

The Value and Importance of the Night and a Special Du'ā for the Night

The greatest virtue of the Night is mentioned in the Sūrah itself, that is, the acts of worship performed in this single night is better than worship in one thousand months which amounts to eighty-three years and four months. The figure here and elsewhere in the Qur'ān does not signify its precise number, but simply denotes a very large or high number. Allah alone knows how much more or better.

It is recorded in Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "He who spends the Night of *Qadr* in the worship of Allah, all his past sins will be forgiven." Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "All the angels resident at the 'Lote Tree of the Uttermost Boundary' descend in the leadership of Sayyidnā Jibra'īl عليه السلام and greet every believer, man or woman, except one who takes wine or eats pork." Another narration reports that anyone who is deprived of the good of the Night of *Qadr* is in fact deprived of all good. On the Night of *Qadr* some people experience and witness special *anwār* [lights]. However, it may be noted that this is not experienced or witnessed by all and sundry nor is it part of the blessings and reward of the Night. Therefore, people should not concern themselves about it.

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها once asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ what supplication she should make if she finds the Night. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised her to make the following supplication: **اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ تَحِبُّ** "O Allah! Verily, You are the Oft-Pardoning, You love to pardon, so do pardon me." [Qurṭubī].

Revelation of the Holy Qur'ān

Verse [1] **إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ** "We sent it [the Qur'ān] down in the Night of *Qadr*." This verse makes explicit that the Holy Qur'ān was revealed on the Night of *Qadr*. This could have one of two meanings: [1] the entire Holy Qur'ān was revealed on this Night from the Preserved Tablet. Then Sayyidnā Jibra'īl عليه السلام, according to the exigency of circumstances, brought it down to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ piecemeal over a period of twenty-three years; and [2] it is related that the first revelation,

consisting of the opening verses of Sūrah [96], took place in the month of Ramaḍān on the Night of *Qadr*, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was at his devotion in the cave of Hira'. The rest of the Qur'an was revealed little by little according to the need of different occasions.

All Heavenly Books were revealed in Ramaḍān

Sayyidnā Abū Dhar Ghifārī رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm's ﷺ Scriptures were revealed on 3rd of Ramaḍān; Torah was revealed on 6th of Ramaḍān; Injīl was revealed on 13th of Ramaḍān; Zabūr was revealed on 18th of Ramaḍān; and the Holy Qur'an was revealed on 24th of Ramaḍān." [Mazharī].

Descent of the Angels and the Spirit with Divine Decrees

Verse [4] تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ (The angels and the Spirit descend in it, with the leave of their Lord, along with every command.) 'Spirit' here refers to Jibra'il ﷺ.

Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When the Night of *Qadr* occurs, Jibra'il ﷺ descends on the earth with a huge throng of angels and all of them pray for every servant of Allah, man or woman, busy in *ṣalāh* or *dhikr*, to be blessed by Allah." [Mazharī]. In the phrase مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ (along with every command), the preposition *min* is used in the sense of 'with' as in [13:11] مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ. The verse under comment means the angels bring down, during the Night of *Qadr*, the decree for everything destined to occur in the coming year. Some of the commentators, like Mujāhid and others, say that the phrase مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ *min kulli amrin* is syntactically related to *salām*, and the word 'Amr means 'every thing'. Thus they interpret the statement to mean: 'The night is a security from every evil, harm and calamity.' [Ibn Kathīr].

Verse [5] سَلَامٌ (Peace it is till the rising of dawn.) The word *Salām* [peace] stands for a complete sentence meaning 'it is all peace, equanimity and complete goodness, having no evil in it.' [Qurṭubī]. Some scholars treat the word *Salāmun* as a sentence qualifying مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ *min kulli amrin*, meaning 'the angels come with every such matter which is good and peace'. [Mazharī].

هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ The concluding expression of the verse means the blessings of the Night of *Qadr* are not restricted to any particular part of

the night. They start descending at the fall of night and continue till the break of dawn.

