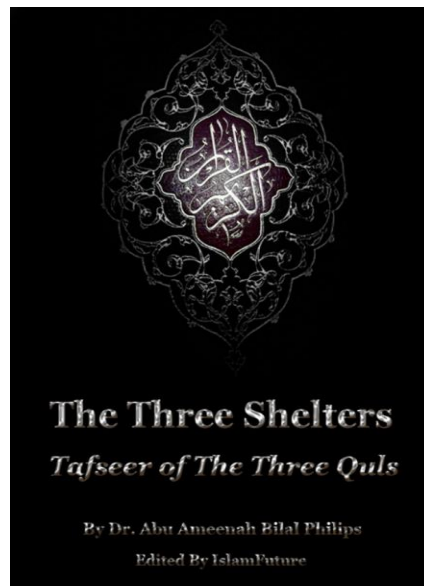


**b) Surah Ad-Dhuha: Orphan, Guidance Seeker and Ni'mah Reporter**

Thanks and praises be to Allah SWT, The Lord of The Universe. May we be guided to the straight path, Aamiin. We start our tazkirah session by first making an attempt to understand Surah Ad-Dhuha (the 93rd Surah, 11 verses). Together with the next Surah (Surah Al-Inshirah), this Surah, unlike many others, gives focus not to the musyrik idolaters but was directed to Rasulullah SAW instead. We start this part by trying to understanding the context (Asbabun Nuzul) of this Surah.

Ulamas differ in terms of its Asbabun Nuzul, in which a group said that once, Rasulullah SAW was in grief, because for quite some time, he did not receive any revelation, in which had lead to the revelation of this Surah. Another group not only agreed with the grievance of Rasulullah SAW, but said that the wife of Abu Lahab (Ummu Jamil) had sarcastically told Rasulullah SAW that, “the one you are so proud of, your Master (Allah SWT) is no longer revealing the truth to you, and so you have been neglected”. The story of Ummu Jamil and her husband, Abu Lahab will be discuss further in our session on Surah Al-Lahab, and it should be mentioned here that she got angry towards Rasulullah SAW when Surah Al-Lahab that cursed Abu Lahab and Ummu Jamil was revealed. She called the Prophet ‘Muzammam’, “who is to be condemned”, rather than Muhammad, “who is to be praised”. Once, she came to him holding an object with the intent to hit Rasulullah SAW. Abu Bakar RA who was with Rasulullah SAW alerted him of Ummu Jamil’s approach. Rasulullah SAW told Abu Bakar to just let it be, for Allah SWT will protect him. As soon as Ummu Jamil arrived next to Abu Bakar, she asked for the whereabouts of Rasulullah SAW (She could not see Rasulullah SAW who was right in front of her) and finally left Abu Bakar RA and Rasulullah SAW.

We have discussed how great the past ulamas such as As-Shaukani, Imam Al-Alusi, al-Tabari, have provided exegesis of the Quran. As we discuss our topic on Surah Ad-Dhuha here, there are many contemporary speakers and ulamas whose concern on Islam is so great that they too provide very interesting discussion on Quran such as the one by Bilal Philips on the three Quls.



*Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, (born Dennis Bradley Philips, 1946) is a Jamaican-born Canadian Muslim teacher, speaker, and author who lives in Qatar. He appears on Peace TV, which is a*

*24-hour Islamic satellite TV channel. He considers himself a Salafi who advocates a traditional, literal form of Islam. - Wikipedia*

Among the important messages of Surah Ad-Dhuha, besides teaching us the importance of theology (aqidah) such as fate in Allah SWT, Rasulullah SAW and Judgement Day, are another three. One, we must take care of the welfare of the orphans, whom nowadays we often neglect. Sometimes we would receive emails asking for donations from orphanages. We tend to criticize the senders and sometimes distrust them, but seldom ask ourselves how many times have we helped the orphans over the past few months. Rasulullah SAW told us to appreciate those who asks for our help, such as asking questions and requiring explanations. Parents, teachers or workers would sometimes be fed up with questions asked to them, and with anger we may feel that their questions are stupid and irrelevant. We hope that we can obtain benefit from this Surah, so that we can improve ourselves and our bad attitude.

This Surah tells us of Allah SWT's ni'mah onto us, which obviously is incalculable. The fact that we are still talking and listening means that Allah SWT's *rahmah* upon us is still continuously flowing. This Surah mentions the ni'mah of Allah SWT in words, be it with our tongue or pen, if necessary. Let us look at the Surah, with knowledge that this Surah was directed to Rasulullah SAW during his grief:-

وَالضُّحَىٰ

[1] *By the morning brightness*

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ

[2] *And [by] the night when it covers with darkness,*

It is quite common in the Quran that Allah SWT would begin with a Qasam (oath). And this oath of soothing morning and calm night is mentioned in this Surah with its very own purpose. "Dhuha" refers to the morning which Rasulullah SAW began to feel grief, and the word "Sajaa" at the end of the second verse is used to not only describe the calmness of night but the stillness of such night, which according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, points to the stillness of revelations for quite awhile. However, in the following verses, Allah SWT mentions many things including the issues of the sudden stop of revelations and the claim that Rasulullah SAW was neglected by Allah SWT:-

مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ

[3] *Your Lord has not taken leave of you, [O Muhammad], nor has He detested [you].*

وَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ

[4] *And the Hereafter is better for you than the first [life]*

وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ

[5] *And your Lord is going to give you, and you will be satisfied.*

These three verses should merit our attention on the following issues:

1. The word “Kaa” in these verses refer to “many”, which not only means that the message is directed to Rasulullah SAW, but we benefit of this message is also for ourselves.
2. Not only will Allah SWT continue to give *wahyu* to Rasulullah SAW, but Allah SWT favours him with many things which we will discuss in this Surah in the second verse and the next three verses. In fact, Allah SWT will give him benefit not only for this world but also in the Afterlife.
3. There are words such as “Uula” and “Tardha” which carry other meanings too. According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, Allah SWT used the word “Uula” instead of “Dunya” in the fourth verse, which explains that not only Allah SWT gave Rasulullah SAW benefits of this world and the world after, but also benefits and help during the period of Islam during the early Meccan time and the end part of his life especially during the Fathul Makkah, when multitudes of delegates came to give bai’ah to Rasulullah SAW.

The following six verses are very important, in which the first three are about the favours that Allah SWT gave to Rasulullah SAW and to many of us, while the remaining three are about the orders of Allah SWT, telling us that we should oblige to His commands. We know all the verses in this Surah was targeted to Rasulullah SAW. Therefore, some of the stories may apply to us, whereas others might not, InshaAllah we will discuss this issue as we proceed with the verses. Let us bunch together the next three verses:-

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ

[6] Did He not find you an orphan and give [you] refuge?

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ

[7] And He found you lost and guided [you],

وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ

[8] And He found you poor and made [you] self-sufficient.

The phrase “أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ” is a specific emphasis to Rasulullah SAW and ourselves that during the point of grief, we should look at the favours that Allah SWT has granted to us. In the case of Rasulullah SAW, he was an orphan and Allah SWT sheltered him when Allah SWT appointed Abu Talib to protect him.

Verse 7 should be discussed with great care, and we should always ask those of authority to explain it. Allah SWT mentions that Allah SWT gave guidance to Rasulullah SAW when he was at a lost. The word “Dhaal” in this verse should not be understood as the phrase Dhaaliin (straight) as found in Surah Al-Fatihah. “Lost” in this context refers to the time when Rasulullah SAW was in search of truth before he became a Prophet. Verse 8 is also similar, telling us that Allah SWT granted him fortune such as marrying Khadijah when he was in desperate need of help. Wallahua’lam.

Of course, all of the stories were about Rasulullah SAW, but we should look at the countless favours given to us by Allah SWT. The stories of Rasulullah's grief were also revealed in Surah Al-Kauthar (Abundance of Good) which when the musyrikun were in great happiness over the death of the Prophet SAW's son, Rasulullah was in deep grief. After all, all of his sons had died (Qasim, Abdullah and Ibrahim). In Surah Ad-Dhuha and Surah Al-Kauthar, an important message is to always be thankful to Allah SWT and look at the bright side when we are inflicted with problems. When we are inflicted with a problem, which sometimes we might exaggerate, we easily become forgetful of the thousands of *Rahmah* that Allah SWT has endowed upon us.

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan discussed about the word "Ka" which is not present in the end of verses such as "وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ" (it can be "fahadaka"). This implies that not only Allah SWT guided the Prophet SAW, but importantly, through the Prophet, Allah SWT guided the rest of mankind as it is Rasulullah who played the crucial role in guiding the Ummah. The remaining 3 verses are parallel with the previous bunch of 3 verses and it is as follows:

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ

[9] *So as for the orphan, do not oppress [him].*

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ

[10] *And as for the petitioner, do not repel [him].*

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ

[11] *But as for the favor of your Lord, report [it].*

Verse 6 is parallel to verse 9, which teaches us the importance of taking care of the welfare of the Yateem. Verse 7 is parallel to verse 10, asking us to be committed when responding to other people's concerns and questions in order for them to get guidance from the state of lost. Verse 8 is parallel to verse 11, telling us to be thankful to Allah SWT for the abundant help given to us by always mentioning it. How beautiful is the Quran, not only deep in terms of meanings, but also beautiful in terms of its organization.

From Surah Ad-Dhuha, InsyaAllah we can derive important lessons which are to always be positive and thankful to Allah, and that the remedy for those in grief is not crying profusely and complaining, but instead looking at the countless benefits that Allah SWT have rendered to us. We will repeat the 3 important things we must do, according to the message of this Surah, which are be good to the orphans, be responsible to those who ask for guidance, and be thankful to Allah SWT's ni'mahs by constant remembrance of Him. This Surah is closely connected to Surah Al-Inshirah, which InsyaAllah, we will discuss in the next part.

**c) Surah Al-Inshirah: Tirelessly Working Day and Night and Reliance to Allah SWT**

In our previous session, we have discussed Surah Ad-Dhuha and we have made explicit mentions that Surah Ad-Dhuha and Al-Inshirah are closely interconnected, and these 2 Surahs are revelations directed to Rasulullah SAW. The 2 Surahs were revealed at the point of Rasulullah's grief and stress. This is for many reasons, including rejections, and more importantly the long delay of revelation as mentioned in the previous session. Appreciating the interconnectedness of these 2 Surahs, it is said that Ibn Mas'ud combined these 2 Surahs without reciting Basmalah in one of the rakaats of his prayer. For the record Ibn Mas'ud or as Rasulullah addressed him, Ibn Umm Abd, was a great Qiraat (Master in Quran recitations) and he was from the Bani Kudli, sub-tribe of bani Tamim, a clan known for its powerful language of Arab, in which Imam Syafi'i himself had learned and was emerged in this clan.

Before we deal with the translations of this Surah, let us mention a few benefits and the main message of it. This Surah, like other Surahs on motivation, such as Al-Kauthar (Abundant Good) teaches us to look at the bright side when inflicted with negative things. We are asked by Allah to look at the countless gifts and rahmahs which He had endowed upon us and one of the biggest rahmah is to be blessed with Islam. This Surah also teaches us to always be positive and enjoy ma'rufs because Allah SWT promises us on the multiplicity of the rewards for every single deed we do. Allah also teaches us in this Surah to rely and depend on Him and Him alone for everything that we do, be it worldly, let alone spiritually. This Surah is very important and useful to be recited when we feel down, distressed and depressed.

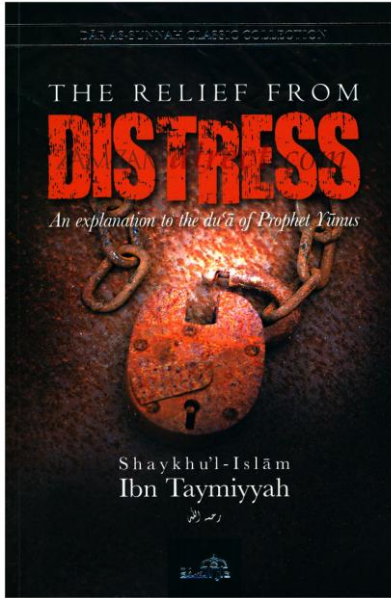
This is a Makkiyah Surah with 8 verses and as we have mentioned earlier, it is directed to the Prophet himself, but it doesn't mean that we shouldn't bother and get benefit from it. Let us now start with the translation and discussion of the verses. The first verse is as follows:

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ

[1] *Did We not expand for you, [O Muhammad], your breast?*

We might spend some time to look at this verse, since the interpretation of its meaning is diverse. Ulamas who took the literal meaning of this verse refers to 2 episodes of events in the Prophet's life. These refer to when his chest was split open and cleansed. The first was when he was 4 years old under the custody of Halimatul as-Sa'diah. An angel came to open his chest and clean his heart. The second took place before the night journey (Isra' Mi'raj).

However, the postclassical ulamas (200 years ago and more recent) such as Imam Alusi\*, goes deeper in search of its meaning. Let us recall the stories of Musa AS when he felt his chest so tight and having difficulty to speak due to stress by the enemy of Islam during his time of da'wah. He made a popular Du'a. This du'a can be found in Surah Taha verse 25-28, which is commonly recited in our du'as. Besides Prophet Musa, there are also du'as of Prophet Yunus as mentioned in the Quran.



*Taqī ad-Dīn Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah (January 22, 1263 - September 26, 1328), known as Ibn Taymiyyah for short, was a controversial medieval Sunni Muslim theologian, jurisconsult, logician, and reformer. A member of the Hanbali school of jurisprudence founded by Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyyah was also a member of the Qadiriyya Sufi order founded by the twelfth-century mystic and saint Abdul-Qadir Gilani. A polarizing figure in his own lifetime, Ibn Taymiyyah's iconoclastic views on widely accepted Sunni doctrines such as the veneration of saints and the visitation to their tomb-shrines made him unpopular with the majority of the orthodox religious scholars of the time, under whose orders he was imprisoned several times. - Wikipedia*

This first ayat or verse of Surah Al-Inshirah carries the two words uttered by Musa AS. The word “Sharah” itself has other meanings according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, such as to make clarifications. It should be noted that the word “Na (we)” in this Surah is mentioned many times indicates the closeness of Allah SWT to Rasulallah SAW, while the word “Ka (refers to Rasulallah)” is located many times in this Surah just like the previous Surah, Ad-Dhuha. This indicates that the Surah is directed to Rasulallah SAW.

We have mentioned in Surah Ad-Dhuha, especially verse “wawajadakahallam fahada”\* which Allah SWT is The One who guided Rasulallah SAW (through his wahyu) and throughout his life before even prophethood at the age of 40. The Prophet had struggled to search for the truth and through the wahyus, Allah SWT had opened his heart and directed him to the truth. Using the story of Nabi Musa AS, Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan summarised the previous ulamas’ meaning or interpretation on this ayat by saying that Allah SWT had opened the Prophet’s chest through revelations, and through Al-Quran, he made Rasulallah SAW happy and contented. While Nabi Musa had to make du’a to get his chest opened, with Allah’s blessings, Rasulallah attained the privilege as a gift from Allah SWT. Hence, we have to be thankful and grateful to Allah for giving Islam to us as our religion and Rasulallah SAW as our Prophet.

Let us move on to the next verses and we will take the next 2 together in a group simply because they explain about the blessings the Prophet had once his chest was opened:

وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ

[2] *And We removed from you your burden*

الَّذِي أَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ

[3] *Which had weighed upon your back*

Verse 2 and 3 are basically one, according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan. However, Allah made it 2 because there are important benefits to be obtained from them and requires separate explanation.

What is the burden (Wazir) mentioned in this verse? Rasulallah SAW was known for his huge and extra commitment when performing da'wah. In Surah Al-Kahf, the verse “fala allaka bahiun nafsaka ala asarihim” mentions how Rasulallah was in deep grief and was just about to die, thinking of how to make the people accept the message of truth. We know how heavy the message of Quran is. It is said that if the Quran was to be given to a mountain, it would be instantly destroyed. However, the same Quran was given to Rasulallah SAW and he had to carry it “on his back” in order to make sure that the human kind would get benefit from it and be safe from the punishment of hell fire.

The next verse uplifts Rasulallah’s status, implying how not only the burden has been removed, but the blessings were so abundant on him. The following is the verse:

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ

[4] *And raised high for you your repute.*

The high status of the Prophet had been shown in many ways and narrations. Ibn Abbas and Abu Saïd al-Khudri mentioned many hadiths on the highness and closeness in proximity between Allah SWT and Rasulallah SAW. Not only when we make syahadah we mention Allah and Rasulallah, but this also occurs during Adhan and Salawat. In fact, in the Quran, the word “Ayyuha” is always used before the name of Muhammad is mentioned. The word “Ayyuha” is used to show the high standard of an individual or it can also be used to distant ourselves from the individual because of bad things. For instance, the verse “Kul Ya Ayyuhal Kafirun” is used to single out the problematic natures of the disbelievers. The word Ayyuha in the Quran is used when Allah wants to mention Muhammad Rasulallah but not to other prophets, such as “Ya Zakariyya” and “Ya Musa”.

In the case of Muhammad, “Ya Ayyuhal Muhammad” is used to address him, except in Surah Muhammad but the word Rasulallah is mentioned instead. An explanation to fortify this praise of Rasulallah, Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan said how slow the sun is moving and every movement of the sun is a sign that time for prayer is coming, and therefore at every minute of the 24 hours, we will be able to hear the earth declamating Adhan as earth continues to revolve around the sun.

Let us now move to the next verse which alludes to how reward is given, and in this case, the burden on the Prophet had been eased up. The following are 2 of the next verses:

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

[5] For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease.

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

[6] Indeed, with hardship [will be] ease.

Ibn Abbas, when explaining the word Usri (hardship) and Yusri (reward) specifically mentions the blessings of Allah when the word Al-Usr refer to “one” and Yusron which means many or general, implying that the reward is much higher compared to the hardship that we face as we do deeds or as we make da’wah. The fact that there is a repetition of phrase, this increases not only the verse’s quantity, but quality as well. This kind of reward was a gift to Rasulallah and is a gift as well to those who follow his footsteps. The individual who is willing to sacrifice everything to make other people be enlightened spiritually is rewarded and at the same time is removed their burden. In fact, according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, if these verses is carefully read, it should be translated as “the abundance of rewards which eclipses the hardships”.

Now we progress to the last 2 verses. The following are the verses:

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ

[7] So when you have finished [your duties], then stand up [for worship].

وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ

[8] And to your Lord direct [your] longing.

The verse is straightforward, explaining about what Rasulallah had to do, which is generally giving da’wah during the day and spend time worshipping Allah SWT at night. This applies to ourselves as well. We have to rely and depend everything that we do to Allah. Rasulallah SAW continued with his da’wah with success after success and happiness after happiness, and this Surah had motivated him a lot in continuing the mission of spreading Islam. We have problems in our life partly because we fail to apply the spirit of these verses. Not only do we not do our work to please Allah SWT but we also don’t rely on Allah as the cause of everything.

Some ulamas interpret verse 7 to mean that we have to prepare a Plan B for our work, and as we find it difficult to accomplish the goal, we have to go for Plan B, and no matter the outcome, we have to apply verse 8 which says that Allah is the source of the occurrence of everything and to Allah is all our longing. Besides Imam Alusi mentioned earlier, this Surah had also been interpreted by Imam Ibn Ashur and Shaykh Yasir Qadhi. In one of Shaykh Yasir Qadhi’s discussion on this Surah, he mentions how verse 7 and 8 had been interpreted by Ibn Ashur concerning the Plan A and Plan B.

In this Surah, we learn how Allah raised the status of Rasulallah SAW and any attempt to underestimate or to joke about him is an act against Allah SWT. We have heard of people such as Salman ar-Rushdi, and recently, Ayaan Hirsi Ali who questions about Rasulallah SAW’s morality, despite many cartoons, such as the Danish cartoon which portrayed a worse image of the Prophet.



More reading materials can be found at [god-consciousness.wixsite.com](http://god-consciousness.wixsite.com)

Allah revealed this Surah when Rasulullah SAW was in grief and distress, and we should get benefit from this Surah because we are human beings too, and we need motivation and Allah SWT is the best source of motivation to us while Rasulullah is the best model for us to follow. May Allah give rahmah for our effort to understand this Surah And give rahmah to our family as well.

**d) Surah At-Tin: Man by Allah SWT's Nature Is Superb**

We are moving towards the next tazkirah session, and in this part, InsyaAllah we will be looking at Surah At-Tin, where its message is so beautiful and to a certain extent, philosophical. One should not understand the Quran as a simple message discussing about believing in God and The World After, rather, one should acknowledge the fact that it carries human philosophy as well as common sense May Allah SWT benefit us with the noble meanings of Surah At-Tin, Aamiin.

This is the 95th Surah, comprising of 8th verses. Like many Surahs, it starts with a Qasam. We have discussed previously on the context of al-Mustaizbihi (Allah the protection we seek of) and al-Mustaizminhu (Allah the protection we seek from) when discussing Surah Al-Falaq (113) and Surah An-Nas (114). Perhaps it is timely for us to discuss the concept of Muqsambihi and Muqsam'alaihi as the first three verses of Surah At-Tin is about the way Allah SWT take oath (Qasam). Muqsambihi (To swear over the object) and Muqsam'alaihi (The subject that is being sworn over) are two concepts that run through the Quran. We should always bear in mind that the main point of each verses whenever a Qasam is made lies on the next sentence of the Qasam. And in this case we will look at the Qasam on Surah At-Tin, among others.

Surah at-Tin teaches us the importance of human beings to understand their very purpose of life. We were asked to look at the perfect model of a successful human who has walked on the face of earth (Prophet Muhammad SAW, Prophet Isa AS, Prophet Musa AS, Prophet Nuh AS and equally important, Prophet Ibrahim AS). We should understand that our purpose or aim for whatever endeavour we partake in life is not in the material life itself, but for the virtuous purpose of the world after. We should be aware that we are the best of creations and could easily turn worse if we are strayed from walking on the right path modeled by the prophets mentioned. It is important to note that this Surah has not only connections with the previous and next Surah, but as we will InsyaAllah look later, it also has a connection with Surah Al-Balad, the 90th Surah And Surah An-Asr, the 103th Surah. Let us now look at Surah At-Tin by grouping three verses together:-

وَالزَّيْتُونَ

[1] *By the fig and the olive*

وَطُورِ سَيْنِينَ

[2] *And [by] Mount Sinai*

وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ

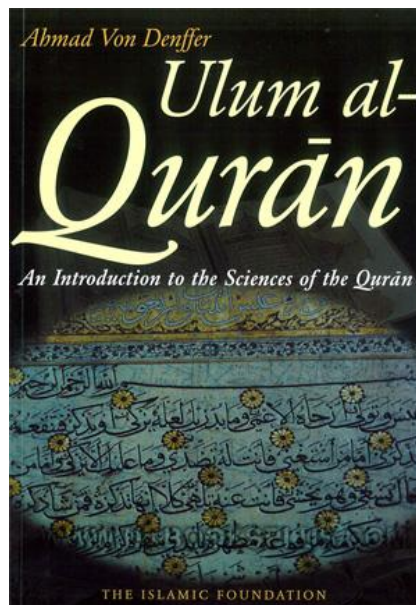
[3] *And [by] this secure city [Makkah],*

The three verses are clearly about Allah SWT's Qasam, and ulamas have different views in terms of its meanings. All these meanings are beneficial for us to acknowledge, but for our tazkirah session we will take the commonly discussed by ustadhs.

Generally, the name of the fruit (Tin and Zaytun) not only refers to the blessed fruit mentioned in the Quran to be in Jannah, but they are also locations where prophets of Ulul Azmi began to

transmit the message of prophet. Surah at-Tin refers to a place in between two valleys (Hamdani and Hamzali, Wallahua'lam), in which Prophet Nuh's Ark was found in the Mount of Judi. Hence, this refers to Prophet Nuh AS' location of dakwah. Zaitun, as mentioned by many ulama, including the earliest of sahabah such as Ibn Abbas refers to Baitul Maqdis, a place where Prophet Isa AS spread the message of truth. Thuurisiinin, or The Mount of Sinin is a place in Egypt, where Prophet Musa AS not only received his revelation, but it was also a place that he had direct communication with Allah SWT, and that was the point where he gradually met his people for dawah. The next place is Balad, the blessed and peaceful place of Mecca, which, none other than Rasulallah SAW initially used as his base of dakwah before migrating to Medina.

We should be proud with our religion and of course importantly to practice what has been described. Islam nowadays have expanded beyond the old boundaries of Middle East to the Northern part of Europe such as in Germany as well as in other regions such as USA and Australia. In fact, there are scholars such as Ahmad Von Denffer who were very keen to learn and expand the knowledge towards understanding the Quran.



*Ahmad Von Denffer was born in Germany in 1949. He studied Islamic and Social Anthropology at the University of Mainz, where he also attended additional courses in the Department of Missiology. His special interests include Christian-Muslim relations. He has made a number of contributions to scholarly journals and has several publications to his credit.*

It should be noted that Balad is a place pioneered by Prophet Ibrahim AS, and therefore not only the four prophets (Prophets Muhammad, Isa, Musa and Nuh AS), but there is also the equally important Prophet Ibrahim AS that should be mentioned, as discussed by Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan as we discuss this Surah. Surah at-Tin begins by mentioning the most blessed to the least blessed place, to which the former is Mecca itself. What is important for us is to understand the message of truth (The existence of Allah SWT, The Day of Judgment, existence of human souls and the true religion of Islam) which can be derived from the teachings from all the prophets, especially in our case, Rasulallah SAW. Before we can discuss about the purpose of life, which

its principles has already been laid down by Allah SWT through the prophets, let us look the fitrah or nature of human beings created by Allah SWT that is mentioned in the next sentence:-

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

[4] *We have certainly created man in the best of stature;*

This verse is not only crystal clear, but it is also straightforward. However, in some other verses Allah SWT mentions that Humans were created in toil or stress, such as in Surah Al-Balad (90), “Laqad insanafii Kabad”. We may have also heard from other Surahs with the description of human nature. According to many ulama’, verse 4 of Surah At-Tin summarises the whole nature of human creation, which points to the fact that we are created capable of doing good deeds or uprighteousness. In Surah Rum Verse 30, Allah SWT mention that humans have longings toward Allah SWT’s creation.

This is obviously a huge gift to humankind, in which no other creations were given such asset and benefit. This also implies that if we understand our purpose of life, that is to aim for everlasting happiness, which could only be obtained in the world after, we should submit ourselves to Allah SWT’s ordain through its sharia. We could only know the sharia through the teachings of the prophet. If we fail to appreciate or admit the facts such as Allah SWT’s power, The Day of Judgment and Human Spirituality, we will never achieve our high aim to obtain everlasting enjoyment.

We have learned from the west, who are no longer interested to study or understand the knowledge of Allah SWT, but rather turned their focus into studying the universe. They no longer acknowledge the study of the World After but set sights on the present world. They no longer give priority to the understanding of human soul, but rather on the human body. Undoubtedly, the knowledge of the material world and human physicality is important, but denying the importance of unseen or metaphysical world blinds us from the fact that not only that there are other worlds above the skies, but the world is important for human species if they were to really look for real happiness.

We know that whosoever aims for only the material world, they will end up with strange feelings where everytime they were to fulfill their desire of A, they realise the potential for B is there, and they would go on chasing their next desire, and ultimately fail to enjoy their present moment of happiness. The prophets have taught us on the importance of living the moment, where we don’t have to worry about the future, nor should we grief what has happened in the past.

Allah SWT, in the next verse of Surah At-Tin, mention that human beings will be brought down to the lowest of lowest point if they were to fail in following Allah SWT’s commands as mentioned by the prophets:-

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ

[5] *Then We return him to the lowest of the low,*

Ulamas have discussed this verse in many ways, and we will discuss two key points here. First of all, the fact that we have created the best means that we enjoy the status of the best creation if we were to follow the model of the prophet. But if we were to fail, then our status as other creations are worse off than animals. We have created them in toil, stress and many other descriptions, unless we follow the ways of the prophet, where it is already mentioned in verse 4 of Surah At-Tin that we are definitely capable to do so. The second meaning of verse 5 according to some ulama mentions about the lowest hellfire. Because we fail to appreciate the best gift, we are given the worst punishment. Although some ulama, according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan mention that it is about the gradual process of becoming old and weak, according to him, neither in terms of textual meaning or intended message, the Surah talks about the human physical decay, Wallahua'lam.

The next question that we should ask ourselves is that what is the model of the prophet and what should be done to avoid the punishment of Allah SWT, the following verse discusses so:-

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ

*[6] Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for they will have a reward uninterrupted.*

All the prophets teach us to have the right belief, such as in The Pillars of Iman and the right practice, such as being good where in this case ulamas have included the Five Pillars of Islam together with other welfare deeds. We will InsyaAllah further elaborate this concept when approaching Surah al-Asr in next part.

We understand that different prophets have different sharia, and we as the followers of Rasulullah SAW, have a specific sharia, the one such as the way we perform the salah, etc. A question may rise, how about the sharia of other prophets such as Prophet Moses AS, etc? In an occasion, during the Medinan times, when the muslims received new neighbours, the Jews, or vice versa, Sayidina Umar RA had the opportunity to read the Taurah, and he read it diligently. Seeing this, Rasulullah SAW said to Umar, “do you not believe with what I teach Umar?” Rasulullah SAW continued with “Even if Prophet Moses AS is still alive today, he would follow my sharia.”

This episode should give us strong convictions on Islam and the sharia of Prophet Muhammad SAW. The verse follows with Ghairu Majnun (The uninterrupted reward), which points to the rewards of The World After which we will continue to enjoy it and therefore everlasting happiness. We have heard of people who have negative thoughts on Islam criticising Islam tremendously. Names such as Bill Warner with more than a dozen books such as “Two Hours of Quran”, tries to damage the authenticity of the Quran. This is clearly because of the lack of knowledge of the meanings and context (Asbabun Nuzul) of the Quran. Unfortunately, many muslims not only lack basic knowledge of the Quran but they are very easily influenced with such problematic Islamophobic movement.

After Allah SWT mentions the nature of human beings, what they must do as well as the rewards they would get, Allah SWT mentions the following two verses:-

فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدُ بِالذِّينِ

[7] *So what yet causes you to deny the Recompense?*

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمِ الْحَاكِمِينَ

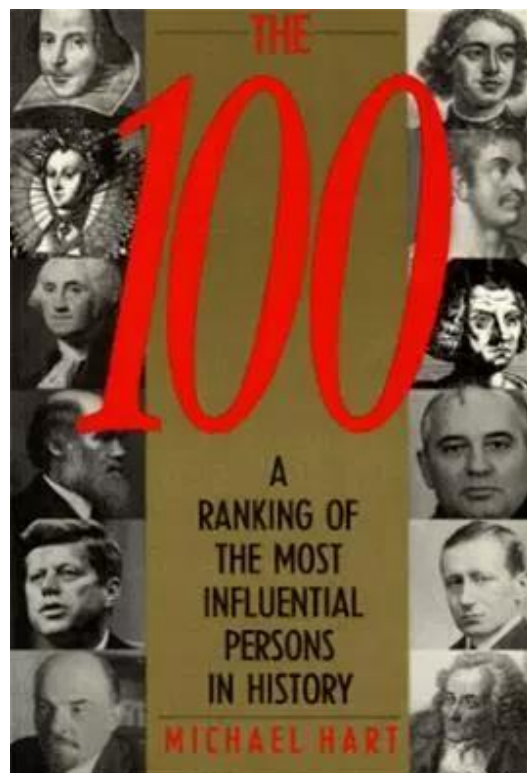
[8] *Is not Allah the most just of judges?*

The verses ring loud and require no explanation. We should open our hearts in earnestly and seek for Allah SWT's taufiq and hidayah. We should admit that we are nothing more than slaves and slaves have no right to make terms and conditions to his Master. We are owned by Him, and our Owner has every right to do anything and everything over us. We have no authority to say yes or no, for who are we to talk about our rights or human rights in front of Allah SWT, our Creator? Of course, among human beings, we have our "hak", or rights. But we were told to fulfill our obligation of rights rather than asking others to fulfill their obligation of rights over us. InshaAllah we receive benefits from this discussion and InshaAllah we are clear with its direction. Where we are right now is not important, what is more important is which direction we are heading to.

e) **Surah Al-Alaq: Source of Two Knowledge and Self-Educated Arrogant Person**

May Allah SWT give barakah to us, our parents, families and friends and all those of Imaan, Aamiin. InsyaaAllah, we will continue our discussion on Surah Al-Alaq, wherein one of the four Surahs, in which its messages are interconnected, at-Tin, Al-Alaq, Al-Qadr and Al-Bayyinah. The basic message of the Surah is to warn and remind those who feel that the Quran and Allah SWT's guidance is less important, and also to those who feel that they can be whoever they want to, especially intellectually, without the Quran and Allah SWT's guidance. This is Surah 96, comprising of 19 verses. It is a Makkiyah. As usual, we will be heavily referring to Syeikh Yasir Qadhi and Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan's explanation of this Surah.