Special Note

According to there verse 'The Night of Power is better than a thousand months' which equals eighty-three years and four months. Obviously, each year will contain a *laylatul Qadr* which will be better than a thousand months. As a result, the Night of *Qadr* will recur *ad infinitum*, that is, repeat or continue without an end. For this reason, some of the commentators say the expression 'more than a thousand months' does not include nights of *Qadr*. Thus this should not pose any problem. [Ibn Kathīr on the authority of Mujāhid].

On account of geographical positions, the time will vary from place to place. As a result, the Night of *Qadr* will not occur in all the regions of the world simultaneously. This is not a problem because people of each location should calculate and consecrate the night and receive its blessings according to their geographical position. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best.

Ruling

If anyone performs the 'Ishā' and Fajr *ṣalāhs* in congregation, he will receive the blessings and reward of the Night of *Qadr*. The more one performs acts of worship in this night, the more he shall receive its blessings. It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim that Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "If a person performs his 'Ishā' *ṣalāh* in congregation, he will attain the blessings of spending half the night in devotion; and if he performs Fajr *ṣalāh* in congregation, he will attain the blessings of spending the entire night in devotion."

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Qadr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Bayyinah

(The Clear Proof)

This Sūrah is Madani, and it has 8 verses

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنْفَكِينَ حَتَّى
تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ ﴿١﴾ رَسُولٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ يَتْلُوا صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً ﴿٢﴾ فِيهَا
كُتِبَ قِيمَةٌ ﴿٣﴾ وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ
مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ ﴿٤﴾ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ
لَا حُنْفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقِيَمَةِ ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ
فِيهَا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ ﴿٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
أُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ ﴿٧﴾ جَزَاءُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۗ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ۗ
ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ ۗ ﴿٨﴾

Those who disbelieved from among the People of the Book, and the polytheists, were not (expected) to desist (from their wrong beliefs) unless there came to them a clear proof, [1] a messenger from Allah who recites the

purified scrolls [2] containing (right and) straight writings. [3] And those who were given the Book did not disagree but after the clear proof came to them, [4] while they were not ordered but to worship Allah, making their submission exclusive for him with integrity, and to establish *ṣalāh* and pay *zakāh*. And that is the way of the straight religion. [5] Surely those who disbelieved from among the People of the Book and the polytheists will be in the fire of Jahannam, in which they will be living forever. Those are the worst of all human beings. [6] As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, they are the best of all human beings. [7] Their reward, with their Lord, is gardens of eternity beneath which rivers flow in which they will be abiding forever. Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. That is for him who has awe of his Lord. [8]

Situation of the People of the Book and of the Pagan Arabs before the advent of the Final Messenger of Allah ﷺ

Verse [1] draws attention to the situation of the world before the advent of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: The entire world was sunk deeply in the darkness of ignorance, superstition, corruption, disbelief and paganism. When the whole world was so benighted, the infinite grace, mercy and wisdom of the Lord of the worlds bubbled up to dispel the darkness, to cure the obnoxious diseases and to dissipate the universally prevailing calamities. The moral and spiritual maladies were acute, excruciating, serious and severe. As a result, there was a need for an effective, expert and a competent healer who would be able to cure them. Such a healer was raised in the person of the Final Messenger of Allah ﷺ who is described as *al-Bayyinah* 'The Clear Proof'. The healer came with a Book. Now follows some of the important characteristics of the Holy Qur'ān.

Verses [2-3] *يَتْلُوا صُحُفًا مُطَهَّرَةً. فِيهَا كُتِبَ قِيمَةٌ* (a messenger from Allah who recites the purified scrolls containing [right and] straight writings. - 98:2,3) The verb *yatlū* is derived from the infinitive *tilāwah*, meaning 'to read out or to recite'. However, not every reading or reciting is *tilāwah*, but only the one that is very closely followed according to the teacher's instruction. Probably, this is the reason why the word *tilāwah* is specifically used, in common idiom, for 'the recitation of the noble Qur'ān'