Before we deal with this Surah, let us discuss a few important issues that serve as a background for this discussion. There are four parts of this Surah, starting with Allah SWT's instruction to us to recite or read (Iqra') twice, followed by the people who feel that they need no Quran and Allah SWT's guide, and ends with discussing about those who are arrogant, especially in this Surah's case, Abu Lahab himself and the lives of the arrogant. Secondly, we should remember the mukjizat, that is the Quran which has survived until today. We have discussed about Ernest Gellner, socioantropologist who died in 1995, who argued that religion is well accepted because the prophet can perform miracles (mukjizat). Clearly, we have no prophets today, perhaps Gellner did not know that we still have the mukjizat (Quran) The problem is that we do not fully utilize the Quran, therefore its miracles remain uncovered. It is worth mentioning that Michael Hart (born in 1932) in 1978 once said that Muhammad is the most influential person in history.



*Michael H. Hart (born April 27, 1932) is an American astrophysicist and author, most notably of his book, "The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History, 1978 (Revised Edition, 1992)". -Wikipedia.*

*Since the rank of the 1st among the 100 is given to Rasulallah by a non-Muslim, there is good reason for us to look at the characteristics of the prophet which has topped the rest.*

This is because he has proven his success in the spiritual and secular world (military, justice, economics, etc.). Not only the Quran is a mukjizat, but in Surah Al-Alaq, Syeikh Yasir Qadhi when referring to verses 4-5, discussed only on the importance of worldly or secular knowledge the way Michael Hart understood it. Thirdly, this Surah is important to those in universities who perform research and seek knowledge, because it gives emphasis on reading and writing activities on both spiritual and worldly aspects. Fourthly, and perhaps most importantly, this Surah discusses about arrogant intellectuals such as Abu Jahal who was first acknowledged as Abul Hakam and later cursed as Abu Jahal.

May Allah SWT protect us from plunging into such group of people, because these people think that they are already well equipped without the help and guidance of Allah SWT, Na'uzubillahi min zalik. With that background in mind, let us start looking at the Surah, which we will divide the first five verses into the ones that Syeikh Yasir Qadhi mentioned as spiritual knowledge and the other as worldly knowledge:-

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

[1] Recite in the name of your Lord who created -

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ

[2] Created man from a clinging substance.

These first two verses start with Iqra', which is to recite, read or study, to which the majority of ulama' refer this to the Quran. Nearly all of us know that this is the first Surah that was revealed to Rasulallah SAW when he was in seclusion whilst seeking for Allah SWT's guidance. Jibril came to hug him and asked him to do it. These first two verses not only teach us the importance of reciting and referring to the Quran, but it is also important for us to be humble. If we rely on our creation, we start with "despised fluid" and later developed as Alaq, a "clinging substance". The next three Surahs are Surahs that teach us another aspect of knowledge that are not known directly from the Quran but from other mediums.

اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ

[3] Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous -

الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ

[4] Who taught by the pen -

عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَم

[5] Taught man that which he knew not.

The second basic message of this Surah is to ask mankind to get His (Allah SWT)'s knowledge, who is The Most Generous, through the "pen". Syeikh Yasir Qadhi refer to the phrase "pen" as



the work of intellectuals or thinkers, who, through Allah SWT's knowledge, were enlightened and become humble and thankful to Allah SWT with the knowledge that they were granted and developed. While the Quran teaches us mostly about spirituality, the second medium of knowledge according to Syeikh Yasir Qadhi teaches us how to live in this world with the knowledge that is developed by the thinkers. Verse 5, perhaps makes the message even clearer, when Allah SWT said, "Taught man that which he knew not".

This says that all forms of knowledge that we have today is from Allah SWT, regardless of whether it came from Muslims or non-Muslims, according to Syeikh Yasir Qadhi. We may be familiar with Muslim thinkers such as Ibn Taymiyyah and Al-Ghazali, as well as Western thinkers such as Adam Smith and Karl Marx. Those knowledge are obviously from Allah SWT. They as well as we ourselves should be aware that it is Allah SWT that gave us knowledge, therefore we should be humble in front of him and use the knowledge as far as the way that Allah SWT tells us to use. Therefore, it is important for us to look back into the Quran and share its knowledge to others as well. However, there are problems especially among those who were granted knowledge and those in universities. The following verses tells us the character of people who do not give priority to the Quran when Allah SWT is the one that granted knowledge to them:-

كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَيْطَغَىٰ

[6] No! [But] indeed, man transgresses

أَنْ رَأَاهُ اسْتَعْنَىٰ

[7] Because he sees himself self-sufficient.

إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَىٰ

[8] Indeed, to your Lord is the return.

If we think that we can be self-educated and self-knowledgeable, we are completely wrong. Not only are we wrong because we are blind to the fact that Allah SWT is the source of all knowledge, but we are also wrong because we have transgressed the line between The Creator and Creation. We are wrong because we cannot be what we are today without Allah SWT and the Quran. And Allah SWT reminds us how arrogant and transgressed our attitudes are, and we have to face Allah SWT in the Hereafter.

Let us observe the beauty of Islam, because its first revelation discusses on the importance of two types of knowledge, spiritual and worldly knowledge. Therefore, it should not be surprising when Michael Hart says that Muhammad is the ranked #1 as the most influential people, judging from Rasulallah SWT's success on spiritual and temporary matters, which relates to the two types of knowledge. Not only we should acknowledge this fact (the importance of two knowledge), we should also acknowledge the fact that Islam places importance on reading and writing, therefore although Rasulallah SAW was unlettered (unable to read and write), he made sure that every revelation that came down was put in written form. We know how Zayd Ibn Thabit was tasked as Rasulallah SAW's secretary to put the revelations in written form. We have no excuse not to read and write. Even Rasulallah SAW who was unlettered still earnestly found his way in writing down the revelations.

InshaAllah, we will now move to the section of the Surah that deals with Abu Jahal, the man who was supposedly of wisdom who was highly acknowledged as Abul Hakam. For the record, he was appointed as a member of the Darul Nadwah at the age of 25, according to some narrations, even though those who were appointed were usually at the age of 50, implying how achieved he was. Rasulullah SAW once made a du'a after looking at Amar Ibn Hisham (Abu Jahal) and Umar Al-Khattab's caliber. His du'a was for at least one of them to convert to Islam, so that the message of Islam could be easily disseminated. Those two were lettered and educated, therefore their knowledge is important for Islam, plus their physicals are strong and big. Semi-legend tells that Umar Al-Khattab did not have to jump if he wanted to climb a horse, and his foot would touch the ground when he is already at the saddle. This means that both of their physical strength are important for Islam. However, by Qadr of Allah SWT, the potential of Umar was recognized, leaving the potential of Abu Jahal to be wasted.

It is worth noting that Abu Jahal loved or was addicted to the verses of the Quran. Together with Abu Sufyan and Akhnas Ibn Syuraik, they would individually come to Rasulullah SAW's house at night to eavesdrop on his recitations. The three were shocked and ashamed once they stumbled upon one another when they noticed that those who were against Rasulullah SAW loved to hear his recitations at night. This story was likely told by Abu Sufyan himself after he converted.

The point here is that not only Abu Jahal had a huge potential, he also had a huge appreciation of the Quran. However, due to his arrogance and ego, he ended up rejecting the Quran and Rasulullah SAW. The following three verses of "Aro aita" (Have you seen), referring to Rasulullah SAW, explains the inner aspects of Abu Jahal, or people who are arrogant or egoistic such as Abu Jahal. We shall include all the verses at once before continuing our discussion:-

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَىٰ

[9] *Have you seen the one who forbids*

عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّىٰ

[10] *A servant when he prays?*

أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ الْهُدَىٰ

[11] *Have you seen if he is upon guidance*

أَوْ أَمَرَ بِالتَّقْوَىٰ

[12] *Or enjoins righteousness?*

أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ

[13] *Have you seen if he denies and turns away -*

أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَىٰ

[14] *Does he not know that Allah sees?*

According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, (although different Mufasssiruns have different leanings of interpretations), these verses discuss the inner character or being of Abu Jahal or people similar to him. We will discuss a bit about the verses 9 and 10.

*[9] Have you seen the one who forbids*

*[10] A servant when he prays?*

Let us discuss a little about the context (Asbabun Nuzul) of these verses. In an occasion, Abu Jahal together with his thugs warned Rasulullah SAW that if he were to continue praying and make sajadah in front of the Kaabah, he would step on his head. Rasulullah SAW continues to perform the solah, and when Rasulullah SAW made sajadah, not only did he have to prove to his gang that he would step on Rasulullah SAW's head, he himself wanted to commit the filthy act. But, once he got closer, there is a fire from a ditch, and an apparition loomed from the ditch and pointed to him. Abu Jahal backed off in fear. The verses after this discusses the dimension of the huge potential that Abu Jahal once had, and the dimension of addiction that he had to the verses of Quran. Of course, we are not among those who are against those who establish prayer. But, we are worried that we are similar to Abu Jahal, only having potential and only having loved the Quran, but has no proof and substance to show that we practice what is taught by the Quran.

This Surah tells us the importance of reading and writing, as well as the importance of knowledge, both on spiritual and worldly matters. Wallahua'lam. In the Surah itself there is the phrase "kalam" or "pen" which tells us the importance of writing. The last part of this Surah tells us the consequence for those who think that they need no Quran and Allah SWT, but trusted their self-knowledge. Obviously, such people are arrogant, simply because their knowledge is nothing except from Allah SWT. The verses are as follows:-

كَلَّا لَئِن لَّمْ يَنْتَهِ لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ

*[15] No! If he does not desist, We will surely drag him by the forelock -*

نَاصِيَةٍ كَاذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ

*[16] A lying, sinning forelock.*

The word "Nasihah" in these verses are important. Not only does it refer to the forehead, the place where the human brain is functioning, this is also the area of the brain known as the frontal lobe, an area where numbering and linguistic ability is processed. But, however great the brain is, if we do not use it for knowledge and rahmah granted by Allah SWT, we are no greater than Abu Jahal and people of ego. Allah SWT mentions two horrible aspects (lying and sinning) of people if they do not properly use their knowledge by being thankful to Allah SWT. Allah SWT mentions in this Surah that it is in those area that they will be grabbed and thrown into the hellfire.

فَلْيَدْعُ نَادِيَهُ

*[17] Then let him call his associates;*

## سَدْعُ الزَّبَانِيَةِ

[18] *We will call the angels of Hell.*

These two verses according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, gave assurance to Rasulullah SAW and ourselves that we should not be worried about those who are enemies of Islam. They can call as many people as they want to oppose Islam, or in those cases, Rasulullah SAW. The word Zabaniyyah linguistically means police or guard. We should not be worried with the enemies of Islam. InshaAllah if you are honest and sincere with Islam as much as Rasulullah SAW was, not only will we be guaranteed to be guarded in this world, but the angels (not from this world) will come to guard us.

The Surah concludes by advising us to concentrate on what we should be doing, that is to make sajdah following Allah SWT's instructions and guidance to the Quran and the knowledge that He taught mankind. InshaAllah, as we make sajdah we can get closer to Allah SWT. The following is the verse:-

## كَلَّا لَا تُطِعْهُ وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ ۝

[19] *No! Do not obey him. But prostrate and draw near [to Allah ].*

May we be guided to the straight path, and may Allah SWT make us not among the people who think they are self-educated, arrogant and egoistic, as well as has no concern over the guidance of Allah SWT. May Allah SWT continue giving us the strength to continue studying, reading and writing, as this is the basic message of this Surah.

**f) Surah Al-Qadr: Descending Quran, Angels and Peace**

Alhamdulillah, Allah still bestows us with strength, willingness and perseverance to continue our tazkirah sessions and we should be aware that without His blessings, we are nothing at all. We are entering Surah Al-Qadr, the 97th Surah of the Quran, the Surah which basically tells us on the immeasurable barakah of The Night and when The Night occurs. The previous Surah, Surah Al-Alaq tells us how the Quran was revealed. This Surah, Al-Qadr, talks about the question of when, and the next Surah, Al-Bayyinah (98) tells us about what is the Quran essentially.

Every year, in the month of Ramadhan, we are reminded on the importance of Laylatul Qadr. Laylatul Qadr simply means the Night of Power. Surah Al-Qadr not only tells us when the night is indirectly, but more importantly, what exactly the Night of Power is. Given the nature of the Night, which the reward equals to a thousand months worth of ibaadah, since the generation of sahabah, people are eager to know and discuss to devise a way on time of occurrence of the Night. Generally, the debate began by saying that it will happen in one of the odd days after the 20th (21st, 23rd, until the 29th) following number of verses in this Surah.

Habrul Ummah (the Scholar of Ummah) Ibn Abbas in one occasion devised the occurrence of Laylatul Qadr employing the so called numerology. He said that the night will fall on the 27th to Umar al-Khattab, and the following was his logic:

1. There are 30 words in this Surah, implying 30 days in the month of Ramadhan.
2. There are 9 letters in the phrase Laylatul Qadr (from “Lam” until “Ra”) and the phrase is mentioned 3 times in this Surah. Hence, the total letters are 27 altogether.
3. The word “Hiya” in the last verse means “it (the Night)”, and the word “Hiya” places at the 27th word in the Surah.

Actually, there are too many opinions and it is said that there are 40 of them. However, the fact that the Muslims start fasting not in the same day implies that the 27th day, for some group of Muslims, might be the 26th or 28th day. According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan (not a fatwa), it would be better to focus on the last eleven days of Ramadhan, so we would be safe from any eventualities. Now we shall take a look at the Surah itself.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ

[1] *Indeed, We sent it (the Qur'an) down during the Night of Decree.*

It is commonly understood the word “it” in this ayat refers to al-Quran and it should be noted that not only did the Quran decent in this night of power but also angel and peace or serenity which we are going to discuss later, InsyaaAllah. Let us discuss the Night of Power or The Night of Decree, which according to many ulama’ carries at least four submeanings, they are: First, a night of calculation or estimation, in which our destiny is being pre-decided or decreed. Second, the night of appreciation, in which our ibadah is abundantly rewarded. Third, the night of congestion, in which angels descend to pay respects to the worshippers. Fourth, the night of power, in which Allah SWT manifests His mightiness through His creations.

There is a discussion among ulama as to how the Quran descended. Is it as a whole from Luh Mahfuz or from verses to verses during Rasulallah SAW's 23 years of da'wah life (13 in Mecca, 10 in Medina). In general, we follow what the "heavyweight" (Habrul Ummah), Ibn Abbas had once said, which was that the bunch of Quran were descended and brought down to the first samawat (heaven) from Luh Mahfuz. From this station which was known as Baitul Izzah, verses were revealed to Rasulallah SAW responding to the needs and events accordingly. Nowadays we celebrate the so called Nuzul Quran, the day the Quran was brought down, and the angels continue to be sent down, mostly during Laylatul Qadr as we shall soon discuss.

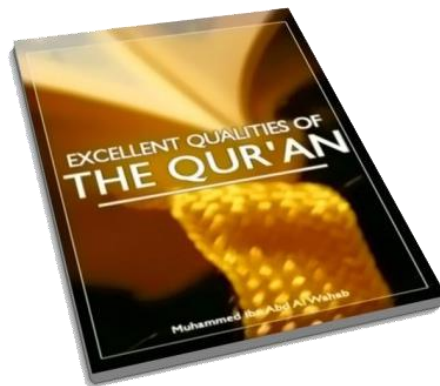
Notice that the phrase of Laylatul Qadr appears three times in this short Surah of 5 verses. It appears consecutively in verses 1-3 respectively. Now we move to the second verse:-

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ

[2] *And what can make you know what is the Night of Decree?*

The structure of the second verse is quite common in many other Surahs. While in this Surah, the phrase "Wama Adra Kama Laylatul qadr" is used, Surah At-Tariq uses Wama Adra Kamattariq' whereas in Surah Humazah the phrase "Wama adra kamal hutamah" is mentioned. However, what makes Surah Al-Qadr so unique is that in other Surahs, the object is no longer mentioned in its following verse. For instance, in Surah Humazah, Allah SWT straight away mentions Narullahilmuqadah. In Surah At-Tariq exists the verse Annajmussaqqib. But, in this Surah Allah SWT mentions the phrase Laylatul Qadri hairum min alfiyahr, which emphasises the phrase Laylatul Qadr, unlike other Surahs.

This phrase should give a sense of awe to us because if we do know what is Laylatul Qadr, we would certainly obtain immeasurable barakah from that night, and Allah SWT mentions three barakahs of the night in which we should be aware of. For the record, the Al-Quran has been interpreted in many ways; Some ulama take the literal interpretation while some interpret it allegorically (takwil). It is said that figures such as Muhammad Ibn Wahab was influenced by the literal approach to interpret the Quran and he was known as the founder of today's Wahabi movement, Wallahua'lam.



Muhammed ibn Abd Al Wahab

*Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703 – 22 June 1792) was a religious leader and theologian from Najd in central Arabia who founded the movement now called Wahhabism. Born to a family of jurists, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's early education consisted of learning a fairly standard curriculum of orthodox jurisprudence according to the Hanbali school of law, which was the school of law most prevalent in his area of birth. Despite his initial rudimentary training in classical Sunni Muslim tradition, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab gradually became opposed to many of the most popular Sunni practices such as the visitation to and the veneration of the tombs of saints, which he felt amounted to heretical religious innovation or even idolatry. - Wikipedia*

Now, InsyaAllah we will discuss the three barakahs of this Surah together, and they are in verses 3-5 at the end.

أَيُّ لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ

[3] *The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months.*

The first barakah is that every good deed that we do in this night will bring barakah to us equivalent not only to 1000 months, but more than that. 1000 months is approximately equivalent to 83 years, and it is said that Rasulullah SAW feared that given the fact that his ummah do not live long lives, unlike the previous ummah, hence this barakah was given to Rasulullah SAW and his ummah. It should also be noted that in Arab Culture, when they mention 1000 months (Al Fisyahr), what they actually mean is forever. Ulamas have said that the good deeds that is going to be rewarded at this night are not necessarily just ibadahs, but also other righteous deeds such as being good to the family, etc. This barakah of night should be realized, as Allah SWT has mentioned in the previous verse.

The second barakah of this night concerns the number of malaikah, including Jibril at this night, would come down to the earth, visit the worshippers and pay respects towards them. Hence, not only is the Quran descended, but Malaikat is also descended by Allah SWT in this powerful night. This event is mentioned in the following verse:-

تَنْزَلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ

[4] *The angels and the Spirit descend therein by permission of their Lord for every matter.*

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan when discussing about Surah Al-Qadr, especially verses 4-5, which he referred to the works of al-Biq'a'i explains in great lengths about how sophisticated and meticulous the Quran is, which we will divide into two parts. First is on the phrase “Tanazzalul Malaikah” (The discussion where the malaikah is being sent down). Besides this Surah, the same story is also available in Surah Fussilat, in which in that Surah, the phrase Tatanazzalul is used instead of Tanazzalul (Two “Ta” instead of one), which in the Surah explains frequent event of malaikat coming down to take the soul of humans. While in this Surah Al-Qadr, only one Ta is used, explaining rare events of malaikah coming down for the purpose of appreciating and respecting humankind during Laylatul Qadr.

Secondly, the phrase Malaikatuwarruhi where the word ruh or Spirit is commonly referred to as the angel Jibril. In Quran, when the discussion about the movement of malaikat is discussed, the

word Ruh always appears after the word Malaikat such as in this Surah Al-Qadr. But in Surah An-Naba', when they had to be stopped or stand still when they can no longer go beyond to the Arasy, Allah SWT mentions the word Ruh first, followed by Malaikah. This happened throughout the Quran, which explains just how sophisticated and meticulous the Quran is. The phrase "For every matter" in this verse explains about what the malaikah were tasked to do as they come down to earth. They have to do everything within Allah SWT's permission, which among others is to look and pay respect to humankind who submit and worship Allah SWT in the night of Laylatul Qadr.

Some ustadhhs relate this Laylatul Qadr event with verses 30 and 31 of Surah Al-Baqarah which mentions that when Allah wants to create a khalifah on earth, the angels asked why did He want to create "humankind" which could cause chaos in this world, while they continuously praised Allah SWT. During Laylatul Qadr, when the angels came down, they noticed how the humans continuously worship the whole night, as we should do. Wallahua'lam. The next thing that was sent down after the Quran and the angels, is peace, as said in the following next verse:

سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ

[5] *Peace it is until the emergence of dawn.*

The word peace had also been interpreted in many different ways as well, but basically it means no interruption, which means that not only are the syaitans chained during the night but Allah SWT also blesses the night with serenity and tranquility. The word "Hiya" or it as mentioned earlier is the 27th word in the Surah, and this is a sign, according to Ibn Abbas. Of course the Quran had already been sent down during the Prophet's time and according to Ibn Abbas, it was in the lowest sky or heaven, and Baytul Izzah, the whole Quran was sent down, in which verses after verses were sent down throughout the 23 years (as mentioned earlier), responding to events and questions, surrounding and facing Rasulullah SAW's da'wah mission.

The important blessings which comes with this Surah is something which we should learn, and the reason is quite obvious. We should grab the opportunity to ask Allah SWT for forgiveness and to ask Allah SWT's rahmah so we can be among the people of Jannah, without hisab (accounting). We should also acknowledge unconditionally the miracle of the Quran because it was sent down during this powerful and blessed Night. Hence, the Quran should not only be read, but understood, and practiced as well.

For the record, in the effort of learning and interpreting the Quran, there was one ulama who contributed a lot to the translating of the Quran. He was known as Al-Biq'a'i (as mentioned earlier). His full name is Ibrahim bin Umar bin Hasan ar-Ribat bin Ali bin Abi Bakar asy-Syafi'i al-Biq'a'i. He was the person who found a new method in translating the Quran. He translated the Quran not only verse by verse, but word by word as well. He was born in Damascus in 809H and died in Damascus as well in 885H. With that, we end this Surah.



**g) Surah Al-Bayyinah: The Crystal Clear Message of the Quran, Benefitting Only The Most Sincere**

We are now entering the next Surah of the Juz Amma, Surah Al-Bayyinah (The Truth/The Crystal Clear). A Surah that not only has been understood as the most difficult to be interpreted, but also the Surah with the most ulamas to differ in its context or Asbabun Nuzul, up to a point where some commentators said that the majority of ulama' say that this Surah is a Makkiyah while surprisingly another commentator would say that the majority of ulama' mention this Surah as Madaniyyah, implying that there is no consensus concerning its context. It has been mentioned that even the great Habrul Ummah (scholar of Ummah), Ibn Abbas, once said that it is Makkiyah, and in another occasion said that it is Madaniyyah, although later people take Ibn Abbas' former stand. Sayidatina Aishah RA herself mentions that it is a Makkiyah Surah.

Let us take the first verse just to see how complicated the meaning of this Surah:-

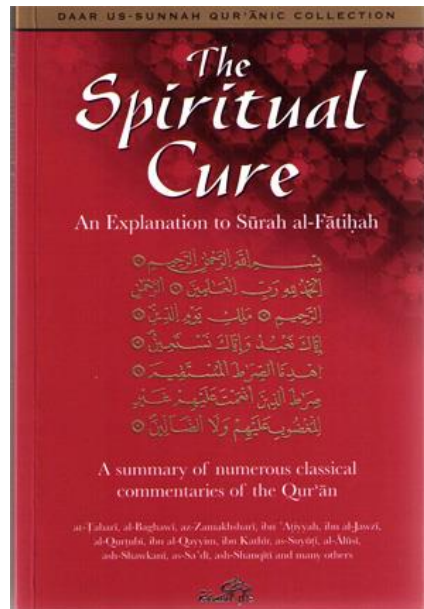
لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنْفَكِّينَ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ

*[1] Those who disbelieved among the People of the Scripture and the polytheists were not to be parted [from misbelief] until there came to them clear evidence -*

First, we've learned before that the Ahlul Kitab (People of the Scripture/Book) is not Kafirun, but this verse says that not only the polytheists were musyrikun, so is the people of the book. Why do great figures such as Sayidatina Aishah RA and later Ibn Abbas mention this Surah As Makkiyah, while there is a specific mention of Ahlul Kitab such as the Jews in Madinah? The phrase "Munfakkina" (Cut-off/discontinued/parted) in this verse can be understood in many ways in the context of Kafirun as mentioned. It can be understood that the people of the book and the Musyrikun were cut off until (Hatta) they received clear evidence. This meaning appears to be strange, why would they be cut-off when evidence came to them.

Let us try to unpack to them this puzzle by referring to the following discussion made by Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan. He differs and agrees to the difficulty of understanding this Surah as mentioned by earlier ulamas such as al-Waqdi, followed by Rahman al-Qilani and many others. Zamakshari (One of the Muktazilite who was also the great Mufassirin whose expertise, among other things is language) had been referred to by many ulamas. Despite referring to Zamakshari, Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan also refers to Imam al-Alusi in order to understand this Surah (InsyaAllah once we are clear about the meanings between verses 1-4, the rest of them would be much easier to be understood).

It should be noted that certain Surahs in the Quran, especially Al-Fatihah attracted many ulama to engage with its interpretation. Different interpretations among ulama is a common thing, key individuals such as Abu Rumaysah (Indian-born) are also among those popular in dealing with Surah Al-Fatihah, just like Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan himself.



*Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan in one of his Youtube videos on Surah al-Fatihah provides a very impressive and comprehensive explanation of the hidden treasure and meanings of the Surah. Other authors, such as Abu Rumaysah is said to also provide another comprehensive meaning of Surah al-Fatihah. However, it is not clear whether he is the same Abu Rumaysah who is labeled as a global terrorist by the US government, Wallahua'lam.*

First it should be easier to understand the first verse if it was in a form of a question. Therefore, the meaning now changes to “The Musyrikun (Ahlul Kitab and Polytheists) parted until there came clear evidence?” The form of question for this verse mirrors with other verses such as those in Surah Al-Imran, al-Isra’ and al-Musyrikun. For instance, in Surah Al-Imran, an Ahlul Kitab said that he will follow the rasul until their sacrifice were taken to the heavens. It is said that in Surah Al-Isra’ for instance, they will follow what Rasulullah SAW has said until Rasulullah SAW can gush out water from the sands. The musyrikun used to say that they will follow Rasulullah SAW until Rasulullah SAW can create rivers in the desert, very much like those described by Rasulullah SAW in Jannah. Therefore, this Surah Al-Bayyinah can best be understood in the form of questions as mentioned earlier.

Another issue is about the phrase Kafirun. According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, the phrase Kafirun could also mean “being buried”. Therefore, they are in great darkness. The phrase Kafirun here refer to being buried in darkness. Hence, all Ahlul Kitab and Musyrikun are known as not rejecting Allah SWT, but misguided. Therefore, they are in darkness. The general meaning of Kafirun is those who are ungrateful to Allah SWT. Although some Ahlul Kitab may be ungrateful, no one can say that they reject Allah SWT. This point is very important as we discuss the 4th verse.

We will continue to discuss in Surah Al-Kafirun later in which that Allah SWT have made it clear as to who are the Kafiruns. This Surah was revealed at the very late Makkiyah, immediately before Rasulullah SAW made migration. This Surah Al-Bayyinah is also a late Makkiyah because there was an instant where the Jews came to Mecca, either for the purpose of business or to know about the news of the prophet. Jewish leaders such as Ka’b Ibn Ashraf and Huyayk Ibn al-Akhtab were known to visit Mecca in those era.

When Allah SWT revealed the verse in a form of question, Allah SWT ended with the phrase Bayyinah, (clear evidence or truth), Allah SWT mention that the evidence came from both Rasulullah SAW and the pure Suhuf (al-Quran). This verse is very important because the pure suhuf and Rasulullah SAW were mentioned together as evidence of the truth. We know that Rasulullah SAW brought the message of truth, and the Quran is the mukjizat in which the message and the mukjizat are united (stand as one). The fact that Rasulullah SAW's character resembles all good character as mentioned in the Quran is the proof and evidence, in which the Musyrikun and the Ahlul Kitab should have no logical reason to disprove or disagree. The next verse mentions the next content of the kitab:-

رَسُولٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ يَتْلُو صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً

[2] *A Messenger from Allah, reciting purified scriptures*

فِيهَا كُتُبٌ قَيِّمَةٌ

[3] *Within which are correct writings.*

The phrase correct writing or Kutubun Qayyimah originates from the word the true Kitab, in which the word Kitab itself in this context means law or hukum. Hence, according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, those Musyrikun and Ahlul Kitab have to follow the law in the Kitab or the pure suhuf as mentioned. The next verse is a bit tricky but it should be understood in the context as discussed in verse 1 earlier:-

وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَةُ

[4] *Nor did those who were given the Scripture become divided until after there had come to them clear evidence.*

First, we should notice that the phrase polytheist or Musyrikun is no longer mentioned in verse 4. This is partly because some of them get benefit from Rasulullah SAW's da'wah through the message of the Quran. However, when the message of the Quran were given to the Ahlul Kitab or when the evidence comes to them, they become divided. This is not a strange thing because they have their own kitab (taurah) or for the Christians, Injil, when the last revelation through the Quran came to them, a majority of them became arrogant and therefore become divided. This happens later during the Medinan period.

Undoubtedly, there are some such as Abdullah Ibn Salam and the Jews who later converted to Islam and played a significant role in disseminating the message of truth, not only within his community, but together with other Muslims involved in da'wah in other regions. Together with Salman al-Farisi, Christians who later converted with Islam not only died as good and pious Muslims but died venerated as a model of good convert.

Let us move to the next sentence, which Allah SWT begin to spell out to people who submit to Allah and Bayyinah (evidence of truth):-

وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ  
وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ

[5] *And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth, and to establish prayer and to give zakah. And that is the correct religion.*

Those who submit themselves to Allah SWT, or those who practice the lessons from Verse 5, which is to worship Allah sincerely, establish prayer and give zakah. The phrase “Yakbudu” is very important because it should not be understood as only worship but includes enslavement or slavery. That is to say, we may worship Allah SWT by praying five times a day. But if we have arrogance and ego, we are not practicing true Islam because we are worshipping our own arrogance, not Allah SWT. For the record, Imam Ibn Taymiyyah provided five characteristics of Ubudiyah, which is loving wholeheartedly to Allah SWT, obedience, tawakkul or trust, sincerity or ikhlas and enslavement or slavery. It should be noted in verse 5 Allah SWT not only mentions how important our relationship to Allah SWT (Hablu minallah) through establishing prayers, but also our relationship with mankind (Hablu minannas) through alms giving.

The last part of the verse is concerning the reward or consequences for those who are in the darkness (Kafirun) among the musyrikun and Ahlul Kitab, followed by those who are faithful to Islam:-

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أُولَئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ  
الْبَرِيَّةِ

[6] *Indeed, they who disbelieved among the People of the Scripture and the polytheists will be in the fire of Hell, abiding eternally therein. Those are the worst of creatures.*

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ

[7] *Indeed, they who have believed and done righteous deeds - those are the best of creatures.*

جَزَاؤُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ  
عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ

[8] *Their reward with Allah will be gardens of perpetual residence beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, Allah being pleased with them and they with Him. That is for whoever has feared his Lord.*

We will discuss a few points based on verses 6-8. Firstly, the phrase Khalidina (abiding eternally therein), meaning that the Kafiruns (polytheists and Ahlul Kitab) will be eternally in hellfire whereas the muslims, with the same concept, will be eternally in paradise. This implies that once we are in hellfire we would have no chance to enter paradise. Although a majority of ulama' agree with such judgment and consequence of Allah SWT, there are some ulama' who still believed that at last with Allah SWT's rahmah, those who end up in hellfire will gradually enter Jannah in the end, Wallahua'lam.

Secondly, the phrase *Khairul Bariah* (The best creatures) in verse 7 refer to the believers. In this verse, the majority of *ulama'* says that human beings are capable of being with other creations such as angels including *Jibril*, while others slightly disagree with this concept. Thirdly, the concept of flowing rivers and lush gardens in *Jannah* should be understood and believed in full conviction, although some orientalist or even some muslims argue that such imagination of paradise only applies for the desert people who are so obsessed with the idea of limitless waters and trees. *Syeikh Yasir Qadhi* and *Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan* when mentioning such issue say that regardless who we are, poor and obviously among the rich, when they have the money, they would spend to have big mansions where in or around it there are flowing rivers (Tap water, sprinklers, water fountains, etc.) and lush gardens (*Bonzai* trees, landscaping, trimmed hedges, etc.), implying that this desire not only applies to the desert people, but rather it is a *fitrah* of mankind.

*InshaAllah* from this *Surah Al-Bayyinah*, we have learned how important it is to understand what is the content and purpose of the *Quran* after we have studied how it has been revealed in *Surah Al-Alaq* and when it had been revealed in *Surah Al-Qadr*. The basic message of this *Surah* is for us not to be arrogant as demonstrated by the *Ahlul Kitab* and not to be making conditions when learning the message of truth as demonstrated by both *Ahlul Kitab* and *Polytheists (Musyrikun)* during the revelation of this *Surah*. With that we end this session, may Allah SWT pardon us and our family too, *Aamiin*.

## h) Surah Al-Zalzalah: As Small as an Ant Egg

Thanks to Allah SWT for endowing us with the strength and patience to continue our tazkirah series. In this part, we will discuss Surah Al-Zalzalah (99) which comprises of 8 verses. This Surah is very important in this post modern era, not only in the western atmosphere, but also in our country, when more and more people, including some Muslims begin to be sceptical about the idea of the coming of the end of the world. Some people, including Muslims, even suggest that those who talk about the end of the world or death are pessimistic and some even say that it is not a productive discussion and some even want us to forget about it. It's not that they don't believe of Allah SWT or the presence of souls and the coming of the Day, but for them, the concept is just too abstract and any attempt to explain it would be fruitless and a waste of time.

As a Muslim, when we speak about long term consequences, we should have a strong belief on what the concept of world after is, and when we speak of long-term investments, we are talking about the things that we do which we can harvest in the world after. This Surah, Surah Al-Zalzalah, should open our eyes on the importance of the End of the world to be prepared on what we can carry as we enter the next realm. The End will begin with a series of earthquakes and destructions, and the first verse of the Surah tells us how the process will happen:-

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُلْزَالَهَا

[1] When the earth is shaken with its [final] earthquake

The word “(final) earthquake (Ardhuzil zalaha)” should deserve attention, because many ulamas, such as Imam al-Alusi, as discussed by Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, at the very minimum, provided 4 different contexts to the phrase. First, nothing can be compared to its destructiveness. Therefore, we can say that even the Richter scale cannot measure the force of the massive destruction. Secondly, it is so strong and there will be no other earthquakes afterwards since the world has already been destroyed as an aftermath. Thirdly, it means that the destruction itself had already been destined. Fourthly, the massive destruction and the End will certainly happen. There are many “Zal” and “Lam” letters in this verse, implying that the destruction will happen over and over again till the end. The word “Iza” in the verse, as opposed to “Iz” (past tense) not only implies the time that it will come, but also the certainty of it coming.

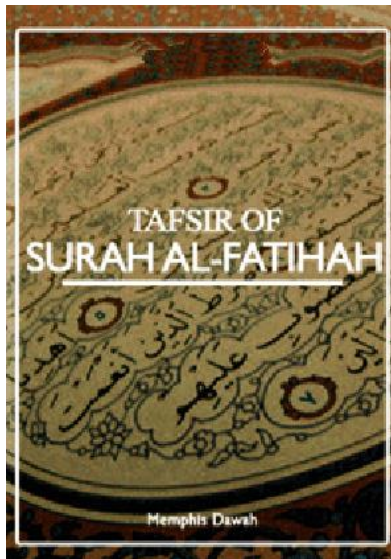
It should be noted that this Surah touches the aspect of Earth and the discussion on how the sky and other objects collapse are not specifically mentioned in this Surah. Therefore, there are many “its” word which refers to the Earth itself. It should also be noted that every time we discuss about the worst image of the world after and its attending punishment, it is directed primarily to those who reject and are ungrateful to Islam (the al-Kafirun). Due to that, there is a need to tone down whenever we discuss the terrible images when we have to share our idea to kids to avoid trauma in their mind. Now let us move to the next verse.

وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا

[2] And the earth discharges its burdens

The destruction is so huge that the Earth itself discharges its burdens. Ulama such as al-Biqa'i and al-Alusi discuss on the thing that will be discharged and what is meant by burden in this verse. They are, as they have discussed, dead bodies, treasures which people desire and the "report" of good and bad things. It is said that the Earth itself is a direct witness of what the humankind did, and during the Destruction Day, they discharge the report which they have recorded.

If we refer our discussion to Surah Al-Fatihah in which we ask Allah's guide to the straight path as mentioned in one of the ayahs, we hence should always make sure that we follow the do's and don'ts in Islam, and InshaaAllah, we will be avoided from being presented with the bad records as mentioned in Surah Al-Zalzalah. Other than that, Surah Al-Fatihah received many comments from many scholars and also many institutions, such as the Memphis Da'wah Association.



*The Memphis Dawah Association (MDA) is a non-profit organization established in 2015 that is multi-lingual and multi-ethnic, whose objective is to provide the public with authentic traditional knowledge about Islam in addition to community services for the public. Syeikh Yasir Qadhi, a professor in theology, which we have referred to a lot is also related to an institution by the name of Memphis Islamic Center (MIC) implying that the Islamic movement in US is growing significantly, particularly in Memphis.*

The word "burdens" (asqalaha) refers to the human beings themselves, and in Surah Ar-Rahman, the word burden even includes jinns when Allah SWT said "Sanaf rughulakum Ayyuhas Saqalan". Earth is also a creation of Allah SWT. Not only does it have the responsibility to record, but when the sins committed by the humans and jinns are so terrible and heavy, it becomes a burden to the Earth. It is because of this that the Earth will discharge the burdens it is carrying. The next ayah is as follows:

وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا لَهَا

[3] And man says, "What is [wrong] with it?"

In the day of destruction and resurrection, all of mankind will be resurrected and the ulama discusses how people since the time of Adam until the end of day, despite gathered in one place,

feel so isolated and alone because of the terrible events they have encountered. The word *insaan* in this ayah, according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan not only explains how humans are always forgetful, but they come individually and there's no place except beneath their two feet only. It should be noted that those who fear God in their own category are free from such torment. Therefore, the great mufassirun such as al-Shawkani, when dealing with such ayah always gives two scenarios of environment, one for believer and one for the disbelievers.

We are quite familiar with the verse in Surah Yasin “marqadina...haaza, ma waada Raahmanu wasadaqalmursaluun”, in which those who were so shocked when they woke up from the grave not only were terrified by the punishment of the grave, but have to face with a terrifying punishment of the immediate period of resurrection among the disbelievers. The ayah of Surah Yasin refers to the believers, the group who knows about Allah's Rahmah and the truthfulness of messages from the Prophet (SAW). When all of mankind is resurrected, the Earth itself will speak up against the wrongdoers and the following ayah mentions the situation:

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا

[4] *That Day, it will report its news*

بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا

[5] *Because your Lord has commanded it.*

We have mentioned at the very beginning that Surah Al-Zalzalah is an Earth specific Surah, in which resurrection is mentioned in the context of how Earth responds to Allah's instructions and permissions. We have also mentioned earlier that Earth records the misdeeds of Jhinn and humans and when mankind are together, the Earth begin to utter the reports. The ulama differ in terms of who the Earth utter the report to. Some said to the wrongdoers themselves, while another said to Allah SWT.

In this ayah, Allah mentioned “Rabbuka”, Rasulallah's Master explicitly, implying the important role played by Rasulallah, not only in this world but in the Worldafter. According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, when “Yauma IZIN” is used in the Quran, we should understand that the ayah also mentions Allah's anger. The word “Yauma IZIN” is also used in the next ayah as follows:

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ

[6] *That Day, the people will depart separated [into categories] to be shown [the result of] their deeds.*

When we are together in Yaumul Mahsyar, not only are we separated (between believers and disbelievers), different small categories also exist in both groups, implying how detailed the reports of our deeds will be. We can see in detail and this situation also was explained clearly in Surah Al-Kahf:-



وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يَا وَيْلَتَنَا  
مَا لِي هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا وَوَجَدُوا مَا

عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا ﴿٤٩﴾

*And the Book (of Deeds) will be placed (before you); and thou wilt see the sinful in great terror because of what is (recorded) therein; they will say, "Ah! woe to us! what a Book is this! It leaves out nothing small or great, but takes account thereof!" They will find all that they did, placed before them: And not one will thy Lord treat with injustice. (Surah al-Kahf Verse 49)*

Nothing is missed in the report, big or small, and no one will be unjustly treated. In the Qur'an, the word Amal and Fa'al are commonly used to refer to the human activity. In this ayah and the following two ayahs, Allah mentions the word Amal explicitly, meaning the one that we do on purpose will only be counted. We may see prohibited scenes accidentally. This is Fa'al and they are not counted as wrongdoing, except we make do it on purpose. This differentiates between Fa'al and Amal. The following two ayahs details about the record which we will see during the day:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ

[7] *So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it,*

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

[8] *And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.*

These two ayahs are very straightforward, except we should explain the word atom "zarah" in the ayah. Since there are the super smaller particles called the tachyons (super small particles that travels faster than the speed of light). The Arab community, during Rasulullah's time will use the word Zarah when describing the smallest thing, and the initial meaning is ant eggs. For them, that was observably the smallest thing they know. Therefore, the word zarah should be understood as the smallest thing that people can observe. The point here is that the super smallest act that man commits, good or bad, are carefully recorded and we can see it in detail during Yaumul Mahsyar.

This situation is very important according to the Ulama because people will be rewarded with Jannah not necessarily because of the good or bad deeds that they have committed only, but through Allah's Rahmah and Forgiveness. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan said that based on his readings, while those with good deeds (right hand) will be rewarded with Jannah with Allah's Mercy, there are those with bad deeds that get forgiven by Allah, either with intercession (shafaah) or some kind of his own good deeds, Wallahua'lam. Whatever the case, may Allah put us among the category of people with the right hand, and of course, we need Allah's Rahmah so that we can enter Jannah without hisab (Counting) and azab. We also pray for our parents, relatives and friends to be given the same privilege, Aamiin.

**i) Surah al-'Adiyat: The Fiery Hooves of The Horses?**

InshaAllah, this time we are going to engage ourselves with Surah al-'Adiyat (100), the Surah which many ulamas differ in thoughts and interpretations on its meaning, especially the first 5 of the 11 ayats (verses). Therefore, like the other Surahs, we should ask for Allah SWT's guidance even more when we want to engage ourselves with this beautifully complex Surah.

Let's talk about the connection of this Surah with the previous Surah (Al-Zalzalah) and it should be noted that this Surah is also connected with the next 2 Surahs, Al-Qari'ah (101) and At-Takathur (102). While Surah Al-Zalzalah teaches us about the torments or the terrifying feeling experienced by those who reject and are ungrateful to Allah, this Surah states two distinguishing characters of those who reject and are ungrateful to Allah SWT (worse than ungrateful and love for worldly wealth). Surah al-'Adiyat is a continuation of Surah Al-Zalzalah and we should pay our attention to the phrases "Yaumaizin tuhaddisuah baraha" (99:4), "Yaumaizin yasdurunna" (99:6) and verse 11 of Surah al-'Adiyat, "Yaumaizin lahobir), in which we have stated that such phrases demonstrates Allah SWT's "anger" to those who reject and are unthankful to Him (Al-Kafirun).

Some Surahs in the Quran are moved either in pair like Al-Falaq and An-Nas called Muazatain or Al-Baqarah and Al-Imran called Muasajaratain. Some were grouped under Mutasabiha (begins with Tasbih) and some are moved in a quartet such as the Surahs we are trying to discuss now, Al-Zalzalah, al-'Adiyat, Al-Qari'ah, At-Takathur. There are many concepts which should not miss in Surah al-'Adiyat like when we look at verse 1-5 in terms of meaning and its relevant concept, including the context of revelation (Asbabul Nuzul). The verses are as follows:

وَالْعَادِيَاتِ ضَبْحًا

[1] *By the racers, panting,*

فَالْمُورِيَاتِ قَدْحًا

[2] *And the producers of sparks [when] striking*

فَالْمُغِيرَاتِ صُبْحًا

[3] *And the chargers at dawn,*

فَأَنْزَنَ بِهِ تَفْعًا

[4] *Stirring up thereby [clouds of] dust,*

فَوَسَطْنَ بِهِ جَمْعًا

[5] *Arriving thereby in the center collectively,*

Laymen like us, whenever we read these verses, however concentrated we might be, we might end up learning little, if not nothing except for the story of horses in battle. Wallahua'lam.

Let us discuss about the different opinions in terms of context among the ulamas before we discuss other issues. Some commentators say that the first ayat talks about a group who plans on doing

Hajj, and others say that this verse is indicating the period when a group of Muslim army went missing for quite some time when they had to confront Bani Qinanah. Commenting on the context of this ayat, Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan had a different comment. Firstly, the fact that the majority of ulamas said that this Surah is Makkiah implies it is not talking about the Muslim army as there was no Muslim army at that period of time and the Muslim army was a phenomenon of the Medinan period. Secondly, looking at the text and linguistic structure of the Surah as well as the content, it has little to do with pilgrimage. Thirdly, for so many generations, ulamas and commentators had differed, especially in terms of its meaning and perhaps it is more important for us to look into what Allah SWT said directly, rather than reviewing what the previous generations of ulamas said about its meaning. It does not mean that the whole debate was neglected in his entirety. Fourthly, what is more important, according to him, is to understand the concept of Qasam “Oath”, Muqsambihi (swear over the object) and Muqsam alaihi (swear over the subject).

While earlier ulamas generally mention that Allah SWT’s swear was placed in the first verse only (the racers, panting), the remaining is about the subject of Allah SWT’s swear. However, according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, verse 1-5 is a package of Allah’s swears and it is used as an device to attract the Arab musyrikuns. It is important for at least some of us to be able to understand the Quran academically if we don’t want to lose sight of its meaning. In fact, there are attempts made by individuals such as Muhammad AS Abdel Haleem to publish works on the Quran in the academic world.



The Qur'an  
A new translation by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem



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It should be clear by now that whenever Allah SWT swears, or Qasam using “Fa”, it should be understood as one big oath and whenever Allah SWT uses “wau” such as in Surah as-Syams, it is a different set of Qasam altogether. In Surah as-Syams, from verses 1-6, Allah SWT made Qasam separately, and the subject of the Qasam is:-

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا  
فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

The subject of the Qasam in Surah as-Syams is a creation of humankind with their inner beings (sawwaha) who are capable of creating filthy and becoming God fearing creatures. It should also be noted that there is need for Allah SWT to develop rhetorical devices in order to attract and entice the Musyrikun idolaters who would normally close their ears whenever they would hear the message of Allah SWT. Allah SWT entices them over the stories that is close to their hearts, which is about the best verses in a ferocious battle. The purpose is so that after they are enticed with their own cultural stories, then Allah SWT will shock them with the true message concerning them (The filthiest and dreadful person and the loving of wealth excessively). Let us look at the meaning of verses 1-5 again:-

- [1] *By the racers, panting,*  
[2] *And the producers of sparks [when] striking*  
[3] *And the chargers at dawn,*  
[4] *Stirring up thereby [clouds of] dust,*  
[5] *Arriving thereby in the center collectively,*

The gist of the story of Allah SWT’s Qasam or the meaning of the verse can be summarised as follows. A warrior together with his steed, dashed towards their enemies, until sparks flash beneath the horse’s legs, producing clouds of dust as it moves at dawn, moving quickly to ambush, with the intent of killing the enemy. The dust rises, covering them as they penetrate straight through the center of their enemies. It should also be noted that the horses that they used were strong and loyal, that even though the horses knew that they are confronting with arrows, sword, javelins, etc. When the musyrikuns were enticed with their taste of story, Allah SWT shocks them with the following verse:-

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُودٌ  
[6] *Indeed mankind, to his Lord, is ungrateful.*

The phrase Lakanuud in this verse not only mentions how ungrateful, but more worse, because the phrase Kufur is not used, but rather Lakanuud. The phrase Lakanuud not only means ungrateful, but also making complains with Allah SWT’s gift. Perhaps we complain about how we are not getting promoted, or with the workload that we have, but we are not grateful with the job that we have, while there are a lot of others who are jobless. We complain about the menu served, because the types of food that we like isn’t served. This is an example of Lakanuud. The next verse teaches us that we are actually aware or are witnesses to our own characters of exceeding ungratefulness (Lakanuud). The verse is as follows:-

وَإِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ لَشَهِيدٌ

[7] *And indeed, he is to that a witness.*

Once Allah SWT completed telling us of the first filthy human character, Allah SWT moves to the second, which is excessive love of wealth. Let us look at the verse:-

وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ

[8] *And indeed he is, in love of wealth, intense.*

The phrase “wealth” (Khairi) in this verse usually means a good thing. Majority ulama here agrees that the term good thing for this verse, refers to wealth. This is pretty much our problem, for we are carried with the idea that wealth is everything, and our mind is stuck with the fact that having more wealth is better. Some ulama’ mention that Allah SWT uses the phrase Khair sarcastically to refer to wealth in order to indirectly mention the filthiest character of human being, in which when they are really in love of their wealth, and love it unflinchingly, they are actually inviting Allah SWT’s anger as we will discuss at the end of this Surah. The next verse is a bit complicated. Let us look at the verse first above all else:-

﴿ أَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِي الْقُبُورِ ﴾

[9] *But does he not know that when the contents of the graves are scattered*

According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, all the people who love their wealth unflinchingly will never be satisfied with their current possessions. They will continue to gather more and what’s worse, exploit others. Not only do they exploit others, but they are ready to go for war to accumulate wealth. In general, for the sake of their wealth they are ready to sacrifice others. This is in conjunction to Surah al-Zalzalah verse 2, that when earth discharges, not only does it discharge dead bodies, but also wealth (resources). The earth also discharges records of human filth. The basic message is that we are expected to know that the contents of the grave is full of things concerning the filthy characters of human beings, Wallahua’lam.

The next verse concerns what is inside the human chest (heart), in which it becomes clear in the world after as to which person is good or best, and this is parallel with Verses 7-8 of Surah al-Zalzalah:-

وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ

[10] *And that within the breasts is obtained,*

As mentioned earlier, the intricacy of Surah al-Zalzalah and Surah al-'Adiyat deserves our close attention. It become even clearer were we to observe the meanings of the last verse:-

إِنَّ رَبَّهُمْ بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيرٌ

[11] *Indeed, their Lord with them, that Day, is [fully] Acquainted.*

The phrase Yaumaidzin Lakhbir, (That Day, is [fully] Acquainted) is important because it teaches us that not only on the Day of Judgment Allah SWT is angry towards those who had committed exceeding ungratefulness and unflinching love of wealth as mentioned earlier, but this Surah is important because it is parallel with the previous Surah, because Yaumaidzin appears twice in verses 4 and 6 of Surah al-Zalzalah and in Surah al-'Adiyat it appears in the last verse, ending the two interconnected stories. The first being the story of the terrifying moment for the Kafiruns during the Day of Destruction in Surah al-Zalzalah and the second is the two filthy characters of exceeding ungratefulness and excessive love of wealth (those who will be terrified during Destruction Day). We should not neglect the fact that rhetorical devices are hugely important to convey our message as Allah SWT teaches us in verses 1-5 (the graphic image of how fierce the battle was and how shrewd were the races).

May Allah SWT protect us from not becoming among those with filthy characters, and may Allah SWT protect us on the Day of Destruction so that we are safe from the terrifying moments. May Allah SWT also take us as among the people of the right hand (Ashabul Yamiin) and may Allah SWT with his rahmah allow us to enter Jannah without hisab, Aamiin.

**j) Surah al-Qariah: The Punishment of the Bottomless Pit**

May Allah open our heart, so not only will we get benefit from His revelation, but we can also continue our effort of discussing and sharing with some of the Surahs, particularly those in Juz Amma. InshaAllah, we will engage with the 101st Surah of the Quran, Surah Al-Qari'ah. Surah Al-Qari'ah (its meaning commonly known in English as the Striking Calamity) had been interpreted in many ways, just like the Surahs we have discussed before. Some mentioned it as repetitive perturbed sounds while some explain it as a fierce rattle, etc. The word "Qari'ah" in common Arabic is applied in cases of people knocking on the door repetitively or people hitting and beating animals harshly, etc. In this Surah, the word is mentioned 3 times and the word is also mentioned in Surah Al-Haqqa and Surah Ar-Ra'd, and in the Quran, the word is only mentioned 5 times altogether.

What is interesting and beautiful about the Quran is that we cannot find punctuation marks such as question marks, exclamation marks, hyphen. Obviously, verses in the Quran carry emotional tones. Therefore, one has to be very good in grammar (saraf), and to give more impact to the emotion and religious aspect of the Quran, the aspect of balaghah (rhetoric) is a must as well in order to make the verses more exciting. We will try, InshaAllah, to discuss how such aspects might be used in Surah Al-Qari'ah. Other important aspects of Surah Al-Qari'ah are it is placed together in a quartet with Surah Al-Zalzalah (99), al-'Adiyat (100), and At-Takathur (102). InshaAllah we will discuss this group in the end of this Surah's session.

Let us now discuss the first 3 verses, in which in each of the verses the word Qari'ah is visible. The verses are as follows:

الْقَارِعَةُ

[1] *The Striking Calamity*

مَا الْقَارِعَةُ

[2] *What is the Striking Calamity?*

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ

[3] *And what can make you know what is the Striking Calamity?*

The word Al-Qari'ah in the context of Striking Calamity should be understood in terms of fierce sounds produced during the occurrence of the Calamity. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan used the word rattle to describe the fierce sounds and it has other characteristics as well besides being fierce. Firstly, obviously it has to be repetitive. Secondly, it is not expected. Thirdly, we will be puzzled about its source and make us scared due to our ignorance. On a side note, we should try to understand any verse of the Quran as a way to increase our Iman and purify our hearts. It is said that some people use Qur'an, especially Surah Al-Muntahinah to increase anger to influence people to act violently. May Allah protect us from such characters.



*Al-Wala' wal bara' in Surah al-Mumtahinah (Loyalty and Disavowal in the Chapter of Al-Mumtahinah). This book by Wasim Fathullah is very unique in the sense that it provides a comprehensive discussion on the importance of the sixtieth chapter of the Quran, Surah al-Mumtahinah, and the historical events of its verses which have an impact on the way modern Salafis understand and treat the concept of al-Wala' wal Bara'.*

*Source: Mohamed bin Ali, "The Roots of Religious Extremism: Understanding the Salafi Doctrine of al-Wala' wal Bara'"*

Ulamas such as As-Syahrawi, Ar-Razi and Ibn Faris discussed the whole of Surah Al-Qari'ah not only by detailing the aspect of word choices but also the aspect of the overall organization and its coherence (Naghah). The word Al-Qari'ah in common known Arabic language should be accompanied with an exclamation mark and one exclamation mark is not enough to express its intended emphasis. The fact that Allah mentioned it 3 times in this Surah suggests the highest degree of unimaginable suspense effect that the verses produce. In short, when this event takes place, not only will we be scared of it and lose our balance but we will be so disoriented and disorganized, as explained in verse 4 and 5 which we will discuss next.

In verse 3, Allah SWT is guiding us by asking a rhetorical question (what can make you know about the Striking Calamity) implying that we cannot know exactly how it is just by observing the examples of the event to imagine it. Verses 4 and 5 are the images given to us on how terrifying it will be during Al-Qari'ah.

يَوْمَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوثِ

[4] *It is the Day when people will be like moths, dispersed,*

وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ

[5] *And the mountains will be like wool, fluffed up.*



While any translation of the Quran to any other language only helps half or less on learning the intended meaning, but it doesn't mean that it's not helpful at all. Therefore, it is a must for us to learn Arabic because this is the only mean for us to understand the intended meaning of the Quran (may Allah SWT forgive us).

The graphic image that these 2 verses offer to us should create a terrifying feeling in us and we should be so scared and cry if we really understand the intended meaning. The word "Al-Farash" generally refers to flying insects such as moths, bug or termite swarms which usually disperses to every direction or no direction at all. The message in this verse is that when the world comes to an end, humans will be disorganized and discombobulated and the day is so fierce that human beings will be dispersed like the flying insects mentioned above. Verse 5 mentions how the heaviest object on earth (mountain), which, despite its weight, will be destroyed in clusters and will be scattered into every direction.

We have mentioned in the previous session that ulamas such as As-Syawkani had always mentioned that the terrible and terrifying moments mentioned in the Quran only apply to disbelievers. Those who are pious and are faithful to Islam will be protected by Allah SWT. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan gave an interesting analogy of a snake and a baby doll. A toddler might not be scared of a venomous snake, but if they are scared of certain images of baby dolls, they will cry loudly. Muslims or the believers may be scared when Al-Qariah or Al-Zalzalah happen, but it is just like the toddler being scared of dolls. Wallahua'lam.

Whatever the case may be, in the Quran, there are at least 12 times Allah mention the phrase "La haufun alaihim, wa la hum yahzanun" - "Believers will not fear of the future nor will they grieve about the past." InshaAllah, we are among the mentioned believers and we should know about these facts especially if we want to share about the idea of Al-Qari'ah, Al-Zalzalah or even the idea of punishments in the hell fire. It should be noted in advance as we head closer to the next Surah, Surah at-Takathur (102), the concept of al-Qariah and al-Zalzalah will be indirectly referred to, together with the basic messages in these three Surahs (Surah al-Qariah, al-'Adiyat and al-Zalzalah).

Before we engage ourselves to the next verse, verse 7, let us understand the philosophy behind the idea that Allah SWT's mentioning of the insects (lightest) and the mountains (heaviest), which tells us that those forms of creation will be disorganized and dispersed in every directions when the world comes to an end, implying that the event will defy physical law and gravity as commonly understood. In the next verse, verses 6-9, Allah SWT tells us how the good and bad deeds, (during al-Qariah) which is in our physical law not only cannot be seen and touched, but carries no weight at all, suddenly becomes the focus of discussion, not only on its importance but also on its weight. Verses 6-9 is as follows:-

فَأَمَّا مَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ

[6] Then as for one whose scales are heavy [with good deeds],

فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ

[7] He will be in a pleasant life.

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ

[8] *But as for one whose scales are light,*

فَأُتْمُهُ هَاوِيَةٌ

[9] *His refuge will be an abyss.*

Surah al-Qariah and Surah al-Zalzalah both discuss about the end of the world and in both Surahs, the word scale (Sakal) is mentioned. While the emphasis in Surah al-Zalzalah is more on sins that we can see, Surah al-Qariah refers to the sins that we can know the weight of our deeds after both good and bad deeds that we have done will be measured. Verses 6 and 7 tell us of the people of the right hand, in which their good deeds have given them an easy life. Word “‘Isshatir radhiah)” and redha were used to refer to their pleasant life that they will be in.

Verses 8 and 9 teach us the idea of those of the left, in which their refuge as mentioned in the verse will be in an abyss, meaning terrible and painful distress. In Arabic proverbs, the phrase Ummuhu Hawiyah (Mother falling in bottomless pit) is an expression for those who are in deep and painful distress. Allah SWT uses this phrase to give the graphic image on how terrible the punishment which Allah SWT alone knows best. The phrase Hawiyah (Abyss) is not one that humans can imagine in their own sense, hence the following verse, Allah SWT tells us the meaning of Hawiyah, and He begins with a rhetorical question:-

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا هِيَ

[10] *And what can make you know what that is?*

نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ

[11] *It is a Fire, intensely hot.*

Allah SWT begins this Surah with a rhetorical question (What is the Striking Calamity) and ends with this question. This explains just how beautiful the Quran and its Naghm (coherence and organization). As mentioned in verse 11, Hawiyah is the Fire, intensely hot, which no one can fully or correctly imagine its true nature. According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, the word Hawiyah itself carries Allah SWT’s “anger” towards those whose warnings were given through Rasulullah SAW, yet they rejected and were ungrateful with Allah SWT’s ni’mah.

InshaAllah we have discussed whatever that we know about this Surah, and as mentioned earlier, we will discuss about the organization of these quartet, Surah al-Zalzalah al-’Adiyat, al-Qari’ah and at-Takathur (the discussion and debate of this idea of Surah Al-Qariah will be continued). When Allah SWT mentions the end of world in Surah al-Zalzalah, Allah SWT tells us of the terrifying moment when earth is terrifyingly shaken. In the next Surah, Surah al-’Adiyat, Allah SWT mentions two types of people, the rejectors and wealth-lovers, which when the Zalzalah occurs, they will be terribly tormented and will be in immeasurable fear. Of course, not only these two groups will be tormented, Allah SWT discusses the next event after Al-Zalzalah happens, that is, Al-Qariah, which not only their deeds are measured, the al-Kafirun will be thrown into Narun Hamiyah. In the next Surah, Surah at-Takathur, Allah SWT provides a detailed description of those

More reading materials can be found at [god-consciousness.wixsite.com](http://god-consciousness.wixsite.com)

in hellfire, and provides graphic imagination of hellfire itself. Insyallah we will engage with that once we move to the next session.

May Allah SWT protect us from being ungrateful and rejecting his commands (small and big) and may Allah SWT make us among those who are of the right hand, which the deed can bring us to Fahuwafi Isyatin Radiah (He will be in a pleasant life).

**k) Surah At-Takathur: Why Compete for More When Even a Tiny Portion Will Be Audited**

Thanks and praises be to Allah SWT, The Lord of The Universe, The Entirely Merciful and The Especially Merciful. May we be guided to the straight path, Aamiin. As we mentioned in our previous session, Surah at-Takathur moves in tandem with four Surahs (Surah al-Zalzalah, al-'Adiyat, al-Qariah and at-Takathur. To which the alternate message of the end of the world and the temptation of worldly things were revealed by Allah SWT in those four Surahs.

We should also inform ourselves that the previous bunch of four Surahs (Surah at-Tin, al-Alaq, al-Qadr and al-Bayyinah) also moves as a quartet, in which the message is on the Quran itself. Surah at-Tin talks about the importance of the prophet and its universal message, followed by Surah al-Alaq, which discusses about the revelation specifically to Rasulullah SAW, while Surah al-Qadr talks about when the Quran was revealed and Surah al-Bayyinah talks about the important message (contents of the Quran itself).

Let us remind ourselves about the last verse in the previous Surah (Surah al-Qariah) on Narun Hamiyah (Intensely hot fire). In which, Allah SWT continues in Surah at-Takathur, reminding us how we are so distracted, forgetting about the terrifying moments of the world-after as mentioned in Surah al-Zalzalah and al-Qariah. The basic things that distract ourselves is the main thing that we shall discuss, that is the concept of at-Takathur (Competition in worldly increase). Perhaps that we might take a big span of time to discuss the first verse of Surah at-Takathur, partly because we are so engrossed about the worldly things, to the point that we have little to no clue that we have deviated or distracted from Allah SWT's warnings and reminders. The first verse is as follows:-

أَلْهَاكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ

[1] Competition in [worldly] increase diverts you

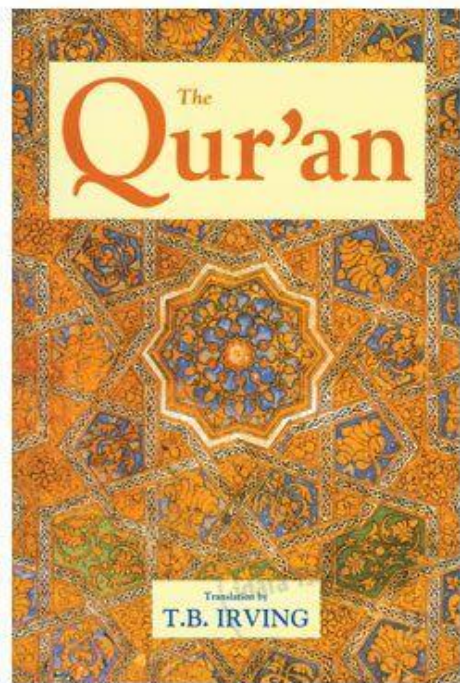
The first verse of Surah at-Takathur deserves pages of explanation. But more importantly, it should strike our hearts as we discuss it InshaAllah. We are going to divide this verse into three parts, as follows, First is the phrase “*alha*”, which the root word is “*lahu*” (entertainment and play). In which, in this verse it refers to the word divert or distraction of our attention. We will discuss the things that have diverted our attention. And what the attention that this verse refers to, after discussing the second component of the first verse of Surah at-Takathur.

Secondly, is the phrase Takathur. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan refers to many scholars such as Al-Biq'a'ie and as-Shawkani when discussing the meaning of Takathur, and in general there are four:-

1. Desire to have more - We have already one house but we desire to have two houses, if not more. This distracts us.
2. Not being happy with what other people have acquired - We are not happy when they get a promotion. This distracts us.
3. Taking pride with our own achievements - We tell others that we have a new car, directly or indirectly, even when no one asks about our car. This sort of pride distracts us.

4. Not only do we individually commit at-Takathur, it can be collectively - We together as family, colleagues or group wants to show off our groups achievements that we worked hard for. This distracts and diverts us.

The third component that we want to discuss considering the first verse is about the things that deviate us from our attention. The attention here is quite clear, that is the one that is mentioned in Surah al-Qariah and Surah al-Zalzalah. We should always pay attention on the importance of The End of The World. This impending day should guide our daily activities. But rather, we indulge in worldly competitions. Something that we focus on or the attention we give, leads us to the indulgence of at-Takathur. It is said that people in the West (such as in the US), the influence of materialism is immense. But alhamdulillah, there are many Islamic scholars such as Thomas Irving as early as 1980 have dug deep into Islam and he himself was the first Muslim to have translated the Quran to English for the people of the US.



*Thomas Ballantyne Irving (1914–2002), also known as Al-Hajj Ta'lim Ali Abu Nasr, was a Canadian-American Muslim professor, and an accomplished scholar of linguistics and a writer, Irving was responsible for the first American English translation of the Qur'an, The Qur'an: First American Version, published in 1985. As a scholar, Irving taught and studied at a number of leading universities in the U.S. and Canada, including McGill, Princeton, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Tennessee. - Wikipedia*

Ulamas commonly mention the issue of wealth and children/families. In Surah al-Kahf, Allah SWT tells us how He has brought down water and gave growth to vegetations, and the vegetations died, to which humans should learn that just like vegetations, they too will die. Allah SWT asks us what continues to live when we die? They are our good deeds, however, our wealth/money and our children/family distracts us from our proper attention (the world-after). Below is the related verse from Surah al-Kahfi:-

وَأَصْرِبُ لَهُمْ مَثَلِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا آءِ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ  
بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيْحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ

شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا ﴿٤٥﴾

*Set forth to them the similitude of the life of this world: It is like the rain which we send down from the skies: the earth's vegetation absorbs it, but soon it becomes dry stubble, which the winds do scatter: it is (only) Allah who prevails over all things.*

الْمَالِ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ

رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا ﴿٤٦﴾

*Wealth and sons are allurements of the life of this world: But the things that endure, good deeds, are best in the sight of thy Lord, as rewards, and best as (the foundation for) hopes.*

In a nutshell, the first verse of Surah at-Takathur is about how we, being distracted by our desire of wealth and submitting to our children/family's request and demands, lose our focus and attention on the incoming al-Zalzalah and the world-after. In the process, we commit ourselves to the four issues of takathur as mentioned earlier, may Allah SWT forgive us. It is said that Ibn Abbas, when commenting about this verse, mentioned that to demonstrate how filthy the Takathur is, the verse should be read as a question rather than a normal statement. Now let us move on to the next verse:

حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ

[2] *Until you visit the graveyards.*

In general, ulamas provided 3 interpretations for this particular verse alone. The first one is when we deviate our attention from the last world and committing ourselves with Takathur, it is extremely hard for us to stay out from the vicious cycle until we die. While others have said that it is impossible for us to leave the Takathur behind even though at the pang of death. Others take it to mean that Takathur (filthy behaviour) might change if we visit the graveyard. Wallahua'lam. Whatever the case is, it is hugely beneficial for us if we allocate our time at least once a month to pay visit to the graves.