. The word *ṣuḥuf* is the plural of *ṣaḥīfah* and it refers to 'a leaf or a page of a book or some leaves of paper on which something is written'. The word *kutūb* is the plural of *kitāb* and it may mean: [1] a leaf or page of a book or some leaves of paper on which something is written. From this point of view, the words *kutūb* and *ṣuḥuf* are synonyms; or [2] now and then the word *kitāb* [pl. *kutūb*] is used in the sense of a 'writ' as in [8:68] *لَوْلَا كَتَبَ مِنَ اللَّهِ سَبَقَ* "Had there not been a writ from Allah which came earlier..." the word *kitāb* is used in the sense of a 'writ'. In this context, the second sense seems to fit in more appropriately because if it is taken in the first sense, the words *kutūb* and *ṣuḥuf*, being synonyms, the prepositional phrase *fīhā* is rendered meaningless. The pronoun *-hā* in the phrase refers to *ṣuḥuf*, and the two statements would mean: 'reciting purified written pages in which are true written pages'. This is not in keeping with the lofty rules and principles of Qur'anic eloquence.

The word *مُطَهَّرَةٌ* *muṭahharatan* [purified] is an adjective qualifying the noun *ṣuḥuf* [pages/scrolls]. According to Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, the Scriptures are completely free from all possible flaws, forgeries, doubt, hypocrisy and deviations. The word *qayyimah* is used in the sense of 'straight', and is the adjective of the noun *kutūb*, and it means its laws, ordinances and injunctions are upright, straight, just and balanced. It could also mean 'lasting and permanent'. In this instance, the phrase would signify that the Divine injunctions of the Holy Qur'ān will last permanently till the Day of Judgement. The verse thus purports to say that the sending of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ [as the Clear Proof] was essential to the transformation of the people of earlier revelations and the pagans who had ended up in disbelief and could not have departed from their erring ways without the help of his ﷺ Prophetic mission. His ﷺ mission was to recite the pure scrolls to them which contained clear Divine injunctions. Initially he ﷺ did not recite from the Scriptures but from his memory, but the sense here is that he recited to them a discourse that was later written and preserved in scrolls. The Qur'ān [as the Clear Proof] is the compendium of all that is good, lasting and immutable teachings.

Verse [4] *وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَ تَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ* (And those who were given the Book did not disagree but after the Clear Proof came to them.) The verb *tafarraqa* here means 'to deny, reject or differ and disagree'. The

verse means to say that the People of the Book had eagerly awaited the advent of a great Holy Prophet ﷺ about whom clear prophecies were found in their Scriptures, clear description of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was given, in that the Qur'ān would descend upon him and it would be compulsory for them to obey and follow him, but when he appeared in fact, then instead of accepting him, they rejected him. The Qur'ān points out that there was a complete agreement among the Jews and the Christians that the Final Messenger ﷺ will make his appearance, as in [2:89] "وَكَاُنُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ...while earlier, they used to seek help against those who disbelieved..." That is, the Torah had in several places foretold the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In fact, the Jews themselves used to tell the pagan Arabs that a new Prophet was soon to come who will vanquish them, and the Jews claimed that they would be with him, so they would be victorious. Further in [2:89] the Qur'ān states "فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مَا عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ ...yet when there came to them that they did identify, they denied it... ". The phrase 'that they did identify' could refer to the 'Final Messenger' ﷺ or the 'new Divine Book [the Qur'ān]' or the 'religion of Truth'. The same theme runs through the verse under comment: Many people accepted the new Prophet ﷺ, the new Book and the new religion in terms of the prophecies made in their revealed Scriptures, but a large number, especially the Christians, rejected them. It is a strange phenomenon that before his advent they believed in him without a single dissenting voice, but when he appeared as the Clear Proof, dissention arose and a large number rejected him while a small number believed in him.

Since this phenomenon was restricted to the People of the Book, it did not include the pagans, unlike verse [1] which includes the pagans also. Allah knows best!

Verse [5] *وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ* (And that is the way of the straight religion.) The word *qayyimah* [the straight] is apparently the qualifier of the noun *kutūb* [Books] which occurred earlier. Some treat the adjective as qualifying the noun *millah* [religion]. The verse purports to say that Allah commanded the People of the former Scriptures that they should render full and sincere obedience to Divine commandments, that is, to worship Allah alone. They should also establish the regular prayers and

pay the obligatory alms. Then the Qur'ān reminds them that this is not their distinctive feature exclusively. All former religions that are upright and received Books from Allah have the same features. This is the true religion of all the Prophets ﷺ that they preached to their respective people. It would appear that the phrase *kutubun qayyimah* [(right and) straight writings], contextually, refers to the Qur'ānic ordinances and injunctions. From this point of view, the verse would signify that the ordinances and injunctions of the Shari'ah of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ are exactly the same as those that were given to them in their revealed Scriptures. They were not divergent so that they could find a pretext to oppose.