The word "Zur" in this verse originated from the word "Zara" and in ancient usage, the word "Zara" not only means to visit, but when you visit, you greet and hug your relatives, implying that when we visit the graveyard, we should be wholeheartedly in the graveyard so that we will be able to open our eyes and widen our view, focusing on the world-after (according to one narration, this verse was revealed because of the fierce competition between Bani Abdul Manaf and Bani Saham, to the point that they even competed which grave is the most superior among them).

The following 2 verses inform us that not only do we know that we have wasted our time immeasurably but we also will begin to realise Allah SWT's promise in the afterlife and the sudden

realisation becomes even stronger when we are resurrected from death. Let us now look at the verses before further discussing them:

كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

[3] No! You are going to know.

ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

[4] Then no! You are going to know.

We know a little bit that there will be a time when a trumpet will be blown (some ulamas say twice and some say thrice) and all of us will die and later be resurrected when the scary sound is produced again. In Surah Yasin this is mentioned twice. However, for those, prior to their death, fail and are stubborn to admit on giving priority to the requirements of the world-after and neglecting the message of truth. According to Surah Al-Zalzalah and Al-Qariah, they have to taste the worst of punishments such as “Narun Hamiah” (intensely hot fire).

The following verses should inform us on the huge degree of immeasurable intensity of hotness of the fire, and more importantly, the possible experiences we will be seeing with our own eyes. The verse is as follows:

كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ

[5] No! If you only knew with knowledge of certainty...

لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ

[6] You will surely see the Hellfire.

ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ

[7] Then you will surely see it with the eye of certainty.

Let us observe how these 3 verses are interwoven. Perhaps the stories on how humans will have to face terrifying moments in the grave are just not enough to open our eyes, and as if the terrible situation of “Yaumul Mahsyar”, when we will be bodily resurrected is not enough to capture our focus. Allah SWT, in these verses (5, 6, 7) teaches us that until and unless we open our hearts, the knowledge on the whole catastrophic events of the world-after will never enter ourselves. This knowledge, obviously, is not a knowledge which can be achieved with reasons and logical inferences. Such knowledge of Al-Qari’ah and Al-Zalzalah in the previous chapters is a knowledge about belief and conviction. The knowledge comes from authorised resources (Allah SWT, Quran and Rasulullah SAW) and it has divine authority. All the knowledge we receive in this world is derived from the divine knowledge and must be accepted with unflinching conviction.

This is the basic meaning of “Ilmul Yakin”. However, as if humankind thinks that only through their five senses and logical influences that they can figure out and accept the facts of the intensely hot fire, hence Allah SWT proved a graphic image to us. In verse 6 (You will surely see the Hellfire), the word “Jahim” originates from the word “Juhum”, a scary state when we are at the

mouth of a lion. The word Jahim refers to the scary, blazing and intensely hot fire. When our body is resurrected, and our deeds are weighed on scales, while some are about to be thrown into Hellfire, then perhaps that is the moment that we would then be able to see with our own logical eye, as mentioned in verse 7 (Then you will surely see it with the eye of certainty).

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan in his attempt to explain the concept of Ainul Yakin and Ilmul Yakin, at the third concept of Ilmul Yakin there is Ainul Yakin. With our knowledge, we can infer that there must be fire whenever we see a plume of smoke, even though we don't see the fire yet. This is Ilmul Yakin. When we head towards the source of the smoke and see the fire with our own eyes, this is Ainul Yakin. We are probably not sure do to whatever reason it might be, such as tricks, then we make the effort of touching it. Once we feel the heat, then with unflinching conviction we know that it is fire. This is Haqqul Yakin.

In this Surah of at-Takathur, it appears that with the knowledge of Ilmul Yakin and Ainul Yakin only, it should be enough for us to redirect our attention after it was terribly distracted or diverted from at-Takathur, the fact of the existent of the last world with its subsequent series of trauma and punishments. However, a disclaimer should be made, as mentioned by Imam as-Shawkani, we should mention it clearly that we share the idea of Hellfire to keep those trauma and punishments are only applicable to those who reject Allah SWT and are ungrateful with his ni'mah. The last verse talks about being grateful with Allah SWT's ni'mah.

ثُمَّ لَنَسْأَلَنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ

[8] *Then you will surely be asked that Day about pleasure.*

Before the disbeliever and believer were given the final verdict, humankind will be asked how they appreciate the ni'mah Allah SWT has blessed to us in this world. There was a famous story about Rasulullah SAW and the luminary companions, Abu Bakr and Umar, when all of them were hungry during one of the drought season. It was known among Muslims that there was a sahabah by the name of Abu Khaitam who was rich. Knowing that they have no food left, Rasulullah SAW and his two sahabahs went to Abu Khaitam's house. Served with bread, meat and water, they enjoyed the meal. Rasulullah SAW asked Abu Bakr, "How are you going to respond to Allah SWT on the sip of water you've just consumed in the world after?"

One great ulama', Ibn Hatim (a 13th-century official and historian in Yemen, under the Rasulid dynasty) mention that even a small ni'mah, not only a sleep but a nap, not only a big portion but one bite will be asked in the world after. Basically, when we clear everything, not only is the deed measured, but the ni'mah will be audited for the verdict to be passed. It is said that we have to pass through the "Narun Hamiyah" before we can enter Jannah.

Our Takathur in this world is a big hurdle for us that blinds both of our eyes on the reality of our true journey to meet Allah SWT. May Allah SWT grant us taufiq and hidayah so that we can have the energy to confront the deviations of at-Takathur, Aamiin. May Allah SWT give us the strength to not only continue to understand the Quran, not only to practice it, but to share and make da'wah to others and we make du'a so that may Allah SWT give us perseverance and patience in practicing Islam and share it to others. The next Surah, Surah al-Asr will teach us about the four aspects of Islam, faith, righteousness, make da'wah and patience.



## 1) Surah al-Asr - Urgency, Time is of The Essence

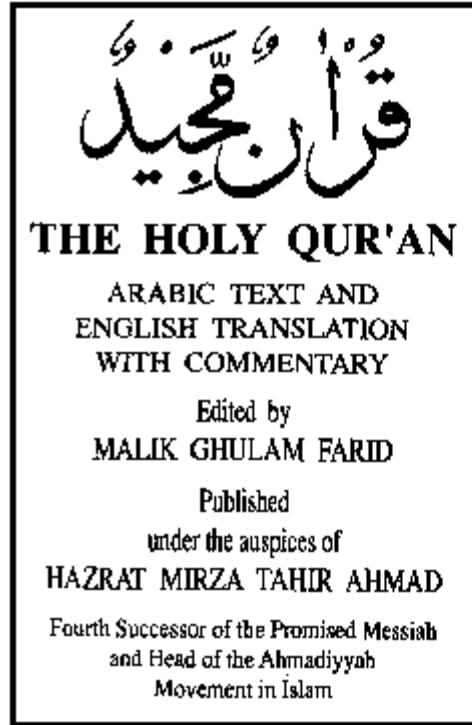
May Allah SWT protect us from the evil of wasting our time for not doing good things. May Allah SWT protect us from the evil of not paying attention to essential times of the world after. InshaAllah, we are going to engage ourselves on the great Surah, similar to Surah al-Kauthar which is Surah al-Asr, the Surah that tells us a lot by telling us a little, given the fact that they only have three short verses. The fact that it is placed close to the end of the Juz Amma specifically, in the Quran generally, tells us a lot, notwithstanding the richness of its contents. Ulama more often than not discuss this Surah lecture after lectures, for pages after pages, as if there is little room for them to end the discussion.

We mentioned in passing as we discussed Surah at-Tin in the verse “Innallazi na amanu wa amilussolihati falahum ajrun ghairu mamnuun”, how these two Surahs, at-Tin and al-Asr in some ways are deeply connected. One aspect of its connection lies on the verse “Laqadhalaknal insanafi ahsanitakwim” (Indeed we have created human beings as the best of creations). In this Surah of al-Asr, Allah SWT mentions “Innal Insanalafi husr” - indeed human beings are drowning in loss. Why is it so? The answers lie in between these two Surahs. Immediately after Surah at-Tin Allah SWT tells us how (al-Alaq), when (al-Qadr) and what (al-Bayyinah) is the Quran as the divine source of our guidance. In the next quartet of Surahs, Allah SWT remind us of the last Day (al-Zalzalah and al-Qariah) and the evils of those who are ungrateful and lustful for wealth (al-'Adiyat) and those who compete for worldly things and are deviated (at-Takathur). Despite being created as a good creation, many of us stray from the path of truth (may Allah SWT protect us). Therefore in this Surah Allah SWT mentioned that we are immersed in a great loss.

In general, the core message of Surah Al-Asr is about 4 essential characteristics of successful people who pass the minimum test. They are having the right belief (Iman), doing righteous deeds, make efforts to enjoin truth and make the efforts with perseverance. Those who fail the 4 characteristics are doomed to a tremendous loss. Let us now start with the first verse of the 3 total verses in this Surah. The verse is as follows:

وَالْعَصْرِ  
[1] By time,

Ulamas, since the time of Ibn Abbas until today, continue to wonder over the meaning of “Wal Asr” (by time). Let us begin by understanding it as one of the Qasams which Allah SWT swear from time to time, implying how serious Allah SWT is over this subject. The subjects for this verse are in verse 2 and 3 which we will InshaAllah discuss later. Before we do that, we should be warned on the fact that there are some who try to use the power of only logic as a way to understand Quran, with the presence of movements such as Qadiani being popular for such approach, Wallahua'lam.



The Title Page of a  
**Fake** Translation of  
The Holy Quran  
By  
Qadianis / Ahmadiyya

*In an attempt to give their cult an appearance of validity and misguide uninformed individuals, the Qadiani (Ahmadiyya) leadership has tampered with authentic meaning and interpretation of the Holy Quran, as related to us by Prophet Muhammad(SAW). They promote an incorrect translation of the Holy Quran written to support the blasphemous claims of Mirza Ghulam Qadiani, the founder of the Qadiani (Ahmadiyya) Movement. - Irshad.org*

It is said that Ibn Abbas refer the concept of time here to the concept of continuous time, especially the past and the present. While others explain the concept of time as a proof and weakness of how humans are in great loss. Basically, we are expected to reflect how time is drifting in our life. The word Al-Asr is usually referred to the time Asar, in which this is the time when night is about to fall and day is about to break. The word “Asarat” refer to a woman who during her young age was about to expire, pointing to the last precious time we have. So, why Asr?

In ancient Arab culture, even in our times, this was the time when people are commonly busy at their workplaces, rushing to go back home. If they fail to do it, they have to face the dark and they cannot start their night activities with a blissful manner. Therefore, when Allah SWT swears by the time, it carries meaning that we have no time to be preoccupied with our personal desire but should instead focus on what is expected from us as humans, which is to continue submitting to Allah SWT. Some ulamas give the analogy of ice, showing that we have to rush to keep it at the right place before it melts. Why is it so important for us to rush? The answer can be located in the next verse, as follows:

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ  
[2] Indeed, mankind is in loss,

This verse teaches us of the fact that we are so occupied with our personal and worldly things, therefore being in a great loss. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan mentioned that if one wants to look at every single letter used and words chosen in this verse, one would find how Allah SWT is not only serious, but also “angry” to the humans’ personally and worldly preoccupied behavior. The word “Inna” and the word “La” should be understood with the word “no doubt” and “definitely” respectively. For the record, there are many word “La” in every Surah and we should understand that it is some kind of emphasis which words such as “undoubtedly”, “definitely”, “obviously” carry the same impact as the word “La”.

Imam Ibn Taymiyyah, in one of his comments on this verse said, among other things, that all human beings are in great loss because of two obstacles. First, doubtful thinking (Shubhat). Second, temptations (Syahwat). While the former touches on the human intellect, the second concerns the human psychospiritual. Our intellect, if not properly trained, tends to guide us to what can be reasoned out through our five senses only. Therefore, the power of such intellect will only help us create doubt for unseen or metaphysical world, such as the reward of paradise and the punishment of hell.

In a nutshell, so far, we have studied the fact that we are running out of time and every single one of us had forgotten the purpose of life and we are indeed drowning in loss. Let us now look at the last verse, verse 3, as follows:

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

[3] *Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience.*

The phrase “Amanu wa amilussolihat” is ubiquitous (found everywhere in the Quran). This phrase teaches on the importance of our belief and the righteous acts or deeds. Hence, we might focus on another aspect of this phrase, especially its overall message derived from the linguistic aspect of the verse as mentioned by Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan. He said that while the previous verse flows in singular form, this verse (verse 3) changes the tone to a collective form, implying that we cannot be alone and isolated when we want to increase and improve our iman and good deeds. Therefore, we have to go to the mosque and get involved in society. The phrase “Illallazi (except those)” obviously refer to those who are not drowning in loss, in which 4 characteristics stand out in this verse. They are Iman, Amal as-Soleh, advising to truth, and advising to patience. This group is of course a selected minority group, implying that those who are in loss are the majority and it teaches us that we are in great trouble if we believe on the logic of majority decision.

The phrase “watawa saubil haqq” and “watawa saubi as-sobr” is so important when we single out the meaning of “tawasi” which also carries the meaning of “wasiat”. Ulama discussed that we are still in loss in some way if we only have iman and do amal as-soleh if we fail to oblige to the other 2 aspects. However, as we advise, “Tawasi”, two essential characters must be, at very minimum, embedded in our very action. First, there must be a sense of urgency. We have said that the human kind is in loss and they are running out of time. For that reason, we should not delay on advising and spreading the truth. Second, the word “tawasi” also carries the meaning of mutual advising. Even though we are asked to advise others, in the process, people might reject and possibly

condemn us. We should take their rejection or condemnation as a form of their advice to us as we are advising.

It is said that Umar al-Khattab RA, one day, as he was outside of his house, he saw a man drinking (alcohol). He rushed to the man and beat him in the attempt to stop the man's sin. In his anger, the man said "You have committed 3 sins, ya Umar. First, you came to my place without permission. Second, you beat me. Third, you made an assumption without evidence upon my act." Umar, in his khutbah, mentioned how he learned from this event, and after the sermon had finished, the man came to see Umar RA and Umar said he learned a lot from that man and from that day onwards, he promised that he won't jump to conclusions before investigating. The man responded to Umar that from that day onwards he no longer drank (alcohol). The point is to always remember that when we do something, do it in the name of Allah SWT and not only do we have to advise others, but we to need to accept advices from others. As we have talked about before, we might be attacked, rejected or condemned emotionally or physically as we give advices and this should be expected, and this is a test from Allah SWT. Therefore, we must hold firm and be patient as we give advice and always hope that the person will give good advice to us as well.

We will end this Surah by highlighting the following five points. First, we know that whosoever fails to perform good deeds, especially salah (The word salihat carries the meaning of salah as well), their iman will be called into question, so too if we fail to advise people the truth and advise them with great patience. We have learned since our childhood's time that we are responsible to stop people from doing wrong, if not from our hand (authority), if not our tongue, or bare minimum in our hearts. This is hadith narrated under Abu Syed al-Khudri should teach us that if we are only concerned about our iman and do righteous good only, it would appear that we know no or little iman. Third, not only the word advice (Tawasi) is applied in the case of advising the truth but advising it with great perseverance and forbearance. Hence, the urgency to advise and the urgency to be patient is equally important, as well as mutually advise and being advised of the truth, together with being patient and get people that are being advised to be patient, plus getting others to be patient is among the important messages of this Surah, as mentioned by Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan. Plus, the third verse is in past tense, implying that until and at least we have done all four in this verse, then we do not fall under the category of the people who are drowned and lost. It appears that the great challenge of advising others are not so much on the outsiders, but rather the insiders, especially our family members or colleagues. However, if we realise on the importance of the fact that the time that we have left is so little, what else is left if not to grab whatever opportunity that we have, difficult it may be to continue giving and getting advice to and from them.

**m) Surah al-Humazh: Five Filthy Traits and Five Explanations of Fire**

May Allah continue bestowing us His rahmah and may we be granted the paradise of Firdaus. Aamiin. We are moving on to the last Surah of this tazkirah series, Surah Al-Humazah, the last Surah of the Quran and obviously in Juz Amma which reminds us on the terrifying punishment of Hellfire.

The important message which we can derive from this Surah is as follows: First, at any cause, we should stay ourselves from backbiting (Humazah) and from making fun of others (Lumazah). Second, by any means, besides the above, we should stay away from the greed of wealth because the Hellfire that's waiting us is worse than what humans can imagine. All in all, we will reduce our discussions into four parts. The first part discusses on the meaning of Wayl. The second part converses on Humazah and Lumazah. The third part is on the problem of greed of wealth, taunting and speculating on it, as well as having conviction that the wealth we acquire is everlasting. The last part talks about the meaning of Hellfire (Hutamah).

It should clearly be noted that the previous 2 Surahs (At-Takathur and Al-Qariah) highlighted the problems faced by the human kind, in which their desire for worldly things has severely distracted them from focusing on the purpose of this life. While in Surah Al-Asr, we were taught by Allah SWT that we are running out of time and are immersed in loss tremendously, except if we are not distracted and are able to fulfill the four obligations (Iman, Righteous deeds, Advising on the truth, Advising with great patience). In this Surah, we will sternly be informed on the verdict for those who fail to follow the message of the 2 previous Surahs and more specifically, those who indulge themselves in Humazah and Lumazah, together with lust for wealth. Let us now take a look at the first verse, as follows:

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ

[1] *Woe to every scorner and mocker*

The word “Wayl” cannot be translated accurately into another language, such as “Woe”, even though translating it in this manner helps to serve some meaning. This word is mentioned 27 times in the Quran and in Surah Al-Mursilat alone, it is mentioned 10 times and the basic meaning in Surah Al-Mutaffifin is similar with this Surah. We might need to spend some time to discuss its very meaning, knowing of its exceptional importance.

According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, from a linguistic point of view, the word Wayl (curse) not only explains the state of the curse, but the effect that the curse brings to those who are cursed. It is so strong to the point that those who are cursed might want to respond with the same curse. In this Surah, it is Allah SWT Who cursed the scorners or the backbiters and the mockers who use vulgar words. Defending those who were cursed by the scorners and the mockers. In general, the meaning of the word “Kul” after the word “Waylulli” suggests that the curse applies to all who have filthy behaviour.

However, during the Prophet SAW’s time, he had faced numerous situations of Humazah and Lumazah, particularly by the elite idolaters such as Walid Ibn Mughirah, Akhnas Ibn Syurik, Utbah Ibn Rabi’ah and even his blood uncle, Abdul Uzza, a.k.a Abu Lahab. In fact, it is said that when

the musyrikun met Walid, to get his expert comments on the verses of the Quran, with his ego and arrogance, although overpowered by the revelation, frowned, and with a sarcastic gaze and body language, he said that “this is nothing but magic which can viciously charm others”. Hence, the word Humazah and Lumazah had been generally interpreted by some ulamas as frowning and arrogance besides the standard and commonly accepted interpretation. Fakhruddin ar-Razi was among the earliest mufasirun who extensively referred to Ibn Abbas concerning the terminology of Humazah and Lumazah. For the record, the word “Wayl” also constitutes the meaning of “the lowest layer of Hellfire”. Wallahua’lam.

Let us look at just how interwoven the three phrases “Humazah”, “Lumazah” and “Hutamah”. These phrases are precisely important due to their rhetorical and meaningful intricacy. To begin with, the three terms end with “Ta Marbutah”, which applies the extreme effect of expression. While “Hutamah” is commonly referred to as a filthy character, condemning behind a person, Lumazah mostly refers to a face-to-face condescending words or condemnation. We should understand as well that not only through words, but also writings, we could commit sins when mentioning bad things of others. May Allah protect us. On the other hand, people such as Sherif Bala use the pen to write the Quran so that he and others could benefit directly.



*It is said that Sherif Bala, a great muhafizun in Nigeria whose handwriting is so elegant, was responsible for releasing a handwritten Quran. One of his unique presentation of his work includes limited sentences per page which might increase our concentration if we want to look at its meaning when we recite it, Wallahua’lam.*

On a lighter note, men proudly say that they’re not like women, enjoying backbites. Men tend to think that they are more open, hence they would say whatever they want to say in front of the person (Lumazah). However, lessons from this Surah rings loudly in both women and men. If they were to say something bad, they will both be thrown into Hutamah. We will discuss Hutamah (another type of intense hot fire) later. For now, let us look at the following verse:-

الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ

[2] Who collects wealth and [continuously] counts it.

يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ

[3] *He thinks that his wealth will make him immortal.*

These two verses speak of three categories of people, in which some ulama' understood it as a subgroup of the Humazah and Lumazah, while another group of ulama' explain it in terms of its own unique three categories, implying that Allah SWT curses five types of people, according to this school of thought. Let us take this as five separate groups. Now, we are going to engage our discussion with the third group (Jama Amalauwwa addadah), those who are greedy with the accumulation of wealth, meaning that in current context, they would trample all forms of law in their desire for profits. They do not care, to the extent that for the sake of profit they would exploit and kill others such as indulging in war. Second, Addadah who are continuous not only in counting, but also in making all the preparations for the safety of their future money. In short, they may have little or no clue on the concept of Rizk and Qada' and Qadr. Thirdly, Yabsabu, those with strong conviction that their money would last forever. This would also mean that they rely heavily on their power of wealth rather than Allah SWT.

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan has a unique observation pertaining this Surah, particularly on the focus of Maal or Wealth. Usually, the concept of Maal more often than not would be discussed parallel with children/families. What is unique here is that as if there is an indirect message implying that whosoever has a strong desire for wealth, they would have little desire for children. It is not a strange thing that rich people has lesser children as compared to low-income groups. This is partly because of these three attitude of people with greater wealth or money (they care less as to how they acquire the money, worried about surviving their future therefore obsessed with saving money, and thirdly thinking that their power of money can buy nearly everything and can last forever).

The next verse is structured in the form of Allah SWT's Qasam, in which Allah SWT has sworn that the five mentioned previously will be thrown in Hellfire called Hutamah. The verse is as follows:-

كَلَّا لَيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ

[4] *No! He will surely be thrown into the Crusher.*

There are different Qiraat (Ways of recitation) for the word Bazan. In some Qiraat, two harakat is recited at the end of the word Bazan, which carries the meaning of not only those five, but also together with the wealth is thrown into Hellfire. Other Qiraat pronounce it as Zun, this points to the meaning of not only those five, but also those who are in their social circle are thrown in Hellfire as well. This is some of the aspects of Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan's discussion.

The next verse explains what Hutamah specifically means. Allah SWT mentions five times on the meaning of Hutamah, suggesting just how beautiful is this Surah's presentation in terms of its Naghm (Coherence). The five verses are as follows:-

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحُطَمَةُ

[5] *And what can make you know what is the Crusher?*

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَةُ

[6] It is the fire of Allah, [eternally] fueled,

الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ

[7] Which mounts directed at the hearts.

إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّصَدَّدَةٌ

[8] Indeed, Hellfire will be closed down upon them

فِي عَمَدٍ مُمَدَّدَةٍ

[9] In extended columns.

These 5 verses will give us the sense of meaning or idea on what is Hutamah, in which many ulamas say that it is the worse Hellfire. The phrase “Narullah (The fire of Allah)” itself should create a parable feeling among us because in previous Surahs, such as in Al-Qariah, the phrase “Narun Hamiyah” was used to refer to the Hellfire without associating it to Allah SWT. The word “Al-Afidah (Fuad)” refers to the inner part of the heart, the most sacred part of our being, and Allah SWT mentioned in verse 7 the whole part of our body will be terrifyingly burned and it points to our protected heart.

The last verse, verse 9, mentions a situation of those who are thrown into al-Hutamah, and in that area, according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, they can see a way out at the top of their block, implying that their punishment is worse both physically and emotionally. This is because they thought that with a way out, they will be able to escape the torture. Such desire to escape itself is a torture for them because there will actually be know way for them to escape. May Allah SWT protect us from falling into the 5 groups of people mentioned in this Surah. May Allah protect us from falling or be thrown into Al-Hutamah, explained in the last 5 verses.

We mentioned earlier that this Surah, Surah Al-Humazah is the last Surah in the Quran which mentions the Hellfire and we notice that this is the place that Allah SWT discuss about the worst form of Jahannam. The last 10 Surahs of the Juz Amma are about the Revelation, stories concerning the Prophet SAW and how we can derive blessings and benefits from the Surahs. May Allah SWT grant us tawfiq and hidayah and with it we will acquire more knowledge and more importantly, increase our Iman, do more righteous deeds, advise truths to others, and last but not least, advising with great perseverance and forbearance. Aamiin.



**n) Epilogue: The Importance of Practice**

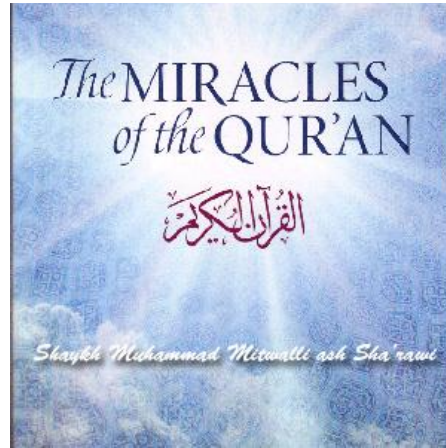
Only with His helps and blessings can we reach the final part of our discussion, which InshaAllah, we will summarize what we have learned and discussed throughout the past 12 sessions, from Surah Ad-Dhuha all the way to Surah Al-Humazah. Before we engage ourselves with concluding remarks, let us remind ourselves of the importances of not only understanding the revelations, but also the equal importances of practicing it, as well as to advising the truth to others and giving advices with great patience. It is said that great saints such as Abu Yazid al-Bustami (804-874) mentioned that we have to act righteously, following the Quran and Sunnah. But, if we are limited by time or space to act with our body, then utter or verbalize it with our tongue, and even we can't do it with our tongue, recite it with our heart.

What exactly have we learned from the 12 Surahs? We have engaged with this discussion during the introductory part of this series, mentioning the general context of the Surahs, and in this concluding part, we want to showcase the basic blessings we can learn from the Surahs in order to practice them. The first two Surahs, Surah Ad-Dhuha and Surah Al-Insyirah were revelations directed to Rasulullah SAW, and in the last three verses (verses 9-11) of Surah Ad-Dhuha Allah SWT teaches us to take care of the welfare of orphans, respond to questions or concerns of others and finally, to always mention Allah SWT's ni'mah or blessings through whatever channel or medium we can. In Surah Al-Insyirah, the last two verses (verses 7-8) teaches us to spend the entirety of energy and time during daytime to work/deal with daily chores or things concerning the ummah, whereas during nighttime we must surrender wholeheartedly to Allah SWT's call, especially to perform the night prayers. Furthermore, in this Surah, Allah SWT reminds us to rely only to Allah SWT and to surrender everything to Him.

Now we shall move towards the first quartet, comprising of four Surahs which deal with the suhuf or Quran, or revelations. The four Surahs are Surah At-Tin, Surah Al-Alaq, Surah Al-Qadr and Surah Al-Bayyinah. In Surah At-Tin, it should be known that we are the best of creations, capable of doing especially good things. However, we are able to be led astrayed, and cause us to depart from the teachings based on the revelations. The next Surah, Surah Al-Alaq teaches us how the Quran was revealed. The important message that we should make as our daily practice is to not be arrogant with the knowledge we have acquired, because all forms of knowledge, be it religious or temporal are direct knowledges from Allah SWT. We must not claim that the knowledge is from our own efforts and consider ourselves self-educated. Na'uzubillahi min zalik. While Surah Al-Alaq tells us of how the quran was revealed, the next Surah, Surah Al-Qadr informs us of the importance of being ready and excited to worship and make long dhikr on the day the Quran was revealed, that is during Laylatul Qadr. Therefore we should be thankful to Allah SWT, not only for His countless blessings, but for the specific blessings during Laylatul Qadr.

Its following Surah, Surah al-Bayyinah interestingly informs us of the important messages in the Quran itself. Verses 4 and 5 tells us on the precarious nature of those with knowledge. More often than not, when those supposedly knowledgeable people are informed or reminded of the Quran, they become divided and start pointing fingers towards each other, arrogantly thinking that only their knowledge is true whereas the others are false statements. Although the verse mentions about Ahlul Kitab, the fact that they are amongst the knowledgeable should remind us, as mentioned in its following verse (verse 5), that only those who are sincere in worshipping and enslave

themselves to Allah SWT will be guided by the contents of the Quran. For the record, the Quran had been interpreted by many ulama such as the earliest one, At-Tabari and the contemporary ones such as Muhammad Metwali Al-Sharawi. May Allah SWT give us the strength to continue reading the Quran to get benefit from it, Aamiin.



*Muhammad Metwali Al-Sha'raawi (April 15, 1911 – June 17, 1998) was an Islamic scholar, former Egyptian minister of Endowments and Muslim jurist. He has been called one of Egypt's most popular and successful Islamic preachers, and "one of the most-prominent symbols of popular Egyptian culture" in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. -Wikipedia*

Let us move towards the second quartet or another bunch of the Juz Amma. They are Surah al-Zalzalah, Surah al-'Adiyat, Surah al-Qariah and Surah at-Takathur. It should be highlighted here that the discussion about the quartets were learned from discussions by great ulamas, and Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, in his discussion of Juz Amma (from Youtube) emphasises a lot about how each quartet in the Juz Amma move from one Surah to another.

Surah al-Zalzalah informs us to be more meticulous on whatever good or bad deeds we engage ourselves into, because every minute, incidents will be put on the scale and we will see the list of good and bad deeds as we are resurrected in the world after. The next Surah, Surah Al-'Adiyat warns us on the filthy character of those who refuse to be grateful to Allah SWT and those who lust for wealth. Similar to Surah Al-Zalzalah previously, the next Surah, Surah Al-Qariah further explains the next step after we have seen the list of our good and bad deeds, we will either be rewarded with paradise or otherwise Narun Hamiyah (Intensely hot fire). Surah At-Takathur warns us that because of our filthy characters, we focus our time and energy just to compete with others for wealth, pride, etc. It is in this Surah that we are informed of the scary image of Hellfire, and it's not just our good and bad deeds that will be evaluated, even the way we spend the ni'mah in things as small as our neck or brain is called for before the final verdict is passed onto us.

The last two Surahs, Surah Al-Asr and Surah Al-Humazah are two Surahs with their own uniqueness. Surah Al-Asr carries a heavy message which warns us on the fact that we are on our last stages, therefore we are lacking time and should only do important things such as performing good deeds like holding on to our iman, advising others with perseverance. The last Surah in this series hyperbolizes but does not exaggerate the worst punishment. Therefore, as clearly stated in

this Surah, we must not backbite, insult others as well as engulf ourselves with the pleasures of worldly wealth.

We thank Allah SWT for endowing us with great knowledge from the 12 Surahs and this is the time for us to reflect on what we have learned from the 12 Surahs, to practice what we have not practiced and to increase what we have already been practicing. While doing so, it is equally important to share with others and be patient in our role of enjoining good and avoiding evil. We would like to express our utmost gratitude to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan whose monumental works have helped others in understanding the important messages of the al-Quran under his Bayyinah Institute. We will end our tazkirah session on Juz Amma (From Ad-Dhuha to Al-Humazah) with Surah al-Asr that tells us that all of us are failures, except for those who have iman, who perform righteous deeds, who spread the message of truth and who have patience and constancy.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾

*By (the Token of) Time (through the ages),*

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾

*Verily Man is in loss,*

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

﴿٣﴾

*Except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of Patience and Constancy.*

# **Part IV**

## **Tazkirah From Surah al-Fiil to Surah an-Nas**

**a) Introduction: Why the last 10 of Juz Amma**

First, we thank and praise Allah SWT for endowing us the strength to continue our family tazkirah series. May Allah SWT bless us in abundance. In this tazkirah series, we will look at the last 10 surahs in Juz Amma, the 30th Juz in The Holy Quran. Before we do so, let us start by reciting the *ummul kitab*, al-Fatihah.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[1] *In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.*

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

[2] *[All] praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds*

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[3] *The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful,*

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

[4] *Sovereign of the Day of Recompense.*

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

[5] *It is You we worship and You we ask for help.*

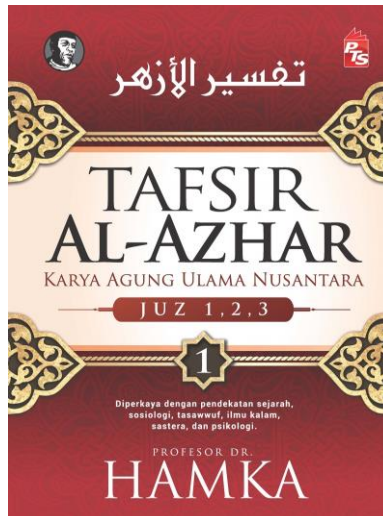
اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

[6] *Guide us to the straight path*

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

[7] *The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.*

May Allah SWT bless us with Surah al-Fatihah, the surah that reminds us to worship Allah SWT, thank and praise Him and understand that He is The Most Gracious and Most Merciful, as well as the owner of the day of reckoning. It is in this surah also that we ask Allah SWT to guide us to the straight path, the path taken by the people of the past, and not those who have knowledge but failed to practice, and also not those who practice without knowledge.



*Prof. Dr. Haji Abdul Malik bin Dr. Syekh Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah, better known by the nickname Hamka, (17 February 1908 in West Sumatra, Dutch East Indies — 24 July 1981 in Jakarta, Indonesia[1]) was an Indonesian ulama, novelist, philosopher and political activist. - Wikipedia*

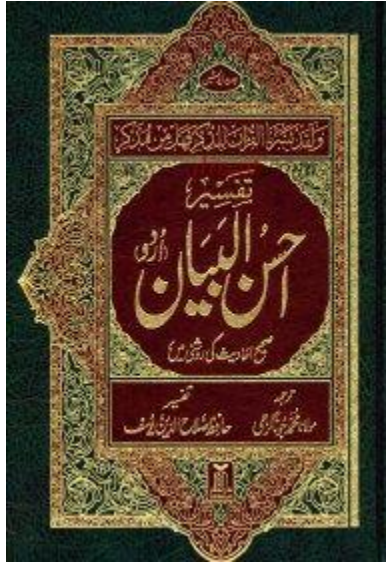
Let us talk a brief about Juz Amma, and why we choose to select the last 10 surahs, from Surah al-Fiil to Surah an-Nas. Juz Amma comprises of 37 surahs, beginning with Surah an-Naba' (The Announcement) and ends with Surah an-Nas (The Humankind), in which we will discuss the surahs, acknowledging the little knowledge we have on the Quran. May Allah SWT have mercy and forgiveness for our ignorance and laziness.

It should be noted that the last 10 surahs are revelations in which their contexts or *asbabun nuzul* are directly related to the *sirah* of Rasulullah SAW. Hence, InsyaAllah, once we manage to cover all 10 surahs, we will be able to get a glimpse of Rasulullah SAW's life. It is really a shame that we still struggle to truly know and understand these simple surahs at our age. May Allah SWT forgive us.

There was an occasion where a non-Muslim heard about the benefits of Surah Yusuf (Joseph) in regard to management and leadership, and came to see a Muslim, asking about the surah. The Muslim knows little to nothing as far as management and leadership is concerned that can be derived from the surah. We ourselves when asked by non-Muslims, know little to nothing about it ourselves. What's worse is when we do not know about contents from simpler surahs from the Juz Amma. Again, may Allah SWT forgive us. It is not important whether a Muslim or a non-Muslim asks us. What is important is when Allah SWT asks us, yet we know little to nothing. Astaghfirullahalazim.

It should be noted as well that Surah al-Humazah (the surah before the last 10 surahs) is the last surah in the Quran that warns people of the Hellfire. The fundamental discussions of Surah Juz Amma concerns about the Hereafter, except for the last 10 surahs, to which their focus departs

quite significantly. We are going to discuss in ascending order, among other things, because we are not trained as *ustadhs* or religious authority. Not only will we start with the simpler surahs, we will do so knowing that nothing in our discussion carries any authority. Wallahua'lam.



*(Image shows Muhammad Idrees Dahri's Ahsanul Bayan) Allama Muhammad Idrees Dahri is a notable Islamic scholar, preacher, writer, author, poet and researcher of Sindh, Pakistan. He is Hanafi, Maturidi, and belongs to the Naqshbandi Mujaddidi sufi order. He is a khalifa (deputy) of Hazrat Khwaja Allah Bakhsh Abbasi Naqshbandi and currently of Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Tahir Bakhshi Naqshbandi. He also has Ijazah in Shadhili and Alawi sufi orders. - Wikipedia*

With our eagerness and perseverance to know, we will try to look at what contemporary ulamas or ustadhs (such as Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, Syeikh Yasir Qadhi and Dr. Kamaru Salam bin Yusof) say about the meaning and benefit of these 10 surahs. InshaAllah most of the time we will refer to the tafsir of Ahsanul Bayan and Ibnu Kathir, available in many exegeses' summary and we should be aware that there is a tafsirul Quran that is near to us, written by HAMKA (Haji Abdul Malik) which is widely used in the Southeast Asian region (Tafsir al-Azhar).

Let us discuss a little about what we can learn from each surah; Surah al-Fiil explains Allah SWT's political protection, Surah Quraisy talks about Allah SWT's economic and financial protection, Surah al-Ma'un explains about those who lied to the religion, Surah al-Kauthar tells us about the legacy of Islam, Surah al-Kafirun explains to us the ending of the religion of truth versus the strayed ones, Surah an-Nasr teaches us the example of the greatest achiever (Rasulullah SAW), Surah al-Lahab gives us the example of the filthiest people, Surah al-Ikhlas explains to us who and what is Allah SWT, Surah al-Falaq tells us to seek Allah SWT's refuge from sorcery and jealousy, and Surah an-Nas teaches us to seek refuge from Allah SWT from the evils of Iblis,

More reading materials can be found at [god-consciousness.wixsite.com](http://god-consciousness.wixsite.com)

InsyaAllah, we perform supplications to Allah SWT. May Allah SWT guide us, for without His guidance, we are nothing. We make du'a to Allah SWT as well to open the floodgates of strength and blessings so that we can be *istiqamah* in performing our tazkirah sessions.



**b) Surah al-Fiil: Political Protection**

May Allah SWT lovingly reward our efforts in abundance for every single attempts that we've made to understand His revelations. InshaAllah with His blessings, we will look at Surah al-Fiil (The Elephant), the 1st of the 10 last surahs in the Juz Amma, that provide not only historical but also cultural accounts, generally on the Meccans and the Quraisy, and specifically on the Musyrikun idolaters themselves. We will be discussed about the Quraisy in terms of the lineage and influence, as we go through between Surah al-Fiil and Surah Quraisy, in which the close linkage or connection between these two surahs must be appreciated. Afterall, it has a historical link between the two. InshaAllah, we will discuss the important messages from this surah.

Before we do that, let us share our understanding on the history of the stories of al-Fiil by reciting the first verse:-

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ

*[1] Have you not considered, [O Muhammad], how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant?*

At very minimum, there are two parts of this verse that should merit our attention. First is the phrase Rasulullah and his Lord on one hand, and on the other is the phrase Ashabil Fiil (The companions of the elephant). As for the first part, Rasulullah SAW was asked to reflect or ponder, and we ourselves have to reflect and ponder as well. In the context of the Meccan people, Wisbatullah is situated there. Rasulullah SAW, and we ourselves were told to reflect when the Meccans were attacked by Abrahah's army, to which in this verse they were called as the companions of the elephant. When the surah was revealed to Rasulullah SAW, he himself has to recite it to his audience. Among his audiences at the time were the Musyrikun idolaters. Therefore, the Musyrikun idolaters were also told by Allah SWT through this verse to ponder on the event of the Abrahah Army's attack.

In Surah Quraisy, we will focus on how the Quraisy who were supposed to continue the legacy of Ibrahim as the custodians of the Baitullah, must not only guard and take care of the Baitullah but worship as how had been told to Prophet Ibrahim AS and guard the welfare of the poor and orphaned (will also discuss in Surah al-Ma'un). They were told to ponder how Allah SWT had helped the city of Mecca from being crushed by the army of Abrahah. When this surah was revealed, some of the seniors such as Walid al-Mughirah, and a majority of others had seen the attack with their own eyes at an early age.

The story of the Abrahah Army was passed from a generation to another. Afterall, the event only took place approximately 45 years before this surah was revealed. In short, the stories of the Ashabul Fiil was still fresh in their minds, as the stories themselves were repeated over and over. This surah reminded the Quraisy, especially their leaders to be thankful to Allah SWT, therefore

worship and surrender to Him, because only Allah SWT is capable of protecting them, ensuring safety as well as remove fear from threats such as the Abrahah Army.

The second part deals with the Abrahah Army. As a sub-colony of Habsyah, Yemen during the times of Abrahah had been redeveloped after a serious catastrophe due to a massive flood in the year 400 CE. Knowing that Mecca was developing as a center of peace and prosperity, Abrahah planned to destroy the city in order to reglorify the Yemeni Civilization. Using religion (Christianity) as its proxy, he marched to Mecca with at least 12000 army with a dozen elephant. There was one huge elephant called Mahmud, expected to bring luck to them and with the help of the people from Taif, they managed to navigate straight through the city of Mecca. Again, Rasulallah SAW, the elite Quraisy and we ourselves are asked to ponder on this event. How is it that such a huge amount of infantry, where some even mention up to 60,000 not only fail to demolish the city of Mecca and its people, who ran to the mountains, the elephants even refused to move forward to attack Mecca?

Ultimately, Allah SWT sent the Ababil to crush them mercilessly. The fact that Allah SWT used the word Kaifa (how) in this verse, not only instructs us not only to ponder on this event, but see how Allah SWT with His miracles, not only used a flock of birds, but also made the elephants on the side of the Meccan people, where the Baitullah is centered and its people being responsible as the custodians to the Baitullah itself. According to many ulama', these verses teach us on how to be thankful and continue our Ubudiyah to Allah SWT, because it is Allah SWT that provides political stability for our country.

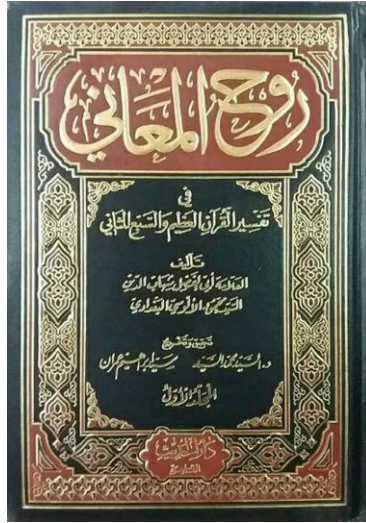
In the case of the Quraisy, the help from Allah SWT was obvious. Whenever our country is in a politically bad shape, remember to ask help from Allah SWT, as He is the one who removes the fear and protects us. We will be discussing the army of Abrahah after reciting the verses and the second verse is as follows:-

أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضَلُّلٍ

[2] *Did He not make their plan into misguidance?*

In this verse, Allah SWT refers to the Abrahah Army, where the word "Kaida" (plan/plot) and misguidance/waste is important to be discussed here. One of Abrahah's plans was to use a shrine in Yemen as the center of worship, replacing the Baitullah, but this is just a cover. The real plan was to glorify the Yemen civilization politically and economically so that they can become the superpower again. Their plot was to use religion as the call to unite the Yemeni who were mostly Christians and Jews. We should also be aware that the Musyrikun elites in Baitullah only used the house of Allah SWT for their political and economic strength. They were not being serious and honest in worshipping Allah SWT, nor did they care for the poor and the orphaned.

Allah SWT mentioned that the plot of Abrahah was basically misguided, and of course wasted because much they have tried and a lot had been spent, yet they had to face the reality of Allah SWT's power. This was also a warning for the Musyrikun elites and ourselves, that if we have interior motives in our worship, we are also among the misguided people. For the record, Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan in many of his discussions on the literal and actual meaning of the Quran, would refer to exegeses such as those written by the great Imam Al-Alusi with his *Ruhul Ma'ani* and Imam as-Shaarawi.



*Abū al-Thanā' Shihāb ad-Dīn Sayyid Maḥmūd ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusaynī al-Ālūsī al-Baghdādī (10 December 1802 – 29 July 1854) was an arab Islamic scholar best known for writing Ruh al-Ma`ani, a tafsir (exegesis) of the Qur'an. He was born in Baghdad on the day of Jumu`ah, 14 Sha`ban 1217 AH (Friday, 10 December 1802). He died on 5 Dhul-Q'dah, 1270 AH (29 July 1854). - Wikipedia*

Some ulama' discussed as to why Allah SWT did not destroy Abrahah and his people in Yemen, but instead waited for them to reach Mecca. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan in this matter by giving the analogy of dogs. He said, if you wanted to punish a dog by using a four feet rope tied to a pole, you wouldn't give a serious impact on the dog. But if you were to use a longer rope, say a hundred feet rope, to torture the dog, then the dog can run fast, and when the dog reaches its peak momentum, the impact becomes heavier as soon as the dog reaches the end of the rope. The same can be said in the case of Abrahah, in which the long, meticulous plan they had made was not only misguided, but wasted as it was foiled right at the end of their journey.

The following three verses were pretty straightforward, and note that Ababil means "a group of birds", not the name of the bird, one of the common misconceptions according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan. Now we move to the next 3 verses:-

وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ  
[3] And He sent against them birds in flocks,

تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِنْ سِجِّيلٍ

[4] Striking them with stones of hard clay,

فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَأْكُولٍ

[5] And He made them like eaten straw.

All the army of Abrahah were hit by Sijjil, a form of very dangerous pebbles. When the army of Abrahah was severely crushed, Abrahah himself managed to flee back to his hometown in Yemen to ask for reinforcements. But looking at his body when struck by the stone, which was horrible, wounded and riddled with many diseases, the Yemeni people were frightened and none of them dared to join the reinforcement army.

Insyallah we will discuss a few important points left before finally ending this tazkirah session. This surah is a reminder to us and in the context of sirah, to the Musyrikun elites that they should be thankful to Allah SWT for removing the fear and provided political safety, so that they can live a peaceful life. But the fact to the matter is that they committed syirik instead, and some question why Ulama' did not decimate them, for their sin (associating Allah SWT with partners) was severe compared to Abrahah's sin, who wanted to destroy the city of Mecca. One of the answers given was, the benefit of Baitullah as the focal point for our people to worship and perform hajj is more huge, therefore Allah SWT destroyed the Abrahah and his army.

Some Ulama discussed the phrase "Ashabul Fiil" (the companions of the elephant) to show that their mentality compared to the elephants were lower. We know the Sahabahs as the companions of Rasulullah SAW, because the level of the Sahabahs are lower than Rasulullah SAW, so too is the Ashabul Fiil. The debate goes on by saying that even the elephants refused to trample on the city of Mecca, but Abrahah and his people insisted, showing that their level is lower than that of the elephants, Wallahua'lam.



*Meccans in general and the Baitullah specifically have been blessed by Allah SWT politically with long safety and economically with a trading route (Rih latassyita iwassaif). However,*

*human beings such as ourselves are very prone to take the blessings of Allah SWT onto us for granted, such as when we enjoy the safety and economic progress for a long period of time, as if they were not from Allah SWT. The Musyrikun Quraisyis forgot that it was Allah SWT that removed the fear from them when the army of Abrahah or the companions of the elephants (Ashabul fiil) attempt on sieging Mecca failed.*

Sahabahs such as Umar and Ibnu Mas'ud have merged these two surahs without basmalah in between, even though they acknowledge that they are two separate surahs. Sayidina Umar RA in one of his prayers even recited both surahs in one rakaah during the second rakaah of his Maghrib prayer. as-Shawkani, who was known for his Tafsir Fathul Qadder, and also known for him not giving endorsement to the idea of divine sequencing, when discussing about Surah al-Fiil and Surah Quraisy, admitted the fact that these two surahs have a close connection, Wallahua'lam. Generally, Surah al-Fiil is about Allah SWT's protection politically, whereas Surah Quraisy is about Allah SWT's protection economically and financially.

The city of Mecca and Baitullah is vital as the sacred focal point of our ibadah and aqidah, therefore we should be thankful to prophet Ibrahim AS who pioneered the establishment of the city of Mecca through his blessed du'a as told in Surah Ibrahim and Surah al-Baqarah. This surah is so important, although the important thing that Allah SWT wanted to protect was the Baitullah, no word of the baitullah was mentioned, but rather Allah SWT mentioned Rasulullah SAW with the word Rabbuka. It should be noted that mostly words such as "ta" or "ka" as we recite the Quran refers to Rasulullah SAW. This is a gift that says that when Allah SWT protected Mecca, Allah SWT protected Rasulullah SAW too.

According to many narrations, Rasulullah SAW's birth was 50 days after this event. We can imagine how Rasulullah SAW's mother, Aminah Bint Wahab, who was in her last stage of pregnancy, was in great fear as the Abrahah army marched closer. But, Allah SWT not only removed the fears from the people of Mecca alongside the prophet's mother, through His powers Allah SWT provided safety to the city so that the city and the Baitullah should and would later be cleaned up from the idolaters.

With that, we end today's session. May Allah SWT make us good mukminin and mukminah, and we pray for Allah SWT to reward us with abundance and enter Jannah without Hisab.

**c) Surah Quraisy: Economic and Financial Gift**

With His blessings, InshaAllah, today we will deal with another beautiful surah in the al-Quran of the Juz Amma, Surah Quraisy, the 106th surah which comprises of 4 verses. The name of this surah, Surah Quraisy, obviously implies one unique and important tribe who had existed for centuries in the Arab lands and it was in this tribe that Rasulullah SAW was born. The Quraisy tribe is important, partly due to the role as the custodians of the Baitullah, the house first built by Prophet Ibrahim AS. He, as mentioned in Surah Ibrahim and Surah al-Baqarah, made a du'a for the safety (political) and prosperity (economics and financial) of this city called Balad, or Mecca.

However, as we know, especially as we have discussed in Surah al-Ma'un, the elite Musyrikun Quraisy failed to fulfill their obligation as the custodians of the Baitullah, despite the safety and prosperity of the city blessed by Allah SWT. We have discussed how Abu Jahal, Utbah, Al-as, Umayyah and many others not only fail to worship Allah SWT, but also worship idols such as Latta, Uzza and many others. Not only do they fail to take care of the poor and the orphans, but when they pray, they do so to show their people how pious they are in the eyes of their people. Wallahua'lam.

Surah Quraisy (106) and Surah al-Fiil (105) has a connection that should not be ignored. The Ulama mentioned that Surah al-Fiil can be observed in terms of its meanings, which is about the safety of Mecca (Political), whereas Surah Quraisy is about the prosperity of Mecca (Economy and finance). It is said that Sayidina Umar RA used to recite Surah at-Tin during the first rakaah of Maghrib prayer, while in his second rakaah he would recite Surah al-Fiil and Surah Quraisy together without Basmalah in between. Although Sahabah such as Umar and Ibnu Mas'ud are aware of the fact that these are two separate surahs, more often than not, whenever they were to recite them, they would combine them.

InshaAllah, we will try to do three things today. First, we shall try to understand each verses intricately. Second, we shall discuss its connection to its previous (Surah al-Fiil) and next surah (Surah al-Ma'un). Third, we shall discuss some leaders of well-known Quraisy tribe members such as Hasyim and Abdul Muttalib as well as Rasulullah SAW's father, Abdullah before we finally conclude our session.

We begin by looking at the concept of accustomed security (Ilaf) in this verse, which tells us that the people with the aid of Allah SWT, began to be accustomed to and forget the security given by Allah SWT. This involves the Quraysh, who had forgotten that Allah SWT is the one that gave security (economically, financially and politically) to them. This also happens to us when we obtain our salary at the end of the month. We are accustomed to it, and we forget that it is Allah SWT that provides us with rizki, and through Allah SWT we obtain our salary. When we realise that the fact that it is from Allah SWT that we get anything, there is no reason for us not to prioritize

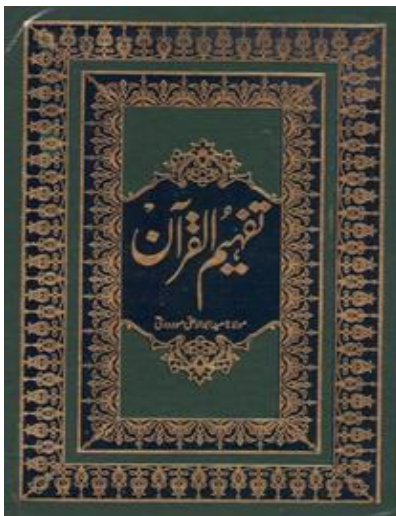
worshipping Allah SWT in our lives. This is the basic message of this surah, and InshaAllah we will begin with the first verse. The first verse is as follows:-

### لَا يَلَا فِ قُرَيْشٍ

[1] *For the accustomed security of the Quraysh*

Before we try to look into the meaning of this sentence, let us shed some ideas about the meaning of Quraisy. We have mentioned that it is a tribe belonging to Rasulullah SAW's clan, and ulamas discuss about three different meanings, where we will only discuss two of them. First, Taqarrusy (People who get together to form a group). Second, originating from Qarasy, the word Quraisy is like the word Husein and Qarasy to Hasan. Qarasy means a strong group. This does not mean the word Quraisy means the less stronger group, but rather a small group with a strong force, just like the force of Qarasy.

The people of Mecca, the Quraisyi are accustomed to being protected (by Allah SWT). In Surah al-Fiil, it is told that Allah SWT protected the Meccans from being destroyed by the forces of Abrahah. In this surah, Allah SWT mentions how the Quraisyi had been protected economically and financially. Obviously, economic progress is important for any country, but we should not be swayed from the fact that our priority is in the hereafter. In fact, there are many great ulama' such as Imam al-Maududi that stress out the importance of staying to the "true Islam" and be cautious of the material world especially through secularism, Wallahua'lam. It should be noted that the Quraisyi had been protected not because of their tribe, but because of their huge responsibility. As custodians of the Baitullah, not only do they have to show that they take care of the people who come and go to perform the tawaf, but they themselves have to take care of the welfare of the people who lived there and more importantly to fulfill the religious duties given by Allah SWT in the Baitullah.



*(Image shows Abul A'la Maududi's Tafhim al-Quran) Syed Abul A'la Maududi Chishti (25 September 1903 – 22 September 1979) was a Muslim philosopher, jurist, journalist and imam.*

*His numerous works, which "covered a range of disciplines such as Qur'anic exegesis, hadith, law, philosophy and history", were written in Urdu, but then translated into English, Arabic, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Burmese and many other languages. He sought to revive Islam, and to propagate what he understood to be "true Islam". He believed that Islam was essential for politics, and that it was necessary to institute sharia and preserve Islamic culture from what he viewed as the evils of secularism, nationalism and socialism, which he understood to be the influence of Western imperialism. - Wikipedia*

This surah is so important because it is a great reminder and warning to the Musyrikun of Quraisy. Let us move to the second verse, so that we can understand how Allah SWT had blessed them economically and financially:-

إِيْلَافِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ

[2] *Their accustomed security [in] the caravan of winter and summer*

It had been many centuries that Mecca, with the presence of Baitullah, became the centre of entrepot. There was a point where Yemen, before the great flood in 400 CE appeared as the greatest city. However, Mecca replaced the role. The fact that Mecca is the center of the Arabian Peninsula made it a strategic place for business. Yemen in the southern area of Bilatussyams was known as a hot city, whereas Bosra (in the area of Bilatussyams) in the North was known as a colder city.

Caravans, including the Quraisyi would take this opportunity to head South during winter and move Northwards during summer. This means that there is no month where they would miss the opportunity to conduct trades. Therefore, it is important for the Quraisyi to be thankful to Allah SWT, and also protect the Baitullah. The fact that they are the custodians of the Baitullah made rulers from other cities give their protection unlike others and this shows that the Quraisy has been long protected by Allah SWT. They should not take this for granted. The following sentence clearly shows how Allah SWT expected them to pray and worship Allah SWT, hence to be responsible with the Baitullah:-

فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ

[3] *Let them worship the Lord of this House,*

However, with all that is given to them, they still fail to fulfill their obligations and Rasulullah SAW came to warn them and they in turn turned to rage and launched a series of persecutions. They no longer worship The Owner of The House (Allah SWT), but rather associated him with idols. They no longer see themselves as slaves to The Master (Allah SWT), but turned arrogant and used the status of Quraisy to boost their pride, hence becoming worshippers of their own arrogance and pride.

By default, the city of Mecca is unlike Medina, Khaybar or Yemen, in which the soil is fertile and ready for cultivation. There was a point where the early generations of Quraisy moved to other



areas before they returned such as Qusay Ibn Kilab, which InsyaAllah we will discuss later. However, the tribe of Quraisy continued to be blessed by Allah SWT from the threats of poverty and hunger, mainly due to its function as an entrepot, being in between Yemen and Bosra. The city had been protected by Allah SWT from military attacks and violence. The other cities during Jahiliyyah gave high respect to the Baitullah and took it seriously, applying the rule that none shall be killed near the Baitullah. The following is the verse showing how Allah SWT has protected the city from poverty (hunger) and instability:-

الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ

*[4] Who has fed them, [saving them] from hunger and made them safe, [saving them] from fear.*

The word “[saving them] from fear”, according to many ulama is a clear example of when the Quraisy was in great fear when the troops of Abrahah attempted to demolish the city. It was through Allah SWT that the army was destroyed by the Ababil. The relation of this surah with Surah al-Ma’un is obvious. Although some ulama mention that Surah al-Ma’un is in a different context, we can understand how the Quraisy failed to fulfill their obligations despite all the blessings as mentioned in this surah. The fact that Allah SWT removed fear and gave safety, this surah relates to Surah al-Fiil, telling us as to how the city was saved from the elephant army. Therefore, some Sahabahs combined both Surah al-Fiil and Surah al-Ma’un whenever they would recite any of the surahs.

Let us now turn to discussing a little about the background of the Quraisy tribe. We should mention beforehand that there are different narrations about the history of the Quraisy, but we will take the moderate or conservative approach. To begin with, let us talk about the only two surviving Arab communities. They are the Adnani and Qahtani. The ones in the South belong to the Qahtani, while the rest belongs to Adnani. Rasulullah SAW is generally 40 generations below the generation of Adnan, and the span of time of Rasulullah SAW to Prophet Ibrahim AS is around 2500 years, Wallahua’lam.

There was once a great politician by the name of Qusay, who migrated to the city of Mecca and with his influence, married the daughter of the chieftain and later became the chieftain of Mecca himself. He managed to gather the entire inhabitants, mostly the children of Prophet Ismail AS under one umbrella and because of his success, he was known as the first Quraisy. Qusay, or also known as Fahr ibn Kilab then began to strategise on developing the city. In those period, Yemen was the center of civilization to a certain extent. However, his great grandson, Hasyim, who was known for his business entrepreneurship began attracting more traders from the North and South to exchange goods in Mecca while using Mecca as a place for ibadah.

Slowly, the route between Yemen and Bosra began to develop and the phrase “Rih latasyiyita iwassaif”, the caravan of winter and summer should be credited to the route developed by Hasyim. One of Hasyim’s wives (Salma) was a great and outstanding business lady in Medina. From this

marriage, Shaybah was born. Hasyim died during his business trip to Palestine. There is a mosque called Hasyim Mosque in Palestine, and his tomb is beside the mosque until today.



*The trading route from Yemen to Bosra (Rih latasyiyita iwassaif) should be credited to Rasulullah SAW's great grandfather, Hasyim. Allah SWT has blessed the Quraisy for hundreds of years. But they, like ourselves have to be reminded, because humans easily take Allah SWT's blessings for granted.*

Hasyim's brother, Mutalib was informed that he had a nephew (Shaybah) in Medina, so he planned to take Shaybah from the people of Medina. He successfully took Shaybah, and in Mutalib's attempt to keep it a secret, he took Shaybah as his slave, hence calling him Abdul Mutalib. The role of Abdul Mutalib is so important, especially when Abrahah came. He tried to negotiate, but with just a minimum of 1000 and a small number of Meccan population, Abrahah took a win-lose approach and deployed their army. The Meccans ran to the mountains.

Aminah Ibn Wahab, during her pregnancy of Rasulullah SAW, was so scared, but as we know in Surah al-Fiil, Allah SWT sent the Ababil. Abdul Mutalib was the one to rediscover the water (zam-zam) that had been missing for centuries when there was no proper maintenance. Abdul Mutalib had not many sons and he had promised to sacrifice one of them if Allah SWT granted him with children. After a careful selection, Abdullah (Rasulullah SAW's) father was chosen as sacrifice, but with the help of shamans in those days, they managed to skip the promise. Abdullah was married to Aminah. However, on the way back from Syams to Mecca in one of his business journey, Abdullah fell sick and died in Medina, Wallahua'lam.

From Fahr (Qusay) to Abdul Mutalib and later to Abu Talib, the Quraisy was expected to resume the role of custodians of the Baitullah. However, as we will discussed in Surah al-Ma'un and other surahs, they failed to do so and therefore Rasulullah SAW came at the age of 40 to warn and remind them to worship Allah SWT and continue the legacy of Ibrahim AS.

Before we end our discussion, let us look at another ibrah mentioned by some ulama', which explains on two types of Allah SWT's rahmah. We are always unaware of the fact that we are for many days not being pressured. But, we would always be upset with one single problem. We would complain when it rains for what might be for an hour, but we forget about the 23 hours of enjoyment that Allah SWT gives us. While this applies in the case of Surah al-Fiil, where we enjoy the peace from the political stability in our country, we fail to appreciate it. Surah Quraisy that we are discussing in this part refers to Allah SWT's direct rahmah and focus. If we still fail to appreciate it, we are no different than the stubborn Quraisy (the rahmah that we still economically and financially have). Last of all, every dawn we see the sunrise and every dusk we see the sunset. We should realise that these phenomenons are very crucial in our lives. If we were to somehow miss the occurrence of dawn, then we might possibly see disastrous effects. But, how many of us realise that Allah SWT has kept this going every single day? This is the concept of Ilaf that we have discussed in our tazkirah session.

Insyallah we have benefitted from our discussion of this surah. May Allah SWT give us rahmah to be the true mukminin and mukminat so that we can be thankful with the economics and financial stability and growth that He has endowed to us in this country, Aamiin.

**d) Surah al-Ma'un - Lying to The Religion**

We are entering surah Al-Maun for our tazkirah session, the surah that guides us on how to avoid from being a hypocrite (munafik) and remain focused on our responsibilities to Allah SWT, especially to worship, and our responsibility to humans, such as to serve the orphans and the poor. There are not many discussions on the asbab an-nuzul, although some ulamas relate this surah to surah Al-Fiil and surah Quraisy. This surah was agreed by many scholars as a Makkiah, although some say that the second part of it, from verse 4-7, is from Madinah, due to the nature of the discussion on the munafikun, Wallahua'lam.

It should be noted that there was no known munafikun which existed during the Meccan period. After all, there was no benefit whatsoever to be a hypocrite in that period of time. Those who convert to Islam was not only boycotted, but also tortured and executed. Why would anyone pretend to be a Muslim? The great scholars, such as Ibn Abbas and many others mentioned it as a Makkiah chapter. We will discuss a little bit about Abu Jahal because of his unforgiving and nasty character which Rasulullah SAW had to deal with during the Meccan period, taking consideration of the Meccan nature of this chapter.

This surah is called Al-Maun (Almsgiving / The Daily Necessaries) or as some sahabas called it, Ad-Din (Recompense or Faith). Wallahua'lam. Let us try to understand the meaning of the surah before we discuss further on other issues.

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْإِيمَانِ

[1] *Have you seen the one who denies the Recompense?*

Obviously, the Quranic language has no equivalent with other languages. Therefore, any attempt to translate it would only bring half of success, if not less. There are two words which should merit our attention. The word “Yukazzibu bi ad-din”, which basically means those who lie about their practice of religion, or those who lie about what had been recompensed to them. The word ad-Din originated from the word “Dain”, loan or owe. This verse basically tells about those who lie about their religious contract with Allah. The first contract which we want to discuss here has to do with Hablu min an-Nas. There are people that say they are in the right path but fail to fulfill their obligations in the society. In this case, they failed in their responsibility to serve the orphans and the poor. The following two verses explains the case:

فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدُعُّ الْيَتِيمَ

[2] *For that is the one who drives away the orphan*

وَلَا يَحْضُرْ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ

[3] *And does not encourage the feeding of the poor.*

This tells us that even though we are good in our ibadah, good at fasting or praying, but fail to fulfill the responsibility, we are considered a liar because our religion requires us to perform and follow the Hablu min an-Nas principle. The following part of the surah deals with our relationship with Allah, Hablum mina Allah, in which Solah is the main pillar. Basically, there are two characteristics of those who lie to Allah and himself. Although they might physically show that they are performing Solah. In fact, Allah curses people who lie to Him and himself. The next verse strongly indicates how bad the curse is:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ

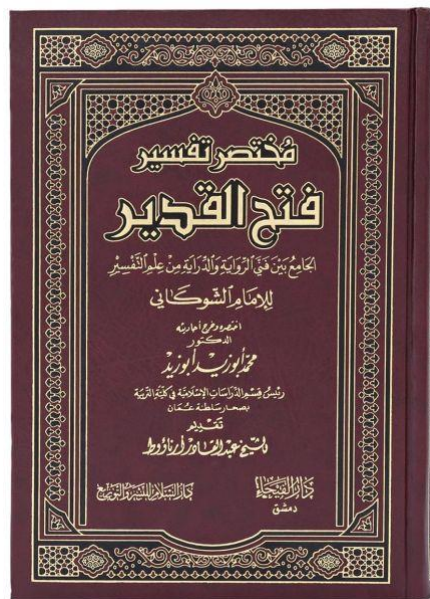
[4] *So woe to those who pray*

The word “Wayl” can be translated as woe, misery or disaster in this verse. The following verse mentions about the characteristic of those whose prayer is completely meaningless.