Verse [8] رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ط ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ (Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him; that is for him who fears his Lord.) This verse points to the highest stage of spiritual development of the inmates of Paradise, that is, the Divine pleasure with no danger of Divine displeasure. This is the greatest reward with which the people of faith will be blessed. The God-fearing people are well-pleased with Him because of the comprehensive favours He has given them. Sayyidnā Abū Sa'īd Khudrī ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"Undoubtedly, Allah shall address the inmates of Paradise: يَا أَهْلَ الْجَنَّةِ 'O Inmates of Paradise!'"

They will reply: رَبَّنَا وَسَعْدَيْكَ وَالْخَيْرُ كُلُّهُ فِي يَدَيْكَ Our Lord, we are present and ready to carry out Your orders. All good is in Your control.'

Allah shall ask them: هَلْ رَضِيتُمْ Are you happy?'

They will submit: 'How can we not be happy when You have given us what You have not bestowed on any of Your creation?'

Allah will tell them: 'Shall I not grant you something superior to all of this?'

They will exclaim: 'What can be superior to this?'

Allah will reply: 'I shall grant you My pleasure, and I will never be angry with you in the future.'" [Transmitted by al-Bukhārī vide Mazḥarī].

It should be noted here that there are two types of *riḍā'* [pleasure]:

one in general sense; and second in specific or higher sense. In the general sense, *riqā'* *bil-qadr* (i.e. to be pleased with every decree of Allah) is part of the obligations of a servant of Allah. A consummated slave is only ever satisfied and content with Allah Himself, and thus sincerely accepts the Divine decree. However, here the word is used in the higher sense, that is, Allah bestows upon a slave all his specific wishes and ambitions without leaving out any of them as in [93:5] **وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ** (And of course, your Lord will give you so much that you will be pleased.) Here also the word '*riqā'*' means the fulfillment of every wish of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. When this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ expressed his wish and ambition that he would not be pleased until every single believer is taken out of Hell. [Maḏharī]

Verse [8 - the concluding phrase] **ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ** (...That is for him who has awe of his Lord.) The word 'fear' or 'awe' here is not used in the sense of an 'agitated, disturbed or perturbed feeling' which we naturally have for an enemy, a beast, a ferocious animal or an obnoxious thing that might harm us. '*Khashyatullah*' (Allah's awe) is, on the contrary, a feeling of deep, reverential awe that leads man to Allah's obedience. It is the awe of Allah's Majesty and His Incomparability that makes the perfect slave do every work under every circumstance to attain the Divine pleasure and evade every occasion of His displeasure. This is the axis on which rotates the religious perfection and all bounties of the Hereafter.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Bayyinah
Ends here

Sūrah Az-Zilzal

(The Quake)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 8 verses

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا ﴿١﴾ وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا ﴿٢﴾ وَقَالَ
 الْإِنْسَانُ مَا لَهَا ﴿٣﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا ﴿٤﴾ بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَى لَهَا
 ﴿٥﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٦﴾ فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ
 مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ﴿٧﴾ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ﴿٨﴾

When the earth will be trembled with its quake, [1] and the earth will bring forth its burdens, [2] and man will say, "What has happened to it?" [3] That day it will describe all its happenings, [4] because its Lord will have so commanded it. [5] That day the people will come back (from the place of reckoning) in different groups, so that they may be shown (the fruits of) their deeds. [6] So, whoever does good (even) to the weight of a particle shall see it. [7] And whoever does evil (even) to the weight of a particle shall see it. [8]

The Merits of Surah Az-Zilzal

Sayyidnā Anas and Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنهما report that the Messenger of Allah said that Sūrah Al-Zilzāl equals half the Qur’ān, Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ equals a third of the Qur’ān and Sūrah Al-Kāfirun equals a quarter of the Qur’ān. [Transmitted by al-Tirmidhī, al-Baghawī and al-Maḏharī].

The Scene of the Day of Resurrection

Verse [1] إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا (When the earth will be trembled with its quake.) It is not clear whether this earthquake refers to the convulsion that will take place in the world before the 'first blowing of the trumpet', as is mentioned in connection with the portents of the Doomsday, or it refers to the quake that will occur after the 'second blowing' when the dead bodies will be resurrected and thrown out of their graves. Narratives and views of the commentators differ on this issue. It is not inconceivable that many quakes and convulsions would occur: first, before the 'first blowing'; and second, after the 'second blowing' at the time of raising the dead. Here it probably refers to the second quake, and the context supports it, because the Sūrah later on describes the scenes of the Day of Resurrection, such as reckoning, weighing and evaluating of deeds, and recompense . Allah knows best. [Maḡharī]

Verse [2] وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا (and the earth will bring forth its burdens.) Muslim has recorded in his Ṣaḡīḡ from Abū Hurairah ؓ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"The earth will throw out the pieces of its liver [contents]. Gold and silver will come out like columns. A murderer will come and say: 'I killed for this ?' The one who broke the ties of kinship will say: 'For this I severed the ties of kinship?' The thief will say: 'For this I got my hand amputated?' Then they will leave it there, and no one will take anything from it."

Verse [7] فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ (So, whoever does good [even] to the weight of a particle shall see it.) The word 'good' here refers to what is good in terms of Shari'ah, that is, only a good deed done in the wake of faith is recognized by Allah. Any good deed done in the state of disbelief is not recognized, and consequently it will not be rewarded in the Hereafter, though it might have been rewarded in this world. It is argued on the basis of this verse that anyone who has an atom's weight of faith will eventually be taken out of Hell. The reason being that, according to the promise made in this verse, man must reap the fruit of his righteousness in the Hereafter. If he has not done any righteous deeds, faith itself is a great righteousness. Thus no matter how sinful a believer may be, he will

not be condemned to Hell for good. On the other hand, if a non-believer has done tons of good deeds, they will be rendered vain in the Hereafter on account of lack of faith. He will, however, receive reward for them here in this world.

Verse [8] وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ (And Whoever does evil [even] to the weight of a particle shall see it.) By 'evil' here is meant the evil for which the evil-doer has not repented. The Qur'ān and the Sunnah bear ample testimony to the fact that any sinner who sincerely repents for his sins Allah will most certainly accept his repentance. However, the sins for which the sinners have not repented in this world shall certainly bring their results, no matter how trivial or petty they might have been in their appearance. That is why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ warned Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها to beware of the sins that are belittled, for indeed they will be taken account of by Allah." [Transmitted by Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah].

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه says that this verse is most robust and comprehensive verse of the Holy Qur'ān. Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه in a lengthy narration reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ referred to this verse as "الفاذة الجامعه" "the unique, most comprehensive verse".

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Az-Zilzāl
Ends here

Sūrah ‘Al-Ādiyāt

(The Running Horses)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 11 verses

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 11

وَالْعَدِيَّتِ صَبْحًا ﴿١﴾ ۞ فَالْمُورِيَّتِ قَدْحًا ﴿٢﴾ ۞ فَالْمُغِيرَاتِ صُبْحًا ﴿٣﴾ ۞
 فَأَثَرْنَ بِهِ نَقْعًا ﴿٤﴾ ۞ فَوَسَطْنَ بِهِ جَمْعًا ﴿٥﴾ ۞ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُودٌ
 ﴿٦﴾ ۞ وَإِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ لَشَهِيدٌ ﴿٧﴾ ۞ وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿٨﴾ ۞ أَفَلَا
 يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعِثَ رَمَاهُ فِي الْقُبُورِ ﴿٩﴾ ۞ وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٠﴾ ۞ إِنَّ
 رَبَّهُمْ بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾ ۞

I swear by those (horses) that run snorting, [1] then those that create sparks by striking (their hoofs) on the stones, [2] then those that invade at morning, [3] and raise a trail of dust therein, [4] then enter, at the same time, into the centre of the (opposing) host, [5] man is, indeed, very ungrateful to his Lord, [6] and he himself is a witness to that fact. [7] And in his love for wealth, he is very intense. [8] Does he not then know (what will happen) when all that is contained in the graves will be overturned, [9] and all that is contained in the hearts will be exposed. [10] Surely your Lord, that day, will be fully aware of them. [11]