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ

[5] *[But] who are heedless of their prayer -*

The word “saahun” or heedless should be explained further. After all, we definitely want to know how Solah can be meaningless. As-Shawkani as explained by Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan provided 4 meanings of the word “saahun” generally. First of all, those who take the responsibility of performing Solah very lightly. They don’t feel anything bad if they do not perform it. We might sometimes organise event and fail to take the importance of Solah into consideration, when we perform Solah, our prayer would fall under the category “saahun” (meaningless).



*Born into a Zaydi Shi'a Muslim family, ash-Shawkani later on adopted the ideology within Sunni Islam and called for a return to the textual sources of the Quran and hadith. As a result, he opposed much of the Zaydi doctrine. He also opposed Sufism. He is considered as a mujtahid, or*

*authority to whom others in the Muslim community have to refer in details of religious law. -  
Wikipedia*

The second meaning, according to as-Shawkani, refers to those who do not take the three prerequisites of accepted Solah seriously. This might include wudu', taharah, and the 13 pillars of Solah themselves. They perform Solah so fast, like a bird pecking pebbles as narrated by Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqas. It is said that the Prophet once condemned those who pray in such manner. The third would be those who perform the prayer hastily and unmindfully. Finally, those whom their body performs the prayer but their mind travels elsewhere. Such heedless Solah is disastrous to those who practice it.

The next verse is even more interesting, in which Allah SWT said not only is their Solah disastrous, but when those people perform Solah, they show off what they are doing. This makes their Solah carry no value and yet again should be cursed. The verse is as follows:

الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ

[6] Those who make show [of their deeds]

This happens many times to us, especially when we are watched by others or we think we are being watched by others. Not only do we try to make the recitation harmonious, but we also pretend that we are so deep in prayers to the point that we cry. Therefore, some ulamas say that if the Solah is not Fardhu, it is advisable to do it at home. However, we shouldn't feel ashamed if we have to do it in front of others. The following verse of this surah concludes by mentioning how filthy the characters of those who lie against their religion:

وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ

[7] And withhold [simple] assistance.

Assistance in this verse, according to some ulamas, refer to almsgiving. This verse refers to those who not only are hesitant to help the orphans and the poor, but also utter words like "why me?" or "why should I?", or if they don't want others to help, they say "why should you?".

Our discussion so far touches on the general meaning of surah Al-Maun and on how we can get benefit from understanding it. We have not discussed on the context or asbab an-nuzul of the surah. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, when presenting the meaning of this surah, relates it to surah Al-Fil and Quraisy, the ones we mentioned a little bit earlier. The fact that this surah is Makkiah means that it has to do with the liars during the Meccan time. Who were they?

It was those like Abu Jahal, Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, Al-As ibn Wa'il, Umayyah ibn Khalaf and others. These group of people deny the true teachings of Allah and in surah Al-Kafirun, they were known as the rejecter of truth and were ungrateful to Allah. They were the worshipper of their arrogance,

inwardly, and the idols, outwardly. How can we relate these people with the concept of Solah or Din, simply because we are very clear with the meaning of Solah and Din, which is the five daily Solah and Din al-Islam?

According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, the word Solah and Din had been existent, thousands of years before the coming of Islam and the Prophet. Nabi Ibrahim used to talk about Solahs to his son Ismail. The last sentence of surah Al-Kafirun mentions the word “Lakum dinukum”, which literally means the Din of Islam and the Din of other faiths. Wallahua’lam. To contextualise it to the Meccan era, it is more suitable and we should try to understand that the whole verse is about the Musyrikun, those who lie and deny the Deen of Ibrahim and Ismail AS. Wallahua’lam.

To understand it, it becomes clear now that during the Meccan time, those Musyrikun, although holding key positions and seen to be respected figures, failed their basic roles (Hablun minan-Nas) in helping the orphans and the poor. We learned that they performed tawaf and worship (arguably we can call it Solah as well), but the fact that the Musyrikun of the Quraisy are known to be the custodian of Baitullah means that they should be the ones to carry the legacy of Ibrahim AS. We have discussed how they failed (Hablun minan-Nas) and they miserably failed their Solah (Hablun minan-Allah), in which the verse clearly speaks on how “Saahun” (disastrous) their worship was. Not only when they worship they do it to show off, they are also the ones whom the verse concludes as those who discourage people to do almsgiving to help the society.

InshaAllah, like our other tazkirah sessions, we’ll discuss the stories of key individuals during the early period of Islam, and we want to highlight the role of Abu Jahal as he was responsible as one of the people who denied and lied about the religion of Allah. It should also be noted that he was one of the custodians of the Baitullah like many other Musyrikun elites. His real name is Amar ibn Hisham al-Makhzumi. When the da’wah of Islam became public, he was so upset and angry. Initially, he was not so angry because of the teachings but because he thought Bani Hashim would take and use the teachings of Muhammad to remain superior over the Bani Makhzum.

Amar ibn Hisham had been appointed as a key member in Dar an-Nadwah at the early age of 25 years old due to his brilliance, whereby the usual age of appointment was 50. Because of his advantage in intelligence, the idolaters call him Abu Hakam (the father of geniusness). Perhaps his age itself made him to be called as Abu Jahal by his own uncle, Walid ibn Mughirah, and later followed by others. While his uncle remained calm and collected when he heard about the prophecy of Muhammad and the teaching of Islam, Abu Hakam got enraged and emotional, unlike the older groups. Hence, it is not a strange thing that he got the name Abu Jahal.



*Solah is one of the pillars of Islam. We should really concentrate wholeheartedly when worshipping Allah SWT in our solah. Let us make du'a to Allah SWT so that our solah is not Saahun and showing off. We shouldn't forget our responsibility to society as well, especially the orphans and the poor, Wallahua 'lam.*

Abu Jahal is known to have tortured not only Yasir's family (Sumaiyyah and also their children), but also the Prophet himself. There was a time when he threw wastes on the Prophet's body when Rasulullah was doing sajadah, and there was also a point when he was about to stab the Prophet but saw an object looming tall in front of him as mentioned in Surah al-Alaq.

It is not a strange occurrence if people like him care less for the orphans and the poor, and it is also not a strange thing if this man worships the Kaaba and has all the Saahun characters mentioned earlier (very lightly, care less about the 3 prerequisites, perform ibadah hastily, and unmindful). It is also not strange if he worships just to show off to others. He had to worship because he is one of the elites of the custodians of Baitullah. He was not only the liar and the denier of the religion of Allah, but also a hypocrite. He was known as the Firaun of Mecca. He plotted to kill the Prophet SAW, and during the night of assassination, he led the youngsters to kill Rasulullah and as we know, he failed and Sayyidina Ali replaced Rasulullah in his bed.

He died during the Badr campaign. He marched and led the 1000 Musyrikun army to crush the 300 Muslims. Due to Qadrullah, he was first attacked by youngsters and was severely wounded before Ibn Mas'ud (the convert who was tortured by the Musyrikun) later stepped on his lying body and killed him. In surah Al-Kauthar, it is mentioned that the legacy of the Musyrikun elites were cut off although initially his son, Ikrimah, was on his side. Ikrimah, after the conquest of Mecca, converted and joined the Prophet's side, becoming a devout Muslim. We may have heard of the Sahaba which died during Yarmouk. He had allowed the injured Sahabas to drink first even though he himself was thirsty. He died in the battle and he is Ikrimah ibn Amar ibn Hisham al-Makhzumi. With that, we end this Surah.



e) **Surah al-Kauthar: The Legacy of Islam**

We thank Allah SWT for giving us the strength and allowing us to continue our tazkirah session of the Juz Amma. InsyaAllah, we will be dealing with Surah al-Kauthar, the 108th surah. This is indeed a beautiful surah, albeit very short (three short verses), simply because it tells us a lot about Rasulullah SAW, especially concerning the abundant goods granted to him by Allah SWT. At the same time, it also tells us of how bad the Musyrikuns' attitude were towards Rasulullah SAW, especially when the relations between both parties were very intense. We should also mention here that Rasulullah SAW's mission among others is to complete the task of Nabi Ibrahim AS, that is, not only to spread the message of truth, but to make sure that the city of Mecca and Kaaba is used as the focal point of worship throughout the world. InsyaAllah, we will discuss about the legacy of Nabi Ibrahim AS, and how it continued in this session of this surah, although focus is only given to Rasulullah SAW's legacy.

Majority of ulama claim this surah to be of Makkiah origin and the context of revelation or Asbabun Nuzul of this surah is very important. Without it, it is difficult, if not impossible for us to understand let alone appreciate even the basic meanings of the verses. As we know, Rasulullah SAW as many narrations tell us, had 7 children, Qasim, Zaynab, Abdullah, Ummi Kalthum, Fatimah, Ruqayyah and Ibrahim. We also know that all of the boys died at an early age, although it was said that Qasim died at the age of around 7 or 8 years old (an age where kids are just about to be able to climb on top of a donkey). Wallahua'lam.

It is clear that not only in Jahiliyyah tradition, but also in Islamic ruling that the family generation is based on the male offspring, and when Rasulullah SAW no longer had a male children, the Musyrikuns were so happy because they believe that not only the legacy of Rasulullah SAW, but the legacy of Islam is completely gone. It is said that even his uncle, Abu Lahab, was so happy and danced to the death of Rasulullah SAW's son (some say it was Qasim, others say Abdullah or Ibrahim). Syeikh Yasir Qadhi is of the idea that it was Abdullah, while majority of ulamas is of the idea that it was Ibrahim. Not only did they find joy in a child's death, they even began to talk among themselves and label Rasulullah SAW with the name "family-cut off". They said, Qadbattara Muhammad, Qadbattara Muhammad, meaning, "The family of Muhammad is cut/severed, or the legacy of Muhammad has ended". The word Battara here is important because this surah ended with the verse "Inna shaani-aka huwal abtar", which we will clarify later.

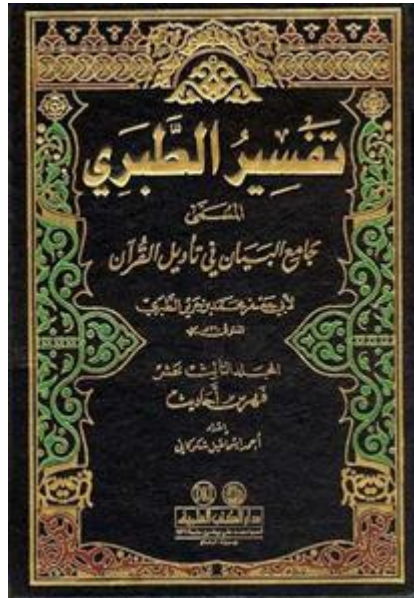
We should be able to right now imagine on one side, a family is in grief of the death of their child while another group of people is in great joy. It makes it even worse when a close relative, Abu Lahab himself was among those who celebrated. Others include Al-As Ibn Wa'il as well. In such grief and feeling of torment, this surah was revealed and the first verse is as follows:-

## إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ

[1] *Indeed, We have granted you, [O Muhammad], al-Kawthar.*

Allah SWT directly said to Rasulallah SAW which brings the effect that it is important for Rasulallah SAW in particular not to fret and look at the positive side whenever we are in a bad situation. In this case, Allah SWT told Rasulallah SAW that he is given the al-Kawthar. The word has not only been interpreted in many ways, but in some cases people do not want to interpret it.

Before we talk about al-Kawthar, which generally means “abundance of good”, let us discuss the phrase “aqta”, which ulama generally gave three different meanings. The first is “something that is given without anticipation”. The second is “something that its blessings are so bountiful”. The third is “something that is given that is more than expected”. That is to say, the Al-Kawthar given to Rasulallah SAW carries at least these three meanings. The word al-Kawthar itself has been interpreted in many ways. It is said in at-Tabari that there are 10 interpretations of the word al-Kawthar.



*Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (224–310 AH; 839–923 AD) was an influential Persian scholar, historian and exegete of the Qur'an from Amol, Tabaristan (modern Mazandaran Province of Iran), who composed all his works in Arabic. Today, he is best known for his expertise in Qur'anic exegesis, Islamic jurisprudence and world history - Wikipedia*

For our tazkirah, we will be taking one that is most commonly discussed and the one used by Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan. It is said that Ibn Abbas, alongside Said Ibn Jubair once had a dialogue or discussion over the fact that so many Sahabaha who understood the word al-Kawthar, understood it as the flowing water or blessed well in Jannah which belongs to Rasulallah SAW that can bring barakah for those who take a sip from it. Said Ibn Jubair asked Ibn Abbas as to what is his take

from such understanding. It is said that Ibn Abbas replied that it was the abundance of goods granted to Rasulullah SAW. If people have already understood it as such, let it be so, because this is also a part of the abundance of goods.

From this dialogue, some ulama began looking deeper, and concluded that besides the well, there are also other goods granted to Rasulullah SAW, such as the best character, Rahmatul Alamin, the best family which until today people in billions still give salawat and salam to, Wallahua'lam. Syeikh Yasir Qadhi in one of his Jumaat Khutbahs, mentioned the meaning of al-Kawthar in the context of blessed well and flowing water in Jannah as mentioned earlier. It is said that in such deep grief over his son's death, Rasulullah SAW closed his eyes and a hadith reveals that when Rasulullah SAW began opening his eyes, Sahabahs can see the happiness from Rasulullah SAW's face.

The next verse is as follows:-

فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحِرْ

[2] So pray to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone].

It appears that this verse caused some ulama' to think that this surah is not of Makkiah due to the phrase of sacrifice. Again, ulamas differ in terms of its meaning and we do not find it of any good benefit for laymen such as us to go into deeper meaning of the word. But, it is important that not only we perform the salah, but also sacrifices, especially during Eid al-Adha. Rasulullah SAW during Hajj Wida' asked Sayidina Ali RA to head to Yaman and buy 100 camels to be brought to Mecca during Eid al-Adha, and he himself slaughtered 63 camels to symbolise his age while the remaining was done by his son-in-law, Sayidina Ali Karamallahu Wajhah. It is known here that the Ibadah of Qurban is a legacy of Nabi Ibrahim AS and was continued by Rasulullah SAW. We know as to how difficult of a task it was given to Nabi Ibrahim when he was instructed to sacrifice his son.

While the first verse mentions the blessings rendered to Rasulullah SAW, the last verse mentions something in polar opposite, pointing to those Musyrikuns that said Qadbattara Muhammad mentioned earlier. The following is the verse:-

إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ

[3] Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off.

In this verse, it is mentioned that Rasulullah SAW's enemy, that is the Musyrikuns or Kafiruns "legacy" has been cut off. We know that all of the elites either died before the Battle of Badr (al-As Ibn Wa'il), during the Battle of Badr (Abu Jahal) or immediately after the Battle of Badr (Abu

Lahab). Their legacy was completely cut off. In fact, some of their sons are on the side of Rasulullah SAW, such as Amru Ibn al-As and Khalid Ibn Walid, among many others. The word enemy here has been interpreted by the ulama into three meanings. First, “‘Adu “, meaning the one that wants his enemy defeated. Second, “‘Baghi “, the one that hates the enemy and wants the enemy defeated. Third, “‘Syani””, meaning one that has a filthy heart such as happiness and joy on the death of others and of course hates the enemy and wants the enemy defeated.

Allah SWT in this surah says that this “‘enemy””s legacy is cut off. It should be clear right now that although Rasulullah SAW no longer has a male offspring, but through Sayidina Ali karamallahu wajhah and Sayidatina Fatimah, the family of Rasulullah SAW continues and even up until today as mentioned earlier, billions of people give salawat to him and his family. It is important to state that not only did his legacy continue, but also the legacy of Nabi Ibrahim AS, which is around 2500 years before Rasulullah SAW continued especially in the form of the ibadah of Qurban that we continue to perform until today.



*The historic event of Qurban during Eid al-Adha began with the tragic event of Prophet Ibrahim’s action of sacrificing his son Prophet Ismail, but was later swapped with a Kibas. The legacy of Prophet Ibrahim was continued by Rasulullah SAW until today, and the legacy of Musyrikun idolaters were cut off. Innasya Ni Akahuwal Abtar. “Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off”.*

Let us discuss about one example of a Musyrikun family, to which their legacy had been cut off. We have heard of the story of Hindun, the woman who tried to eat Sayidina Hamzah’s organ. She was the daughter of Utbah Ibn Rabiah. We would like to discuss here as to how the filthy character of such a lady who was a staunch follower of his father, now follows Islam and not only that her

contributions in Islam in her latter life was so commendable. Utbah Ibn Rabiah was a merchant, and he was known for his horrible character. During the times of early da'wah, when Rasulullah SAW was performing sajdah in the Kaabah, he would grab hold of a carcass of an animal and place it on top of Rasulullah SAW. More and more carcasses were piled until Fatimah came and tried to help his father. There was an occasion where he choked Rasulullah SAW and it was Abu Bakr that came to aid.

His family legacy, if any, was cut during the Meccan times when his son, Abu Hudzaifah converted to Islam. His servant, Salim, not only converted to Islam, but Abu Hudzaifah took him as his Tabanni (Bin to Abu Hudzaifah) and therefore Salim's status was raised as a family of Utbah and enjoyed the status of Quraisy. In fact, during the Battle of Badar it was Abu Hudzaifah that made the attempt to kill his father. It was in this Badr campaign that Utbah was killed during a Mubarazah (a stage duel to create anger and spirit of war). He had to duel with Hamzah, and with a few swings he died. Hindun Bint Utbah was so outraged of Hamzah that she swore to the gods of Latta and Uzza to take revenge on Hamzah. During the Battle of Uhud, with the help of Jubayr Ibn Mut'im's servant, Wahsyi and his spear, Hamzah was killed. She tried to eat the organ of Hamzah, but failed.

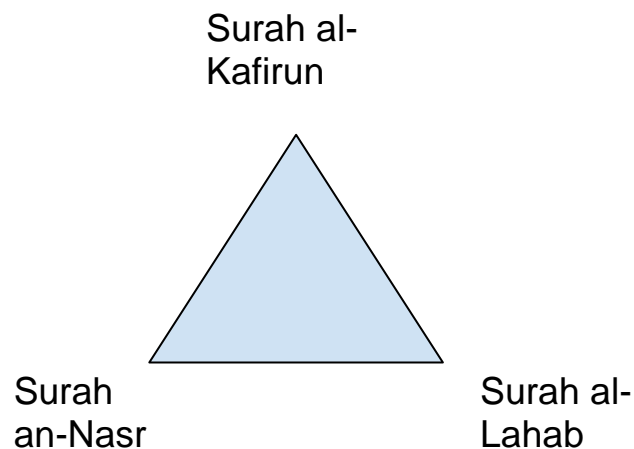
During the conquest of Mecca on 8 Hijrah, Hindun and her husband, Abu Sufyan received hidayah from Allah SWT, converted and swore allegiance to Rasulullah SAW. Qadhattara Rabiah, the legacy of Rabiah was cut off completely when the outspoken Hindun now uses her voice not to attack the Muslims but to create the spirit of Islam and Jihad. Together with Abu Sufyan, she participated in numerous Ghazwahs and it was in the Battle of Yarmouk that she had syahid. Hindun was known as a woman of Sawwamah and Qawwamah, good in fasting and tahajjud.

Surah al-Kauthar had ordained this event 20 years before. Wallahua'lam. It should be clear to us as well that not only the legacy of khutbah, but all of the Musyrikun idolaters, Khalid al-Walid departed from his father, al-Walid Ibn Mughirah, Ikrimah departed from his father, Abu Jahal and many others in order to contribute to the legacy of Islam. Surah al-Kauthar ends with one phrase in between, Syani (worst enemy). In Surah al-Kafirun, the discussion on the worst enemy is continued but this time with a different emphasis. Let us pray that we get benefit from these two surahs, Surah al-Kauthar and Surah al-Kafirun.

May Allah SWT grant us blessings and rahmah and allow us to enter Jannah without hisab. May Allah SWT also help us not only to perform the ibadah of salah but also the ibadah of Qurban, the ibadah mentioned in this surah. May Allah SWT give us strength when facing with grief and sadness, as Allah SWT once gave happiness as mentioned in this surah. Aamiin.

**f) Surah al-Kafirun: The Two Opposite Consequences**

May Allah SWT endow us with the strength so that we are not among those who are ungrateful, nor are we among those who reject the teachings of Allah SWT. In here, we will be discussing Surah 109, Surah al-Kafirun. Although at first glance it might look simple, upon closer inspection we might find a lot of subtle nuances in terms of its meanings and benefits. Surah al-Kafirun, an-Nasr and al-Lahab in many ways are interconnected, especially in terms of its philosophical meanings. We are already familiar with the phrase “*Lakum Dinukum Waliyadiin*” (You with your religion, and me with my religion). This is partly because not only have we heard it and recited it before, we too have mentioned it when discussing Surah an-Nasr and al-Lahab. We will start by presenting a triangle diagram to give an overall idea about this three surah.



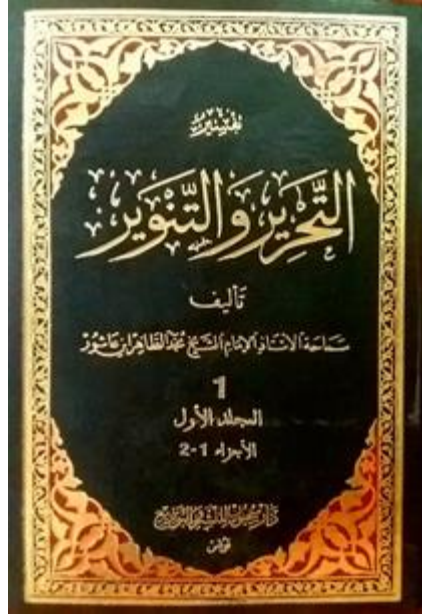
We take to understand Surah al-Kafirun as a discussion about two polar opposites. The true religion and the false, in which Surah an-Nasr tells us of Rasulullah SAW as the best person with the best attitude and best outcome, whereas Surah al-Lahab is a sample of a case of the worst person with the worst attitude and worst outcome. This surah consists of 6 verses and it is a late Makkiah, meaning that it was revealed immediately before Rasulullah SAW migrated to Medina.

There are three words (Kafirun, A’budu, Deen) that if we can understand their very meaning, InshaAllah we can fully appreciate not only its meanings but the teachings of the surah. The concept of al-Kafirun is different in aqidah as that fiqh usage. Ulamas states that al-Kafirun are those who are in Allah SWT’s knowledge and dies rejecting Islam. Simply put, we do not have such knowledge, so theologically speaking, we cannot label others as kafir. Surah al-Baqarah verses 6 and 7 provide the specific meaning of al-Kafirun, which carries the same concept as that of the ulamas explanation. In principle, Surah al-Kafirun is the one who died rejecting Islam. It is known that Ibn Umar once mentioned that Rasulullah SAW would always recite Surah al-Kafirun and al-Ikhlash in many of his salahs, especially during maghrib and fajr.

Before we specifically deal with the surah, let us understand the context (Asbabun Nuzul) of the revelation. It should be noted that efforts by Rasulullah SAW in spreading the message of truth had not only continued to be challenged, but many converts were persecuted. Rasulullah SAW himself had made the first migration to Ta'if, but the people of Ta'if aggressively rejected his messages. On the side of the Musyrikuns, they began to notice, more and more Meccans have migrated, especially to Habsyah. Some have already started to consider migrating to Madinah. The Musyrikuns tried to stop any form of migration, not because they love the new convert, but they simply did not want the teachings of Islam along with the Prophet's influence to be accepted and developed elsewhere. Furthermore, they could not develop the land of Mecca with a small number of people.

The idolaters thought that Rasulullah SAW was desperate, as much as they did, that was when they thought that it was the best time to make a compromise. In this sort of context, the elites of Quraisy such as al-As Ibn Wa'il, Umayyah Ibn Khalaf, Utbah Ibn Rabi'ah and others offered a compromise by proposing that they follow the religion of Rasulullah SAW this year with the condition that in the following next year, Rasulullah SAW and his people would follow their religion. It is very important to understand this proposal of compromise, simply because the organization of Surah al-Kafirun, especially on the repetitions is directly related to this offer. InsyaAllah we will discuss a little bit on al-As Ibn Wa'il (father of Amru Ibn al-As), and the time when Rasulullah SAW was reciting the surah in front of him.

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan when commenting about this offer, followed a discussion by some ulamas that say that these are basically two different things in one proposal, in which both of them should be rejected, simply because if we believe in Allah SWT, we cannot interchange it with other beliefs due to some benefit, Wallahua'lam. One of the important Kitabs concerning tafsir in the 20th century was the one by Ibn Ashur, in which Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan and many others utilize it substantially alongside others such as as-Shaarawi and al-Alusi. We should understand also that Rasulullah SAW was known for his soft, polite, and compassionate character, among others, at times he were to give speeches or in dialogues with the Musyrikuns in order to convince them of Islam.



*Muhammad al-Ṭāhir ibn ‘Āshūr (1879 – August 1973) was a graduate of University of Ez-Zitouna and a well known Islamic scholar. He studied classical Islamic scholarship with reform-minded scholars. He became a judge then Shaikh al-Islām in 1932. He was a writer and author on the subject of reforming Islamic education and jurisprudence. He is best remembered for his Qur’anic exegesis, al-Tahrir wa’l-tanwir (The Verification and Enlightenment). - Wikipedia*

In Surah al-Kahf verse 5 for instance, there is the sentence, “Falakallaka aba ihum”, mentioning that a grievance that can cause death, in which Rasulullah SAW at many times, was in deep grief simply because he wanted others to understand and benefit from the true religion. However, in this Surah, he was asked to say, “O disbelievers”, the word that is very uncharacteristic of him. Let us start looking at the verse and understand it one by one now.

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ  
[1] Say, "O disbelievers,

We have mentioned earlier that Rasulullah SAW had a very soft character. He won't utter the phrase “O disbelievers” but in this verse, it is very obvious that it is Allah (Kul) that asked him to utter the phrase. Obviously it is just in time that the word should be uttered, judging from the atrocity of the Musyrikuns' response towards the da'wah of Islam.

Ulamas explain the word al-Kafirun by dividing it into two aspects. The first, “rejection” and the second “ungratefulness”. The Musyrikuns had been stubbornly rejecting Islam, and whosoever rejects the message of truth, are classified as Kafirun. The other aspect of Kafirun refers to those who are not grateful with Allah SWT's blessings. They might not use the wealth that they have to help others, the status that they have to unite others, the knowledge they have to benefit the ummah, etc.



These two characteristics are the perfect combination to reflect the Musyrikuns after more than 10 years of da'wah. It should be noted here that there is a significant difference between the words Musyrikun and Kafirun. It is known that they did believe in Allah SWT's existence, but they were called Musyrikun because they associated Allah SWT with partners such as Manat, Latta and Uzza. The fact that they rejected the message of Allah SWT along with their ungratefulness obviously imply that they do not worship the same God, Allah SWT, that they claim to be. In the following verses, Rasulullah SAW under the command of Wahyu mentions the following:-

لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ

[2] *I do not worship what you worship.*

The verse clearly mentions that Muslims led by Rasulullah SAW in those days began to make clear references with the meaning of Allah SWT and Rasulullah SWT. More importantly, the concept of worship itself. The concept of worship is a lauded concept. It comprises of two aspects, "ritualistic" and "enslavement".

The verse "I do not worship what you worship", explains that the idolaters, despite claiming their belief in Allah SWT, do not worship Allah SWT at all. Their ritual practice explains all there is to this. There is no sign of enslavement to Allah SWT by them at all, simply because of their arrogance, desire for wealth and pride, controls them and had become their master. They are basically enslaved by all forms of wickedness. The verse "I do not worship what you worship", does not mean worship in terms of ibadah alone, but also in taking only Allah SWT as their master. It is said that Imam Ibn Taymiyyah, when talking about the concept of Ubudiyyah, explains five types of characteristics: obedience to Allah SWT, love, tawakkul, sincerity, and enslavement.

We should understand that we are continuously slaves. As a slave, we have no rights to claim anything for ourselves, but rather surrender it to our master. As a slave, we are required to perform "rituals". The Musyrikuns were called Kafiruns and they do not worship the same God, simply because they do not have all the characteristics to be those who believe in Allah SWT. The next verse is not only a confirmation about their characters as Kafir, but it also explains that not only in the past, present, but also in the future, the Musyrikuns will forever not worship the same way the Muslims do. Following is the verse:-

وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ

[3] *Nor are you worshippers of what I worship.*

We should remember that according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, only the group of people who reject and be ungrateful after a series of da'wah were given to him can be considered as Kafirun. We cannot label people as Kafirun, if we have not made any efforts of giving da'wah to him, let alone if they do not reject and are not ungrateful, Wallahua'lam. However, for the purpose of Fiqh

ruling, the term al-Kafirun is used to make rule and enforce two different groups, the Muslims and Non-Muslims (Kafirun). The next verse is as follows:-

وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُمْ

[4] *Nor will I be a worshipper of what you worship.*

The verse explains how Rasulullah SAW and we Muslims should respond to those who reject and are ungrateful to Allah SWT. We should be firm and know that there is no way that we will succumb to their teachings and become their worshipper. We mentioned earlier that the Musyrikuns made two conditions in their proposal. They agree to the practice of Rasulullah SWT with the condition that the Muslims in turn will practice what the idolaters practice. The next verse is a repetition of the third verse:-

وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَّا أَعْبُدُ

[5] *Nor will you be worshippers of what I worship.*

The fact that there is no way for us to interchange religions and that there are two proposals that make not only verses three and five important to be repeated, but verses two and four also a statement to reinforce about the two proposals. The surah ends with the following verse:-

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ

[6] *For you is your religion, and for me is my religion.*

The meaning of this verse is much deeper and requires closer reading. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan says that this is probably the verse that many people fail to understand. It is not as simple as the translation above.

The root word of Deen is Dayin, meaning “owe” or “loan”. So when we are to talk about Deen, the element Deen means that we owe our master and will suffer consequences when we fail to perform our given tasks. In Surah al-Fatihah, there is the verse “Maaliki Yaumiddiin”, which among others mean Day of Reckoning, in which people who are irresponsible will suffer the consequences. Therefore, the word “Lakum Diinukum Waliyadiin” carries a heavy meaning, implying that “you Kafiruns will be in your belief and suffer the consequences of your belief, and I will be with my belief”.

That is to say that there is no compromise when dealing with Aqidah. Not only do we have to be strong and steadfast in our aqidah, both in ritualistic and enslavement values as discussed earlier, we also should not consider at all to embrace other religions, simply because the consequences of those who are clearly Kafirs will definitely be serious and disastrous. At the same time, we cannot

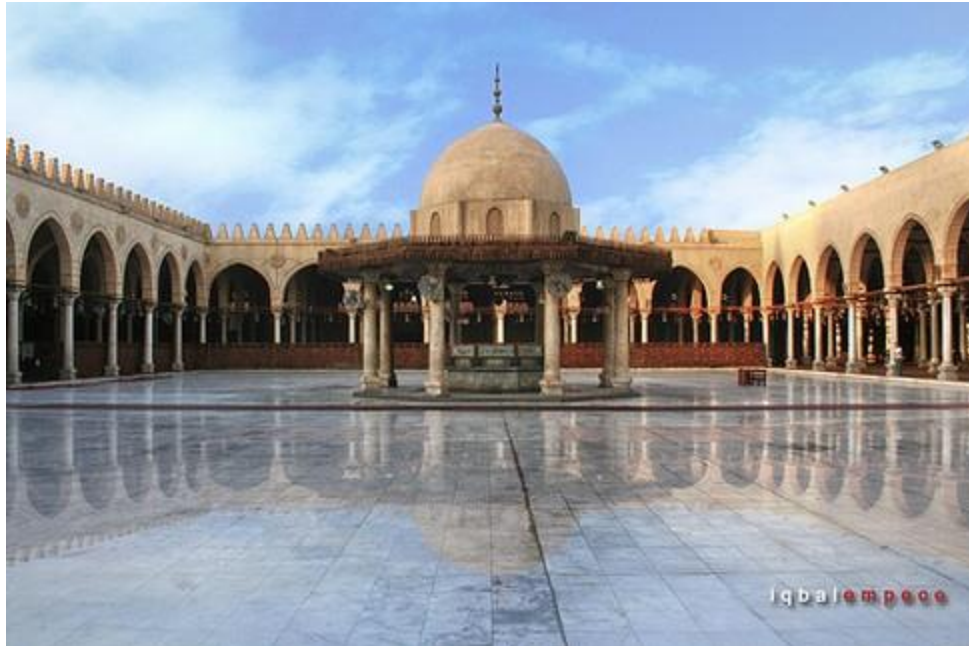
make takfir (labelling others as Kafir, because the word Kafir itself is so strong and heavy), until we are clear that they strongly reject Allah SWT and are being very ungrateful, and we have performed our responsibility of giving da'wah but still they oppose Islam, then perhaps the ulama can decide whether it is "takfir-able" or not. Rasulullah SAW himself for more than 10 years never labelled others as kafir, until and unless Allah SWT instructed him to do so. Wallahua'lam.

As mentioned earlier, we will discuss a little about al-As Ibn Wa'il, but before that let us share the knowledge of how Rasulullah SAW directly recited the verses to the Kafirun face-to-face in front of them. It is said, according to a narration, that when the Musyrikun elites were having a meeting together, Rasulullah SAW barged in and recited the verses to them. We have mentioned that this was the period when the relationship between Rasulullah SAW and the elite Musyrikuns were very intense. This was also the period where Allah SWT instructed Rasulullah SAW to recite the verses to them so that a firm, clear decision as to who was in the true path and who among them was clearly in the wrong path.

Al-As Ibn Wa'il's character has been mentioned in numerous verses besides al-Kafirun. His name was also referred in al-Kauthar, al-Imran, Surah Yaasin, etc. He was the chieftain of Bani Saham, a small sub-tribe of the Bani Quraisy. He would constantly challenge Rasulullah SAW's message, especially on resurrection. It is said that at some point he threw a rotten human bone in front of Rasulullah SAW, sarcastically asking, "Such rotten bone can also be resurrected?".

Al-As' families such as his son and grandson had unique stories. Al-As was known as both Musyrikun and Kafirun, but his son, Amru al-As converted to Islam in 7 Hijrah and contributed significantly during Rasulullah SAW and the four khalifah's time. Al-As also had a son called Hisyam, but not much is known about him. Al-As' grandson was among the luminaries of Muhajirin. His name was also al-As, but Rasulullah SAW changed it to Abdullah Ibn Amru Ibnu al-As Ibnu Wa'il, We are very familiar with the story of a Sahabah whose concentrations toward ibadah was so great that he was continuously praying, fasting and refusing to touch women. Rasulullah SAW said that, I also pray, but I also sleep, I fast but I also eat, and I am also married.

The Sahabah here was the grandson of Al-As Ibn Wa'il himself, Abdullah Ibn Amru. At the time when the persecutions were so intense, Rasulullah SAW made a Du'a against al-As. He died before The Battle of Badar took place. He accidentally stepped on a thorn, and the wound inflicted was so infectious that he died from the disease caused by it. We know that Amru al-As' contribution in opening Egypt was very important and he was appointed as the provincial governor during the reign of Sayidina Umar RA. During Muawiyah's leadership his role in Egypt was more known. A mosque known as Mosque of Amru al-As was erected to commemorate his contributions.



*Amru or Amar Ibn al-As was one of the luminaries of Islam who had multicharacter and one popular non-Sunni did not regard him as a Muslim, wallahua 'lam. The story of his family is very interesting. His father, Al-As Ibn Wa'il was known as an enemy of Islam (Kafirun) together with other elites based on Surah al-Kafirun. Amru's contribution in Islam is so significant, although some groups portray him as controversial. His son, Abdullah emerged as an extraordinary sahabah, which his ascetism (Zuhud), tahajjud and fasting was over the top. Among the lettered sahabah, he was among the earliest to have jot down and compiled Rasulullah SAW's hadith, Wallahua 'lam.*

Abdullah, the grandson of al-As was known as a great narrator of hadith. In Islam, there are two wars, Qadasiyah and Yarmouk. Qadasiyah led to the Persians' collapse, whereas Yarmouk was what led to the Romans' collapse. Abdullah, after the Battle of Yarmouk found numerous materials concerning those of the Ahlul Kitab (Jews and Christians). From this point onwards, there are many discussions in the Quran and hadith bringing the dimension of Israiliyyat sources (knowledge of the past belonging to the Ahlul Kitab).

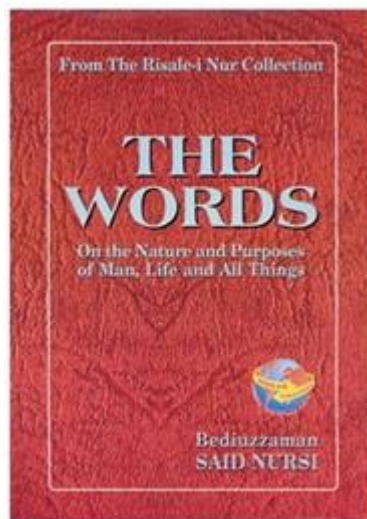
May Allah SWT grant us the strength so that we can be firm in our religion and practices. We also ask Allah SWT to keep us from saying bad things to others, let alone make takfir towards others.

**g) Surah an-Nasr: The Great Achiever**

As we continue with our daily chores, we should always remember as well that we have less days left for us. No one can guarantee that they would still be alive tomorrow. Therefore, let us ask for Allah SWT's forgiveness, not only for us but for our parents as well, Aamiin.

We are entering our next Surah, Surah an-Nasr (Which generally means "The Help"), the 110th Surah. In some narrations, it is also called Surah at-Tawdiq (Farewell, meaning the approaching death). We have mentioned that in Surah al-Kafirun, especially the last verse, "*Lakum diinukum waliyadiin*", is a statement about the two groups, the first a devout Muslim while the other a kaafir. Surah al-Lahab is a discussion or story about the worst case of people, whereas Surah an-Nasr is about the best case of people, that is Rasulullah SAW's achievements. It should be noted that the last 10 surahs of Juz Amma, from Surah al-Fiil to Surah an-Nasr is about specific stories concerning Rasulullah SAW, from his birth up until his death. Therefore, it is important for us to highlight the important sirah or at least the stories of Sahaabah.

Surah an-Nasr is related to the opening or the conquest of Mecca in 8 Hijrah. A new convert, Khalid Ibn al-Walid's role stood out. However, we also understand that the Habrul Ummah (Ibn Abbas)'s knowledge on Quranic interpretation is equally important, simply because it was his understanding of this surah that was constantly referred to by the subsequent ulama after him. Hence, without negating the importance of Khalid, we shall discuss a little about the role of Ibn Abbas in this tazkirah part. Again, although that the majority of ulama said that this surah is Madaniyyah, some argued, especially from the grammatical and linguistic point of view that this surah to them is a Makkiah, Wallahua'lam. We will mostly take it as a Madaniyyah for discussion purposes.



*Aziz Üstad Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (1877 – 23 March 1960), also spelled Said-i Nursî, officially Said Okur and commonly known with the honorific Bediüzzaman, meaning "wonder of the age"; or simply Üstad, "master") was a Kurdish Sunni Muslim theologian. He wrote the Risale-i Nur*

*Collection, a body of Qur'anic commentary exceeding six thousand pages. Believing that modern science and logic was the way of the future, he advocated teaching religious sciences in secular schools and modern sciences in religious schools. Nursi inspired a religious movement that has played a vital role in the revival of Islam in Turkey and now numbers several millions of followers worldwide. -Wikipedia*

In general, we can divide this surah into two parts, one concerning the story of the conquest of Mecca itself and its immediate subsequent effect about multitude delegations coming to Rasulullah SAW and giving their bai'ah. In the book of sirah, this period was later known as the year of delegations. The second part of the story tells us about the importance of ourselves, although the main focus is on Rasulullah SAW himself to praise Allah SWT and make taubah. Basically, it is about our worship to Allah SWT and also the way we purify our hearts. According to Ibn Abbas' narration, when the surah was revealed, Rasulullah SAW himself said that the surah was directed to him, Wallahua'lam.



*Fathu Makkah in 8 Hijrah was a momentous event which brought at least two changes. First, the Jahiliyah ritual practice was completely demolished and the Islamic Shari'a on Hajj was established subsequent years after. Second, multitudes of delegations arrive from all over the arabian lands to swear allegiance to Rasulullah SAW. When the Rasulullah SAW's mission was completed, he was called by Allah SWT to join him (passed away). Rasulullah SAW was asked to make tasbih, tahmid and istighfar as well as taubat. Who are we to pay lesser attention to Allah SWT's instructions? Wallahua'lam.*

Many ulama' or speakers such as Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan take this hadith as the basis for discussion and in our tazkirah discussion, we follow this line of thought, Insyallah. It is said that when this surah was revealed, some of the Sahabah such as Abu Bakr cried profusely. Sayidatina Aishah RA narrated that Rasulullah SAW increased his kalimah of praises and istighfar to Allah SWT after this surah was revealed. A similar sort of narration concerning Rasulullah SAW's

ibadah was also mentioned by Ummu Salamah (another Ummul Mukminin). This is perhaps because when this surah was revealed, the Sahabah had read and noticed signs that Rasulullah SAW was about to leave this world and join the Lord (pass away). Let us start to observe the first verse:-

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ

*[1] When the victory of Allah has come and the conquest,*

The word “*Fath*” in the verse refers to the opening or specifically the conquest of Mecca in 8 Hijrah. This event is so important in the history of Islam because the momentous event has forever changed the landscape of Mecca as the center of Islamic religion until today. That is to say, for about 1430 years, the kiblah of Muslims has been purified from all of the practice of Jahiliyah. It is said that in the culture of the Quraisy or Arabs, no one was able to conquer this city (Mecca) unless they carried the message of God.

In Surah al-Fiil, in a year famously known as the year of the elephants, Abrahah alongside his infantry of 12,000 or in some narrations nearly 60,000 with dozens of huge elephants failed to storm the small population of Meccan people. In the Surah, Allah SWT helped the people of Mecca, where the Kaaba was situated by sending armies from the heaven, the Abaabil. InshaAllah we will discuss this story while discussing Surah al-Fiil itself.

For close to 60 years, the Meccans and Arabs had been embroidered with the idea that no one can conquer this city unless he/she was a person of truth. When Rasulullah SAW successfully conquered the City of Mecca with a sound and easy victory, and almost no bloodshed except for a slight skirmish that took place in the southern part of Mecca when Khalid’s entourage were attacked by the group who tried to defend the Meccans. As mentioned in this verse, the word “The Victory of Allah” or the word “An-Nasr” itself, “The Big Help of Allah”, implies that no one can be successful or that there is no way that Rasulullah SAW would have achieved victory in his conquest unless through the aid of Allah SWT.

When it is clear from the Arabic culture that Rasulullah SAW was the person of truth, unlike Abrahah around 60 years ago, people began to meet him in batches to give their baiah. Although there was an attempt from the people of Taif to claim their superiority over the Kaabah legacy, the issue ended and as a result The Battle of Hunayn took place immediately after the conquest of Mecca. Rasulullah SAW’s blessed attitude and behaviour in handling the events after the Battle of Hunayn by being just and compassionate while distributing the Ghanimah (spoils of war) made not only the Meccans but the people from surrounding areas show much respect to him and Islam in general.

Delegations from the South such as Yemen, from the North such as Najd, as well as the West such as Egypt and East such as regions under the Persian Empire began to give their baiah to Rasulullah

SAW. In a short span of time, the number of Muslims multiplied exponentially. For the record, Southeast Asians might be more familiar with the interpretation by Prof. Hamka in his book of Tafsir al-Azhar. However, in other regions such as Turkey, works on exegeses such as those of Said Nursi are more commonly used. The following verse tells us about the year of delegations:-

وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا

[2] *And you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes,*

During Umar al-Khattab's reign, he asked the Sahabah about the basic meaning of this Surah. Some say that it was about stories of conquest, while others mention the delegations resulting from it. But it was Ibn Abbas that said that this surah is about the Prophet approaching death. Sayidina Umar RA agreed with Ibn Abbas because he himself heard the same thing from Rasulullah SAW himself. After all, Rasulullah SAW was sent to Earth with a specific mission that is to spread the message of Islam. When the mission was completed, his presence was no longer required on Earth. Therefore, it was not a strange thing if Abu Bakr RA cried profusely, and Rasulullah SAW began to increase his praises and istighfar to Allah SWT as mentioned by his wives such as Sayidatina Aishah and Ummu Salamah after this surah was revealed.

Perhaps we should explain a little about Ibn Abbas before we proceed with the last verse. Born during the period of boycott (3 years before Hijrah), the tahnik was performed to him personally by Rasulullah SAW using Rasulullah SAW's own saliva, because there were no dates left, implying just how severe the situation of boycott was. He is the cousin of Rasulullah SAW, Abbas, his father was a brother to Abdullah (Rasulullah SAW's father). Abbas was a secret convert, helping with Rasulullah SAW in Mecca while Rasulullah SAW was in Medina. They planned to migrate to Medina at the time Rasulullah SAW with his huge entourage went to Mecca during 8 Hijrah during the time of conquest. Ibn Abbas was around 11-12 years old when his father asked him to learn how Rasulullah SAW performed ibadah during night time. Hence, he was given the privilege to sleep in Maimunah's room (his aunt), who was also Rasulullah SAW's wife. Maimunah was a sister to Ummu Fadhl, the wife of Abbas. What is important about Ibn Abbas is about his knowledge on many things especially on Quranic interpretation. Rasulullah SAW once made a popular du'a for him:-

*Allahumma faqqihhu fiddin wa a'llimhuttakwil*

*"May he be given knowledge of Islam and on how to interpret the Quran"*

He showed his diligence and perseverance in understanding all forms of knowledge on Islam at an early age and cared less about what his friends said. He became the main reference for interpretations of Quran and he himself was among the top seven of the great narrators of hadiths. During his early twenties he was already called by Umar to be together with the elites of the Sahabah to discuss and elaborate especially about meanings in the Quran. He contributed



significantly not only during Umar's reign, but also during Uthman's and Ali's. He was offered the post of Governor of Damsyik to replace Muawiyah but was only willing to remain the Governor of Basrah for a short period of time. To avoid controversies and fitnah, he remained a quiet life. During Abdullah Ibn Zubair's time, when he was unofficially appointed as the Khalifah in Hijjaz, Ibn Abbas refused to side with anyone. For our information, during this period, Marwan al-Hakam was the khalifah. Ibn Abbas later left Mecca and went to an area of Taif where he later died in 70 Hijrah at the age of 73.

We have so far discussed about the opening of Mecca and how batch after batch of delegates came to give their bai'ah to Rasulullah SAW. We have also mentioned how the Sahabah such as Ibn Abbas understood that it was the sign of Rasulullah SAW's impending leave for eternity. We have also mentioned how Rasulullah SAW began to increase his praises and istighfar to Allah SWT. The following part of the verse explicitly mentions on the importance of Rasulullah SAW and us to praise Allah SWT. The verse is as follows:-

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا

*[3] Then exalt [Him] with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever Accepting of repentance.*

There are four important concepts here, that is tasbih, tahmid, istighfar as well as taubah in these verses. It may create some form of controversy to some, because it might also imply that Rasulullah SAW had committed mistakes when Allah SWT commanded him to perform praises and istighfar. We have mentioned that Rasulullah SAW was said to have said that this surah was revealed specifically for him. According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan and Syeikh Yasir Qadhi as well as many other ulama, the fact that Rasulullah SAW is maksum means that he cannot be sinful, and he cannot make mistakes without being detected and forgiven. Afterall, before this verse was revealed, it was already known that Rasulullah SAW made at least 70-100 times of istighfar a day.

In Surah Abasa (Frowning), Rasulullah SAW was instructed by Allah SWT to give equal attention, when at one time Rasulullah SAW gave more attention to the elite Quraisy hoping that they can provide benefits to Islam even though Ibn Ummi Makthum was beside him. He was told to give equal attention to Ibn Ummi Makthum, even though he was blind, rather than focusing on the elites of Quraisy.

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan not only said that the word "frowning" is inaccurate, but he said that Allah SWT placed high standards to Rasulullah SAW. The fact that Ibn Ummi Maktum was blind, means that he cannot see Rasulullah SAW's face. Hence there is no reason for Ibn Ummi Makthum to be offended/slighted. The fact that he is not deaf means that he had heard that Rasulullah SAW was busy talking, implying that he should have understood the situation, but Allah SWT still reminded Rasulullah SAW simply because Rasulullah SAW was expected to keep his standards high. But because of the high standards placed on Rasulullah SAW, therefore the verses were

revealed to remind him still to give equal priority to Sahabahs such as Ibn Umri Makthum. After all, Rasulullah SAW is the best form of person, and is known for his best attitude and as studied in this surah, the mission of Islam ended with great success. Needless to say, Rasulullah SAW will end up with a beautiful life in the hereafter. This is basically the message of this surah.

Surah an-Nasr is very contrasting with Surah al-Lahab/al-Masad, in which the latter is about the worst person with the worst attitude and worst outcome. Perhaps we should also discuss here about the Asbabun Nuzul, the context on how the surah was revealed. We have already mentioned that there are ulamas who say that looking at the grammatical and linguistic presentation, it is a Makkiah surah. However, there are many explanations that clearly say that it is a surah from Madinah. In one narration, the surah was revealed immediately after Khalid had successfully overcome the enemies which came from the South, while another narration mentions that it was during the Hajjatul Wida'. Some benefits of the surah were also mentioned. For instance, Anas ibn Malik said that this surah carry one fourth of the benefit of reading the whole Quran, etc.

May Allah give us strength to not only recite, but also to practice what had been asked to Rasulullah. After all, what had been asked to him is for us as well. With that, we end this tazkirah session.

## h) Surah al-Lahab: The Worst Person

InshaAllah, we will be dealing with Surah 111 in Juz Amma of the Quran, Surah al-Lahab, also known as Surah al-Masad. Before we do so, let us look at the context of this surah, or in general the 10+ surah in Juz Amma, which is an obvious revelation related to Rasulullah SAW's sirah. Surah al-Lahab specifically, can only be appreciated if we were to understand Surah al-Kafirun and Surah an-Nasr. In the last verse of Surah al-Kafirun is the verse "*Lakum deenukum wa liya deen.*" It tells us about two different religions which stood as opposites to each other, acceptance and rejection. Surah an-Nasr explains to us the stages of the achievements of the accepted religion of Islam while Surah al-Lahab tells us specific cases about the failure of rejected religion by highlighting the case of one of the notorious enemies of Islam, Abu Lahab and his wife, Ummu Jamil.



*(Image shows Rashid Rida's Tafsir al-Manar) Muhammad Rashid Rida, Ottoman Syria, 23 September 1865 or 18 October 1865 –Egypt, 22 August 1935) was an early Islamic reformer, whose ideas would later influence 20th-century Islamist thinkers in developing a political philosophy of an "Islamic state". Rida is said to have been one of the most influential and controversial scholars of his generation and was deeply influenced by the early Salafi Movement and the movement for Islamic Modernism founded in Cairo by Muhammad Abduh. -Wikipedia*

Of course, there were many Musyrikuns to which we can rank them into five scales. Abu Lahab stands at the extreme worst enemy in Islam. Mut'im Ibn Adi was known to be very respectful to Rasulullah, even though he was among the idolaters until the end of his life. He asked six of his sons to guard Rasulullah with their swords unsheathed when Rasulullah SAW was rejected by the people of Ta'if and found it difficult and dangerous to come back to Mecca. The next in rank would be Walid Ibn Mughirah, to which although he rejected the teachings of Islam, he had never said a word of vulgarity nor was he involved in any form of persecution. Abu Jahal would stand behind the two extremes, he was involved in persecution but not as bad as Utbah Ibn Rabiah who was known to be together with the other Musyrikuns and directly persecuted new converts, even Rasulullah SAW himself.

Abu Lahab was the extreme worst. Not only was he involved with personal attacks towards Rasulullah SAW, he was among the first Musyrikun who was also a close family (uncle of Rasulullah) to publicly condemn the teachings of Islam. Hence it is not a strange thing when Allah SWT directly revealed the surah targeted to him and his wife. Surah al-Kafirun, for instance, Allah SWT does not begin with “Ya Ayyuhal Kafirun”, but rather saying it indirectly with the word “Kul Ya Ayyuhal Kafirun”. This was not the case for Surah al-Lahab. This Surah comprises of five short verses and is obviously a Surah from Makkah. We will InsyaAllah spend some time understanding the context or Asbabun Nuzul of this surah, before dealing with its specific meanings.

Abu Lahab was a nickname to Abdul Uzza, the grandson of Hasyim, whose lineage was very well known and prestigious. He was married to the granddaughter of another powerful lineage of Umayyah. Not only did this couple had an elite status of lineage, both were known for their good looks. The word Lahab simply refers to the type of red flickering colour, which Abu Lahab had. He was called Abu Lahab not because he had a son with the name of Lahab, but due to his handsome looks, although some narrations mentioned other factors such as his hot and bad temper. Ummu Jamil or Arwa' Bint Hab was known for their exceeding beauty. Not only that, she was a great poet when the message of Islam began spreading, together with her husband. She also openly and personally attacked Rasulullah SAW.

To begin with, not only was Abu Lahab a close family, but he was also a close neighbour, sharing the same wall with Rasulullah SAW. Whenever they were to hear Rasulullah SAW reciting the Quran, they would throw things to their neighbour. When one of Rasulullah SAW's sons, either Qasim, Abdullah or Ibrahim died, Abu Lahab was so happy and together with another leader of Musyrikun, they said “Qad Battara Muhammad”, simply meaning “Muhammad no longer has legacy anymore”. We will deal with this issue when discussing Surah al-Kauthar, InsyaAllah.

Not only were they so close, there was a point where two daughters of Rasulullah SAW (Ummu Kalthum and Ruqayyah) were married to Abu Lahab's son. After knowing about the message of Islam, they divorced the two daughters. In fact, Utaybah, one of Abu Lahab's sons, spat in front of Rasulullah SAW, showing his anger and pride, just like his father. Rasulullah SAW made a du'a against him. Despite their rejection, they were scared with Rasulullah SAW's du'a, because it was obvious to them that this man (Rasulullah SAW) was a man of truth. Afterall, they themselves once called Rasulullah SAW as al-Amin. On a night, while Utaybah was camped in the deserts, a lion passed another animal and devoured Utaybah. It was so strange that no other animal made any noises when the lion passed them.

Abu Lahab was known to continue to curse Rasulullah with the word “Tabbat”. Cursing the religion and Rasulullah SAW personally. Hence, it is not strange if Surah al-Lahab also began with the word “Tabbat”, implying that the verse referred to Abu Lahab. We have heard how Rasulullah

SAW climbed Mount Saffah to declare the message of Islam, inviting the Musyrikuns. When Rasulullah SAW asked, “Do you believe that there is an enemy behind this mountain?”, all of them would believe, even Abu Lahab, because no one would doubt Rasulullah SAW because he had never said the slightest of lie. When Rasulullah SAW said “I want to tell you that there will be a resurrection, where all of us will be bodily resurrected”. For the record, during the times of Jahiliyyah, whenever there was a need to make an announcement, in order to attract people to come to them, the idolaters would strip themselves naked so that people would see from afar if they could not hear the emergency message. Of course, Rasulullah SAW broke the tradition.

There are two times where Rasulullah SAW called the Musyrikun elites by having a gathering. In the second gathering, the Musyrikuns agreed to listen to what Rasulullah SAW tried to say, by asking what will they profit from if they were to join this new religion. Rasulullah SAW is said to have replied, we will treat people equally and we will together be following Allah SWT, and InshaAllah we will be rewarded with Jannah. With brimming ego and pride, Abu Lahab stood up and said, “You want to treat us equally with the rest?”. It should be noted that the early converts included slaves such as Bilal, Suhaib as well as some elites such as Abu Bakr, Talhah and Uthman. When Abu Lahab continued to curse Rasulullah SAW, and in one narration tried to use a rock to hit Rasulullah SAW, the situation became intense and Surah al-Lahab was revealed.

Let us look at the meaning of this surah before we continue the story, especially about the character of Ummu Jamil. The first verse is:-

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ

*[1] May the hands of Abu Lahab be ruined, and ruined is he.*

There are many explanations concerning the hands of Abu Lahab in this verse. Some ulama' mention that he would express with his hands whenever Abu Lahab were to speak, while others mention because he once tried to use his hands to hit Rasulullah SAW, while there are some that refer to hands as his status of power. Abu Lahab himself when this verse was revealed, publicly criticised Rasulullah SAW by showing both of his hands and said sarcastically, “Look, nothing is happening to my hands”.



*We should not never try to say something bad about Rasulullah SAW and Islam. Abu Lahab said a Tabbat (curse) to Rasulullah SAW to Islam, Allah SWT mentions Tabbat twice in Surah al-Lahab/al-Masad. Abu Lahab ended his life miserably, and the blazes of hellfire is his place (Lahab is the flickering red of his skin and the blazing red of hellfire).*

The following verse mentions that all of his belongings and possessions will not in any way help him, referring to the words Aghna and Kasab. The verse is as follow:-

مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ

[2] *His wealth will not avail him or that which he gained.*

It should be noted here that Abu Lahab was elected as the treasurer or ministry of finance during his time. Not only did he serve the interest of the rich, he himself was rich, referring to the word Aghna. He had very good lineage and children, besides many other possessions, referring to the word Kasab. But Allah SWT said that he will soon be thrown into the fires of Hell. Interesting enough, the word Lahab also refers to the flickering red colours of Hellfire that will burn him. The verse is as follow:-

سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ

[3] *He will [enter to] burn in a Fire of [blazing] flame*

Not only Abu Lahab, but his wife, Ummu Jamil who also has a filthy character will be together with his husband. But who exactly was Ummu Jamil? Despite being known as a poet and among the educated ladies of Quraisy, her anger towards the Prophet was as surmountable as her husband's as well. She had a necklace, which she displayed publicly over her chest. Every time she was to curse the Rasulullah SAW, she would use the necklace to spend her animosity towards Rasulullah SAW by swearing under the names of Latta and Uzza. She was known as a slanderer

of Rasulullah SAW, among others. In relation to Ummu Jamil's actions towards Rasulullah SAW, the following verse was revealed:-

وَأَمْرَاتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ

[4] *And his wife [as well] - the carrier of firewood.*

The commonly used word, Zaujah was not used to refer to Ummu Jamil, but the exclusive term of wife, "Wa amratuhu" was used, implying that something had to be said about this lady. She was called "Hamma latal Hatab", although it is translated as the carrier of firewood, the meaning is much deeper than that. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan mentioned at least three different meanings of this phrase. During those ancient times, the carrier of firewood is a type of work given to "low class" women. The first meaning of this phrase is about the curse of how low of a mentality Ummu Jamil had. The second meaning of the verse is to mean the slanderer as mentioned earlier. The third meaning of the carrier of firewood is even deeper.

According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, the proper translation for the carrier of firewood is Hamillatal Hatab, but Allah SWT used the word Hamma Latal Hatab, implying the continuous work as the carrier of firewood. In this context, some ulama' refer to the case of Hellfire because this verse follows the earlier verses. Hence, she will continue to carry the firewood to burn his husband and herself. Wallahua'lam. The last verse of this surah explains the character of Ummu Jamil, carrying the necklace while cursing Rasulullah SAW.

فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّنْ مَّسَدٍ

[5] *Around her neck is a rope of [twisted] fiber.*

The word "Masad" in the verse refers to the necklace worn by Ummu Jamil and used by her to curse Rasulullah SAW. Her anger made her change Rasulullah SAW's name from Muhammad to Muzammam (Condemner) Everytime people were to talk to her about Rasulullah SAW, she would refer to him as Muzammam instead. As for Abu Lahab, he lived a miserable life haunted by his own curse towards Rasulullah SAW, especially when he began to witness and experience the increasing influence of Islam. When all the Musyrikun elites joined the Badr campaign against Rasulullah SAW, he himself was so scared to join and instead asked a person who had failed to pay his debts to him to replace him.

The news of the Musyrikuns defeat in the Battle of Badr made him have an even greater trauma. He fell sick, possibly due to a contagious disease. His entire body was bloated and his flickering red skin was afflicted with ugly rashes. He died in great shame when his family refused to get close to him, and with the help of their servant, they used a wood to push his body into a ditch and threw soil onto it to cover his body. Wallahua'lam. Perhaps as mentioned earlier, the word al-Lahab in these verses not only refer to him, but also the flickering flames that would engulf him in the Hellfire.

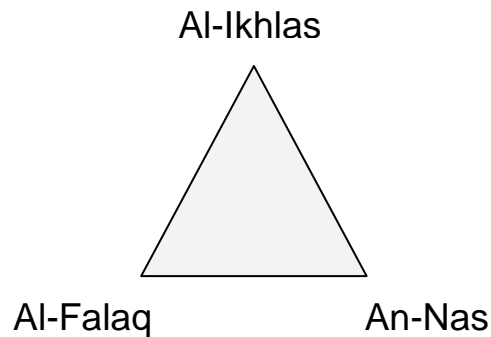
Before we end our discussion, let us look at some of Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan's comments on the stories of good and bad women in the Quran. We have discussed before how bad Abu Lahab was, where in a scale of 1 to 5, he would be the worst (5). We will now discuss 4 different women. The first Maryam, who had Nabi Zakaria AS as the guardian. Second was Asiah, who had a bad guardian, the Firaun. There was also the story of a bad woman with a good guardian, the wife of Prophet Nuh AS. In Ummu Jamil's case, not only was she a bad woman, she was guarded by a bad man as well. Let us now look at the overall idea of Surah al-Lahab/al-Masad, which highlights a sample of the worst person with bad beliefs and attitudes and with a bad ending, to which Allah SWT tells us to stay away from such characters.



**i) Surah al-Ikhlās: Who and What Is Allah?**

Praises be to Allah, The Lord of The Universe, The Most Gracious and Most Merciful. May the floodgates of Allah SWT's rahmah be continuously open for us, Amin. We continue with Surah 112, Surah al-Ikhlās. Let us hope that Allah SWT guides us with knowledge so that we can benefit from this tazkirah, Amiin and InsyaAllah.

In Surah an-Nas, it is the Syaitan that whispers to us internally in order to lead us astray. Therefore, it is important for us to recite the surah for protection. In Surah al-Falaq, we seek Allah's refuge externally from the potential evil of night, sorcery and jealousy. And InsyaAllah from this Surah al-Ikhlās, we can grasp an idea of Who and What is Allah, The One whom we seek refuge. Perhaps we can construct a triangle as follows:



The diagram represents the idea that we should ask for Allah SWT's help from external and internal evil as mentioned before. Obviously, there are many hadiths and stories which lead to this surah, and InsyaAllah we shall start by discussing a few hadiths, followed by the meaning of the surah itself and finish with the story of Bilal Ibn Rabah. The story of Bilal Ibn Rabah is important, mostly because when he was under severe persecution, he kept uttering the phrase, "Ahadun Ahad", the word "Ahad" is the one important word that is present in Surah al-Ikhlās.



*Not only boulders were out on top of his body under the scorching sun, but they even tied his neck and asked ruffians to drag him from one corner to the other. But, Bilal truly understood the meaning of Ahad. Allah SWT knows everything, and surely Allah SWT knows what has happened to me. The idolaters can continuously hit Bilal's battered body, but they cannot hit Bilal's strong tauhid in his body.*

There are at least three hadiths explicitly telling us as to how the Sahabahs show their love towards this Surah and to Allah SWT, and also the status of this surah in the Quran. Two hadiths, one by Anas Ibn Malik and the other by Sayidatina Aishah RA mentions how the Sahabah, when leading the congregation, would read Surah al-Ikhlās in every rakaat.

In the hadith by Anas, there was a story of an Imam in Masjid Quba who would recite Surah al-Ikhlās after every al-Fatihah. The story is very long, but it is among the popular stories. Although the other companions were unhappy with the imam, to cut things short, Rasulullah SAW praised the imam because reciting the surah is the way he showed his love to it. Next, in a hadith under Aishah, it was told that there was once an army in battle that would recite surah al-Ikhlās before their ruku' (hand to knee position) in every rakaat, Wallahua'lam. We will include here hadiths narrated under Abu Darda', saying that the benefits of reciting Surah al-Ikhlās is equivalent to  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the benefits of reciting the Quran. The Hadith is as follows:

*Abdullah ibn Umar reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Say: He is Allah the One (112:1) is equal to one third of the Quran. Say: O unbelievers (109:1) is equal to one fourth of the Quran." The Prophet would recite these two in his bowings before the dawn prayer.*

For our information, a third of the Quran is about Aqidah and Theology. The whole content of Surah al-Ikhlās is about our Theology of Allah SWT. Let us together recite Surah al-Ikhlās in order to get the benefit, before moving on towards the next session. Afterall, it is a short Surah.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ

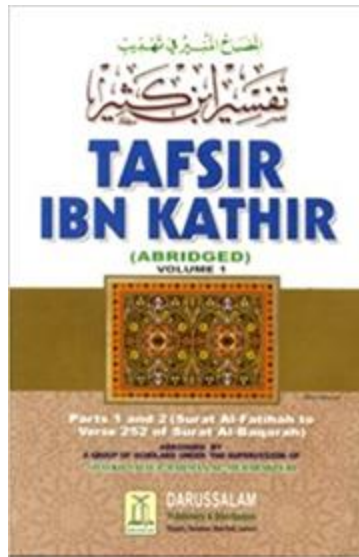
لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

May Allah SWT reward us, Amin. There are many names to this surah besides Surah al-Ikhlās. In fact, it is said that there are 20 names altogether, most of the names were given by the Sahabāhs. This includes, at-Tauhid, al-Marifah, an-Nur, an-Najd and so on. In fact, it is said that there is a hadith saying that al-Baqarah is the peak of Quran while al-Ikhlās is the Nur of the Quran, Wallahua'lam. As far as the Azbab an-Nuzul is concerned, there are a few narrations about it. Although the majority of ulama' decided that this surah is Makkiah, some say it was Madaniyyah.

It is said that the Musyrikun, or according to Syeikh Yasir Qadhi, including the Bedouin, came to Rasulallah SAW to know more about Allah SWT, The God as told by Muslims. For the record, the Musyrikuns or idolaters clearly believed on the existence of Allah SWT. In fact, when asked as to who created the heaven (7 skies) and the Earth, they would say Allah. However, not only do they believe on other gods such as Hubbal, Latta, Uzza, etc., they also believed that Allah might have a daughter (angel) or son, Na'uzubillahi min zalik. Not only do they want to know of the existence of Allah SWT as told by Rasulallah SAW, they also want to know what God is made of, His lineage and status. This is because their god have all the attributes. They were made out of gold, wood, etc., they have sons and daughters.

Some narrations mention that the question is similar to as follows, "Look, we face the same direction (the idolaters) and we also have the same name of Allah. What is your Allah then?". Other narrations mention that the Jews in Madinah, especially Ka'b Ibn Ashraf and Huyay al-Aktab also asked similar questions, but it is not clear whether they asked the question when they visited Mecca or during the Prophet's migration. Those who say that Surah al-Ikhlās is from Madinah may likely say that this happened in Madinah, Wallahua'lam. For our information, Mus'ab Ibn Jabbal was known as Rasulallah SAW's asset in discussing Islam to the Jewish community in Madinah.



*Ismail ibn Kathir; Abu al-Fida' 'Imad Ad-Din Isma'il bin 'Umar bin Kathir al-Qurashi Al-Busrawi (c. 1300 – 1373) was a highly influential historian, exegete and scholar during the Mamluk era in Syria. An expert on tafsir (Quranic exegesis) and faqih (jurisprudence), he wrote several books, including a fourteen-volume universal history. Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani said about him, “Ibn Kathir worked on the subject of the hadith in the texts and chains of narrators. He had a good memory, his books became popular during his lifetime, and people benefited from them after his death. - Wikipedia*

Now, we turn to the meaning and blessings of surah Al-Ikhlās.

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

[1] Say, "He is Allah, [who is] One,

We have mentioned the meaning of “kul” in our previous session, and we currently want to focus on the word “Ahad” which has no equivalents in English, although most translations use the word “One”. According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, the Quraisy was not familiar with the word Ahad, but the meaning is very deep. The ulamas said that it is a concept which has no comparison, no synonyms or antonyms. It is a word to show the Oneness of Allah and it is not a strange thing that it was like an earthquake to the idolaters when Bilal said the word Ahadun Ahad non-stop when he was persecuted by his master, Umayyah ibn Khalaf.

To further understand the word “Ahad”, let us look at the 3 following situations: First of all, when we mention that Allah is All-Knowing, we are speaking of the timeless knowledge. Different from humans with time-bounded knowledge, the word “Ahad” carries the timeless dimensions of Allah SWT. Secondly, it explains on everythingness. This is to say that Allah knows everything, anywhere, manifested or latent, in light or in darkness, in the sky or in the ocean, etc. Thirdly, the word Ahad also carries the meaning of ownership. He owns all of the knowledge. Therefore, He needs no other to teach him nor does He need to learn.

The next verse is:

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ

[2] *Allah, the Eternal Refuge.*

The concept of Allahu As-Samad carries at least two meanings, ‘He is The One whose creations depend on’ and ‘He is The One who the creations should look for’. The concept of As-Samad is very crucial, simply because it helps us from sliding down the slippery slope of associating partners with Him. If we rely none of our needs to Allah, and if we look for help from other than Him, then we will obviously associate Him with others, therefore Syirk. So, What, and Who is Allah? He is The Ahad and As-Samad. Another character of Allah is in the next verse.

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

[3] *He neither begets nor is born,*

This verse specifically refers to the question on lineage (which is completely inappropriate for The Creator, Allah SWT). We have explained that He is Ahad. Therefore, it is illogical for The Ahad to give birth or to be born. The last verse is as follows:

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

[4] *Nor is there to Him any equivalent."*

This verse is very explicit on the concept that Allah is Ahad, in terms of no one should and could associate partners with Him, clearly because He has no equivalent and it is superfluous to say that He is Ahad if there is someone higher than Him. Afterall, He can neither be compared nor can He be synonymised or antonymised. We hope that with such understanding, we can make sure that we are not relying on others with anything and everything, and to centre our hope and focus to Allah SWT alone for help.

As told previously, it is important to understand the word “Ahad”. One of the ways of understanding it is by looking at the way Bilal responded to his persecution. Bilal, a son of a Habsyi woman captured during the elephant army’s attack on Mecca in 570 CE was a slave of Umayyah Ibn Khalaf. He was tortured by Umayyah due to his conversion to Islam. While he was tortured under the scorching sun by placing a heavy boulder on top of him, he kept uttering the word “Ahadun Ahad”. According to Ibn Mas’ud he refused to concede throughout his life of torture. He considered his body as nothing compared to Allah SWT. Why did he say Ahadun Ahad instead of Allah? We have mentioned earlier that the word Allah is also used by the idolaters, so too did Umayyah. The word Ahadun Ahad is not only unusual to the Quraisy, but as discussed earlier, it carries a strong and absolute meaning.

Bilal was later freed by Sayyidina Abu Bakar RA and continued his life being a close companion to Rasulullah SAW, serving his needs. He was once the doorkeeper for Rasulullah SAW, meaning that whoever wanted to meet Rasulullah SAW, he/she generally had to talk to Bilal first. He was known for his deep, booming and melodious voice and was appointed as a muazzin for Rasulullah SAW. Not only was he the first to perform the call for prayer in Masjid Nabawi, but also in Masjidil Haram and Baitul Maqdis. He died in the area of Damsyik at the age of 70, Wallahua'lam.

With Bilal's story reaching its end, so does our tazkirah session for today. For the record, the first Quran translated to English was the one by Yusuf Ali, and the first exegesis of the Quran translated in English is the one by Ibn Kathir. It is said that this is the only one available in English to date. We hope that Allah SWT bless us with Surah al-Ikhlās and reward us with jannah without hisab, Aamiin.

## j) Surah al-Falaq: External Protection

Praises to Allah, Lord of The Universe, The Entirely Merciful and The Especially Merciful. We are moving to the next Surah or Chapter of Juz Amma, Surah Al-Falaq, Chapter 113. Surah Al-Falaq comprises of 5 verses, 1 classified as “al-Musta’iz Bihi” (Allah, The Protection we seek of) and the remaining 4 “al-Musta’iz Minhu” (Allah, The Protection we seek from). On this part of tazkirah (Surah al-Falaq), we will detail the story of the well-known sorcerers during the Medinan era, Labeed bin 'Aasim, the one who used magic against Rasulullah SAW. Surah Al-Falaq and An-Nas were revealed under this context. Before we deal with the stories of Labeed, let us also be clear that Surah An-Nas is a lesson for us to seek refuge from Allah SWT from the one who whispers to damage or ruin our aqidah. They can be both from the jinn or mankind. In this surah, Al-Falaq, however, we seek Allah’s refuge from the evil which might ruin ourselves externally.

Let us start with the story of Labeed bin 'Aasim. The Hudaibiyyah treaty was a turning point that signposts the success of Islam. All the Jewish communities (Nadhir, Qaynuqa, Khuraiza) who still survived were transported to Khaybar because of their list of filthy characters. Angry and jealous with the success of Rasulullah SAW, they used magic to ruin the Prophet, physically and mentally. Knowing that they couldn’t do it themselves, they tried to get help from the well-known sorcerer, Labeed. Although it is said that Labeed used to say he had accepted Islam, some narrations say that he was a Nasara or a Jew, but in many accounts, he was known for his hypocrisy. Labeed’s daughter was also known for her magic as well.

From the help that they got, especially from the Jewish boy that used to work and help Rasulullah SAW, they managed to get whatever they wanted, such as the Prophet’s comb, hair, etc. to start the plot. As narrated by Aisyah RA and compiled by Imam Bukhari, Rasulullah SAW shared his problems, the unhealthy feeling he had to her.

*Narrated 'Aisyah: One day he said, to me, "O 'Aisha! Allah has instructed me regarding a matter about which I had asked Him. There came to me two men, one of them sat near my feet and the other near my head. The one near my feet, asked the one near my head (pointing at me), 'What is wrong with this man?' The latter replied, 'He is under the effect of magic. The first one asked, 'Who has worked magic on him?' The other replied, 'Lubaid bin A'sam.'" The first one asked, 'What material (did use?)' The other replied, 'The skin of the pollen of a male date tree with a comb and the hair stuck to it, Kept under a stone in the well of Dharwan.'" Then the Prophet went to that well and said, "This is the same well which was shown to me in the dream. The tops of its date palm trees look like the heads of the devils, and its water looks like the Henna infusion."... 'Aisha added, "(The magician) Lubaid bin A'sam was a man from Bani Zuraiq, an ally of the Jews." Bukhari vol.8 book 73 no.89 p.57*

In his sleep, two men (angels) came to him in his dream and in the dream, the plot was exposed and Surah Al-Falaq and An-Nas were revealed. Rasulullah SAW was asked to recite the 11 verses of the 2 surahs (referring to the 11 tied knots done in the ritual performed by Labeed). The Prophet

went to Dhu Riwaan (the well where items used for the ritual were hidden). After getting rid of them, Rasulullah SAW felt completely relieved. Let us now discuss on the surah itself.

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ

[1] Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak

The word "Falaq" (Daybreak) or early morning (Fajr) had been interpreted in many ways. One of the basic meanings of Falaq may refer to the stage before new things happen, such as a seed cracking open and the plant grows, a point when a baby is born, and in this verse, *ulama* commonly refer it to early morning when the day is about to begin and generally, it is about us ourselves who should seek refuge from Allah, The Lord of All Beginnings. The following verse mentions what type of refuge should we seek from Allah:

مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ

[2] From the evil of that which He created

The word "Sharri" (evil) in this ayah sparked some controversies. Therefore, some ustadhs or ustadhahs refer to skip from discussing it. However, we might try here to understand it and may Allah guide us. The evil that Allah created in this verse should be properly understood in the context, this can be achieved by following the discussions by Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan and Syeikh Yasir Qadhi. Allah created the Sun so that we can get benefit, but from the heat of the sun, we can also get problems (Sharri), and the same can be said with rain or water, fire, and many other things.

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan referred to the parables by one of the Deobandi ulamas, Muhammad Qasim Nadwi. A gardener has to take care of his farm before he can harvest the crops. In the process, Allah SWT also created birds, insects, the scorching heat from the sun and also heavy rain which could damage the farm. It is Allah Who gave the farmer his crops and Allah is also The One Who created the Sharri. It is Allah Who gave knowledge to the farmer so that he can find a solution to get rid of the problem.

The next three following verses are quite straight forward, which tells us to seek protection from the potential evil of night, the evil of sorcerers and the evil eye or jealousy.

وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ

[3] And from the evil of darkness when it settles

وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ

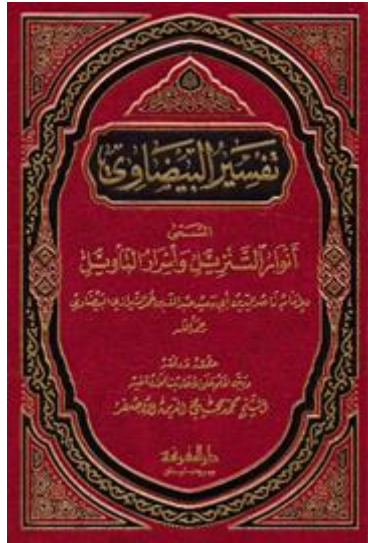
[4] And from the evil of the blowers in knots



وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ

[5] *And from the evil of an envier when he envies."*

No one can deny that more often than not, acts of evil usually happen at night, and so are the plots. What is perhaps related to Labeed bin 'Aasim and Rasulullah SAW is specifically on the issue of sorcery and jealousy (The evil eye). The word “naffas” refers to the act of blowing when they perform magic. We should seek Allah SWT’s protection from such evil magic.



*(Image shows al-Baydawi's exegesis, Anwar al-Tanzil) Nasir al-Din Abu al-Khair 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar al-Baydawi, also known as Baidawi, was a Muslim scholar, born in Fars, where his father was chief judge, in the time of the Atabek ruler Abu Bakr ibn Sa'd. He himself became judge in Shiraz, and died in Tabriz about 1286. Many commentaries have been written on Baidawi's work. He was also the author of several theological treatises. -Wikipedia*

After 6 Hijrah, especially after the treatise of Hudaibiyah, the degree of anger and jealousy among the enemies of Islam, especially the jews and munafikun was so high. Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Salul tried numerous ways to raise his influence but failed. It was the Jews who were chased away from Medina and later settled in Khaybar, who sought Labeed's help to cast a spell on Rasulullah SAW. We too should ask for Allah SWT's protection from the threats of sorcery and the evil eye (jealousy) for it is a deadly and potentially dangerous power. We may have heard popular exegeses of al-Quran, such as ones by Ibn Kathir and Shawkani. However, there are many others such as al-Baydawi, in which its importance of its interpretation should not skip our attention.

Before we end today's tazkirah session, let us look at how Surah al-Falaq is connected to Surah an-Nas and Surah al-Ikhlās. When we ask for Allah SWT's help from the evil of iblis, which potentially can damage our iman (the most precious asset), we are asked to obtain help through the power and blessings of Allah SWT by pointing to the three names of Allah SWT through al-Musta'iz bihi (Rabb, Malik and Ila). In this surah, the concept of al-Musta'iz bihi was used only

once (Rabbil Falaq) when we ask for Allah SWT's protection externally, showing that external evil is not worse than internal evil.

It is also important to discuss another meaning of Falaq. We always refer to it as Fajr or early morning. However, Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan discussed many of its meanings. Basically, it is about the breaking point such as Fajr being the breaking point of day, from darkness to light. It explains to us about a creation or new creation. Discussions on the Big Bang as the agent of world creation can be related with the word such as Falaq as well, Wallahua'lam. Generally, Surah al-Falaq tells us to seek Allah SWT's protection from any external evil that might come whenever we confront with new things, Wallahua'lam.



*We seek refuge Allah SWT's refuge from all forms of evil. A farmer is given with Allah SWT's knowledge to protect his crops from pests also created by Allah SWT. Hence, min sharri ma khalaq, in which we seek Allah SWT's refuge from the problems and tests of evil that Allah SWT placed on us, including the evil of sorcery.*

The connection it has with Surah al-Ikhlās is quite straightforward. For instance, in the phrase “Allahu Samad” which we will later discuss in Surah al-Ikhlās, we must rely on Allah SWT for everything and anything. In both surahs al-Falaq and an-Nas, Allah SWT tells us to rely on Him for protection against internal and external evil. May Allah SWT open the floodgates of rahmah lovingly and abundantly.

### k) Surah an-Nas: Internal Protection

May Allah SWT forgive our sins and sins that our parents might have committed, and may Allah SWT protect us from many evils, especially the evils of syaitan. We begin by giving our salawat to Rasulullah SAW, his family, the Sahabah and Tabi'in. May Allah SWT bless Rasulullah SAW's family, them as well as ourselves lovingly.

We are looking at Surah 114, Surah an-Nas, the last surah in the Quran, and we have to feel bad about ourselves because our knowledge about the this surah may be shallow, despite reciting it countless times since we were kids. This surah is, to the majority's opinion a Madaniyyah. There is only one known context of the Asbabun Nuzul of this surah. That is, the event where Rasulullah SAW was casted a spell by a magician by the name of Labeed bin 'Aasim. It is in Rasulullah SAW's dream that the two surahs, Surah al-Falaq and Surah an-Nas were revealed together (11 verses, 5 from Surah al-Falaq and 6 from Surah an-Nas).

It should be noted that there are many surahs such as Surah an-Nas, Surah al-Falaq, Surah al-Ikhlās and Surah al-Kafirun that begin with the word "Kul". The word "Kul" basically means a form of instruction given to Rasulullah SAW to be said to the people. So as followers of Rasulullah SAW, we too have to say it to the people.

Surah an-Nas is so important because it highlights how human beings (an-Nas) is vulnerable in the presence of syaitan or iblis' whispers. Therefore, we undoubtedly need to seek refuge from Allah SWT. We will InsyaAllah discuss about the character of iblis/syaitan at the end of today's discussion, so that at least we know the kind enemy we are dealing with (the iblis).

Let us take the first three verses together. After all, the first three verses tells the importance of seeking refuge from Allah SWT.

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ

[1] Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind,

مَلِكِ النَّاسِ

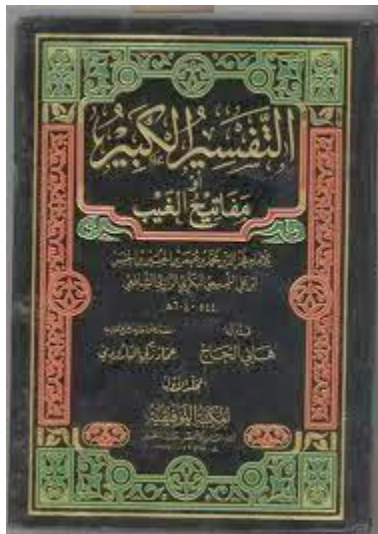
[2] The Sovereign of mankind.

إِلَهِ النَّاسِ

[3] The God of mankind,

The phrase "I seek refuge in the Lord", is commonly understood under the genre of al-Musta'izbihi (The One we seek protection of) as opposed to al-Musta'azminhu (The One we seek protection from). In this surah, beginning from verse 4, we seek Allah SWT's protection from Iblis, and this

surah starts with three names of Allah SWT, implying that we should always remember Allah SWT, and it is not a small thing to deal with Iblis without the help of Allah SWT. Imam Fakhruddin ar-Razi is said to say the word “Mankind were put together with the name of Allah SWT, symbolizing the closeness in relationship between Allah SWT and the human being”. We should understand that only Iblis or Syaitan can break the closeness.



*(Image shows Fakhruddin Razi's Tafsir al-Kabir) Fakhr al-Din al-Razi or Fakhruddin was an Iranian Sunni Muslim theologian and philosopher. He was born in 1149 in Rey (in modern-day Iran), and died in 1209 in Herat (in modern-day Afghanistan). He also wrote on medicine, physics, astronomy, literature, history and law. He left a very rich corpus of philosophical and theological works that reveals influence from the works of ibn Sina, Abu'l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī and al-Ghazali. - Wikipedia*

Let us understand a bit about the three recited Names of Allah SWT here, Rabb, Malik and Ila. Rabb generally means The Owner or The Master, meaning that Allah is able to do whatever Allah wants to mankind, and mankind needs Him. The word Malik refers to The Sovereign or The Ruler. It (among other things) can be understood that not only does Allah SWT govern us, but also gives us law for us to follow. The word 'Ila' simply means The God, meaning that we have to turn to Allah SWT for everything and anything. Some ulama' discuss the progression of mankind, in which in such a small scale, such as a family or organization, they need the help of their bosses or parents. As they progress into a larger scale, such as into a larger society, they need kings. The entire human being needs no other than Allah SWT. Whatever discussion that we've heard from the ulama', we should understand that we need Allah SWT to protect us from the evils of Iblis.

Basically, unlike Surah al-Falaq, the protection that we seek from is internal. That is, how the heart can be corrupted and astray if not carefully covered from the syaitan's continuous influence. The

following verse tells us of Allah SWT's protection that we need in order to ward off the evil of syaitan.

مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ  
[4] *From the evil of the retreating whisperer*

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan mentions two natures of the whisperer. Majority of Ulama' refer the whisperers here as Iblis, because the word "the", or "al" is used here. The first nature of the Syaitan is to instil doubt, confusion and influence us to perform evil by constantly whispering so that we can be strayed. The second nature refers to the word "Khannas", meaning that it will always come and go to deviate us from the straight path.

Every time we remember Allah SWT, it has no way to enter our hearts and would stay out. When he was forced to stay out, he always aimed on how to come back to corrupt our hearts. These two natures of syaitan or Iblis should not skip our notice. Therefore, there is a good reason for us to continue to make Dzikir, even before getting into bed. Iblis always wants us to commit evil (Syarri), regardless if it is big or small, because it knows that from a small sin, it can influence people further to commit bigger ones. Perhaps, the story of Basisah who started with what he thought was a small mistake, taking Khamar, which later on lead to commit fornication, killing a baby, and finally ended his life committing syirk should merit our attention.

The next verse tells us how the syaitan tries to enter our heart. The verse is as follows:

الَّذِي يُوسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ  
[5] *Who whispers [evil] into the breasts of mankind*

The word breasts or hearts means that it will always wait or stay out to look for opportunities to enter our heart. When he manages to enter and conquer our heart, we will not see evil things as evil anymore. For example, we know that corruption is bad, fornication is bad, backbiting is bad, and many more. When we reach the stage of backbiting others, we fail to see that we commit evil any longer, even though before that we know that the act is evil. That is the sign that the syaitan has already entered our hearts.

It is said that in one night, Rasulullah SAW was walking together with Safiyyah and they passed by an Ansari. Rasulullah SAW said to the Ansar, "the lady with me is Safiyyah bint Huyai, my wife". The Sahabah is said to respond by saying, "You don't have to explain to us, Ya Rasulullah, we do not have any ill things to say to you". But it is important because Rasulullah was said to have mentioned that he was concerned that syaitan may enter his body. Wallahua'lam. That is to say that we might think that we know, but we do not know because syaitan always stays outside and seek opportunities to potentially enter our heart.

The last verse is so profound and important, because it tells us that not only the syaitan, who were from the creations of Jin can whisper to us so that we would be strayed from the true path, but this also includes humankind as well. The verse is as follow:

مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ

[6] From among the jinn and mankind."

This verse warns us to be selective when choosing friends. There is also a verse from Surah al-An'am which tells us that the syaitan is also among humans and jinn:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيْطِينِ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرْهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿6:112﴾

[112] Likewise did We make for every Messenger an enemy, - evil ones among men and jinns, inspiring each other with flowery discourses by way of deception. If thy Lord had so planned, they would not have done it: so leave them and their inventions alone.

Friends that create doubt and confusion with no good reason at all might be friends that whispers to us bad deeds. Specifically, on the word of Khannas (Hide or staying out, aiming to strike or create doubt again), it is said that Syed Ibn Jubair once asked Ibn Abbas concerning this matter. Ibn Abbas gave an explanation on how the syaitan "with his compulsive and obsessive behaviour" will not stop whispering to mankind to stray from the path of truth.



*Not only does he (Iblis) and his army whispers, he never stops trying after many failures every time we remember Allah SWT (Dzikr). Surah an-Nas teaches us to seek refuge from Allah SWT (Rabb, Malik, Ila) from the whispers of Iblis. It should be noted that Iblis' army not only includes Jinn, but also mankind.*

Insyallah we will now start discussing the nature and character of Iblis or Syaitan. From other sources, mostly Israiliyyat, we hear stories of the iblis, how he was so humble until his level was appraised to the highest status in heaven (Samawat), Wallahua'lam. We try to discuss based on

the stories of creation and how Iblis was expelled from Heaven, which not only appeared in Surah al-Baqarah and Surah al-A'raf, but in five other surahs as well.

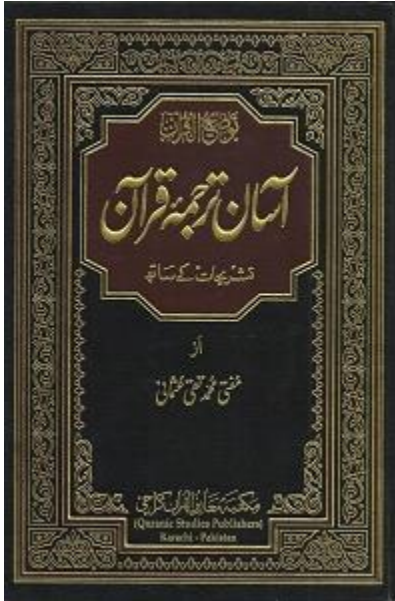
We know that the Jinn is created from fire and in Surah al-Kahf, it is specifically mentioned that Iblis is a generation created from Jinn and it will have its own generation. What is important is to understand the nature and characteristics of Iblis. First, Unlike Prophet Adam AS, who made du'a to ask Allah SWT's forgiveness for his and Hawa's Zulum (wrongdoing), Iblis was angry and with his arrogance swore to Allah SWT to stray the children of Adam, "*Rabbana zalamna anfusana wa in lam taghfirlana watar hamna lana koonanna minal khasireen*". Second, Iblis deployed a syllogism to counter Allah SWT's action by saying, you have created me from fire and him from soil/dust. What Iblis is trying to say is that he is a better creation, forgetting that Allah SWT had blown a soul into Prophet Adam AS' body, therefore he has to respect (sujud) Prophet Adam AS.

The first syllogism (logical thinking) in all creation was established by Iblis, he failed in his attempt because he judged actions externally, failing to see the soul. It is important for us not to be trapped by Iblis' thinking if we too are to judge books by its cover. Of course, there are many things we can say, but the following discussion should merit our attention seriously. It appears that it is easy for us to admit that Allah SWT is our Master (Rabb). But to admit that we are slaves would not be an easy accomplishment. It is easy for us to say that Allah SWT is great, but at the same time we want to say that our knowledge is great, our money is great, our lineage is great, and sometimes we forget that we are nothing more but slaves tested by the knowledge, money and lineage lended to us by Allah SWT. If we are really slaves, there is no good reason for us to be arrogant. Iblis knew this is the humans' weakness in which he could capitalise so that we become like him. May Allah SWT protect us.

Surah an-Nas is important for us to recite so that we can get Allah SWT's refuge and the three names, Rabb, Malik and Ila should always be in our minds and hearts as we seek protection from the evils of Iblis.

## 1) Conclusion: The Blessings of the 10 Surahs

Thanks and Praises be to Allah SWT, Lord of The Universe, The Entirely Merciful, The Especially Merciful. We ask for Allah SWT's help to guide us to the straight path, Aamiin. None of us can say that we can come into the concluding part of our tazkirah session because we worked hard for it, or for whatever logical explanation, for without Allah SWT's rahmah and help, we are nothing. Therefore, we shall always ask for Allah SWT's rahmah and help, Aamiin.



*(Image shows Mufti Taqi Usmani's Aasan Tarjuma Quran) Muhammad Taqi Usmani (born 5 October 1943) (also spelled Uthmani) is a Deobandi Hanafi Islamic scholar from Pakistan. He served as a judge on the Federal Shariat Court of Pakistan from 1981 to 1982 and the Shariat Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan between 1982 and 2002. He is an expert in the fields of Islamic Jurisprudence (fiqh), economics, Tasawwuf, and hadith. He also held a number of positions on the Shariah Boards of prestigious Islamic institutions, and was instrumental in the writing of the Hudood Ordinances under General Zia ul-Haq. He is the brother of Islamic scholars Muhammad Rafi Usmani, Muhammad Wali Razi, and Muhammad Razi Usmani, as well as of the Urdu poet Muhammad Zaki Kaifi. He has written translations of the Qur'an in both English and Urdu. - Wikipedia*

We have mentioned in many parts of our tazkirah session that there are many ulamas that discuss on the concept of divine sequencing. For the record, ulama of a different persuasion may have different leanings theologically and in jurisprudence. Therefore, it is not a strange thing that sometimes we may have heard religious speakers not only refer to tafsir which belong to sunni groups, which we have highlighted in this tazkirah session, but some also use or refer to Mu'tazili works such as al-Zamakhshari and Shi'a works such as Husayn Thabathaba'i.





*Abu al-Qasim Mahmud ibn Umar al-Zamakhshari, known widely as al-Zamakhshari, also called Jar Allah (Arabic for "God's neighbour") (18 March 1075 – 12 June 1144), was a medieval Muslim scholar of Persian origin, who subscribed to the Mu'tazilite theological doctrine, who was born in Khwarezmia, but lived most of his life in Bukhara, Samarkand, and Baghdad. He was a great authority on the Arabic language as well as a rationalist theologian - Wikipedia*

In cases such as in India, those who follow salafi movements might refer to works by Mufti Taqi Usmani. However, laymen such as us should refer to the works that our Ustadh and Ulama advise us to, and obviously there are many tafsirs written by renown sunni ulamas, Wallahua'lam. This means that each verse from a surah to another has a divine interconnection, meaning that its organization is directly from Allah SWT. We will conclude our tazkirah session by looking at the blessings and lessons of each surah, that is, from Surah al-Fiil to Surah an-Nas. We hope we can obtain clarity, and more importantly become a more humble Muslim, and practice the knowledge that Allah SWT gave us, Aamiin.

Surah al-Fiil should open our hearts on the rahmah that Allah SWT gave to our land (country), concerning the political stability of our land. It is in surah al-Fiil that tells us that Allah SWT removed fear from the Quraisy when their lands were stormed by Abrahah's troops. We should understand that the peace that we enjoy is from nothing, except Allah SWT. If we are in trouble such as that of other countries, we and they should ask for Allah SWT's help for political stability.

The next Surah, Surah Quraisy has similar ibrah (wisdom) with that of Surah al-Fiil. It tells us that Allah SWT with his rahmah, provides economic and financial stability for any country. No one can say that it is his/her effort alone that brought economic prosperity for their country without Allah SWT's power. Therefore we should not take this for granted. What is important is that in both surahs, Allah SWT while granting protection, also warned the Quraisy to worship Allah SWT in His House (Baitullah). This tells us a lot, especially that while we are enjoying our progress we shouldn't neglect the importance of our ibadah.

The next Surah, Surah al-Ma'un points to those who lie to their religion. We might proudly think that we are Muslims, but if we care less to those who are in need (orphans and the poor), we are nothing to Allah SWT and are no different from the Musyrikuns such as Abu Jahal. The surah warns us on the importance of khusyuk in Salah, which many of us take for granted.

The next surah, Surah al-Kauthar, teaches us on the importance of the legacy of Islam, from Prophet Ibrahim AS, to Rasulullah SAW and until today. The fact that Ibadahs such as Qurban is practiced during Prophet Ibrahim AS' time (approximately 2500 years before the Prophet Muhammad SAW), and still continues to be practiced until today means that Islam continues, although with some interruptions. We should have the conviction that the legacy of Islam will continue, even with the hurdles that it faces, Wallahua'lam.

The next surah, Surah al-Kafirun, should give us an idea that we (Islam) are different from other religions. The consequences for being a Muslim, as opposed to that of a non-Muslim (al-Kafirun) are obviously different. Therefore, there is no such thing as a universal religion or religious pluralism. However it is important for us not to claim takfir to others, simply because we do not know how their lives will end, and so is our own end.

Surah an-Nasr clearly teaches us to clean up our ibadah so as to not be contaminated by other form of ritual practices such as what had happened in the case of the idolaters in Kaaba. We should follow the model set by Allah SWT (Rasulullah SAW). The only guarantee of being rewarded in Jannah is to follow Rasulullah SAW's footsteps.

While Surah an-Nasr gives us the true model, Surah al-Lahab on the other hand tells us about the worst model. Allah SWT gave us so many things, and it is a test to us, because the wealth that we have may bring us to Hellfire if we were to fail the test. This is what had happened to Abu Lahab and his wife, Ummu Jamil with their pride and good looks.

Allah SWT in Surah al-Ikhlash teach us the importance of Aqidah (Theology) so that we can understand who and what is Allah SWT that we are worshipping. Allah SWT is the only place for us to ask for help and directions.

The last two verses, Surah al-Falaq and Surah an-Nas also gives us an idea that it is only through Allah SWT that we can receive protection externally and internally. While it is true that externally people can hurt and influence us so that we are miserable in this life and the hereafter as discussed in Surah al-Falaq, what is more pertinent is the temptations and whispers of Iblis and Syaitan. It is only through Allah SWT that we can get protection. We should understand that not only Jinn, but mankind as well can be an agent of Iblis to lead us astray such as in verses such as Surah al-An'am verse 112.

Surah an-Nas should not be taken for granted, just because it is the last Surah in the Quran. The fact that all forms of evil in the world comes from the whispers of Iblis, we should get benefit from surah an-Nas and always recite it. May Allah SWT bless us and forgive all the misdeeds that we have committed, and may Allah SWT forgive our parents and families too, Aamiin.

We should repeat what has been said in the introduction, how ashamed we are to still struggle to truly know and understand these simple surahs at our age. Again, may Allah SWT forgive us. As a reminder to ourselves, we would also like to repeat the story of a non-Muslim asking a Muslim about the benefits of Surah Yusuf as mentioned in the introduction. There was an occasion where a non-Muslim heard about the benefit of Surah Yusuf (Joseph) concerning management and leadership, and came to see a Muslim, asking about the surah. The Muslim knows little to nothing as far as management and leadership is concerned which can be derived from the surah. We ourselves when asked by non-Muslims, know little to nothing about it ourselves. What's worse is when we do not know about the simpler surahs from Juz Amma. Again, may Allah SWT forgive us. As mentioned in the introduction, let us be again reminded that it is not important whether a Muslim or a non-Muslim asks us. What is important is when Allah SWT asks us, yet we know little to nothing. Astaghfirullahalazim.

We will end our tazkirah session on the Juz Amma (The last 10 Surahs) with Surah al-Asr that tells us that all of us are failures, except for those with iman, perform righteous deeds, spread the message of truth and with patience and constancy.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

وَالْعَصْرِ

*By (the Token of) Time (through the ages),*

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِفِي خُسْرٍ

*Verily Man is in loss,*

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

٣

*Except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of Patience and Constancy.*

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