Place of Revelation

According to Sayyidnā Ibn Mas‘ūd, Jābir, Ḥasan Baṣrī, ‘Ikramah and

‘Aṭā’ رَحْمَهُمُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى, Sūrah Al-‘Ādiyāt was revealed in Makkah and, according to Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās, Anas, Imām Malīk and Qatādah, the Sūrah was revealed in Madīnah. [Qurṭubī].

In this Sūrah Allah describes the special features of war-horses or chargers, and swears by them. The subject of the oath states that man is very ungrateful to his Lord. It has been explained time and again previously that it is the prerogative of Allah to swear oath by any of his creatures to recount an event or set down ordinances. It is not permitted for any of the human beings to take oath by any of the creatures. The purpose of swearing an oath is to confirm or give weight to a subsequently stated truth. It is also mentioned earlier that when the Holy Qur’ān swears an oath by an object, it has some nexus with the subject of the oath. Here the hard tasks of the war-horses are called to bear testimony to the fact that man is very ungrateful for Allah's favours. In other words, man needs to look at the horses, especially the war-horses, who risk their lives to travel under very dangerous and difficult conditions, especially in the battlefields where they follow the commands of their masters, whereas man has not created them, he has not even created the fodder he gives to them. His task is merely to give them the fodder that Allah has created. The horses recognize and acknowledge this little favor man does to them, and are prepared to risk their lives and bear the greatest of hardships. As against this, Allah has created man with an insignificant drop of sperm and endowed him with high faculties, abilities, intellect and senses to perform various types of tasks, thus making him the crown of His creation. He [Allah] provided him with all types of food. Facilities are created for all his needs and necessities in an amazing manner. But man does not recognize and acknowledge any of these sublime favors, nor does he express his gratitude to his Creator.

Lexicographical Analysis

The word عَادِيَاتٍ *‘ādiyāt* is derived from the root *‘adw* which means 'to run'. The دَابْحٌ *dabh* means 'the sound coming out of the chest of a horse when it runs fast and breathes laboriously; panting.' The word مُورِيَاتٍ *mūriyāt* is the active participle of the infinitive of إِرَاءٌ *‘irā’*. The infinitive means 'to strike or produce fire with a particular piece of wood.' The word قَدَحٌ *qadh* means 'to strike or produce fire with a flint; striking sparks of

fire when the horse runs fast on a rocky ground with horse-shoes on'. The word مُغِيرَات *mughīrāt* is active participle of the infinitive إِغَارَةٌ *ighārah*. The infinitive means 'to attack, or make a sudden hostile excursion upon, an enemy'. The word *ṣubḥ* means 'morning or dawn'. This time has been specifically mentioned because it was the practice of Arabs to attack their enemy at dawn, and not at night in order to show off their bravery. They thought making a hostile excursion on the enemy in the darkness of night was an act of cowardice. The word أَثْرَنَ *atharna* is derived from 'ithārah, which means 'to raise dust'. The word نَفْعَ *naq'* means 'dust'. This implies that the dust became stirred up and spread upon the horizon, especially in the morning when the horses run fast. Normally, this is not the time for clouds of dust to fly in this way, unless it was caused by very fast running.

Verse [100:5] فَوَسَطْنَ بِهِ جَمْعًا (then enter, at the same time, into the centre of the [opposing] host) In other words, they penetrate into the centre of the enemy forces without the least degree of fear.

The word *kanūd*, (100:6) according to Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى, refers to the one who counts the calamities that befall him, and forgets Allah's favours. Abū Bakr Wāsiṭī said that *kanūd* is the one who spends the bounties of Allah for sinful purposes. Tirmidhi said that *kanūd* is the one who looks at the bounty, and not at the Bounteous Lord. In short, all these interpretations lead to the sense of 'ungratefulness to favours and bounties' and hence the expression *kanūd* means 'ungrateful'.

Verse [100:8] وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ (and in his love for wealth, he is very intense.) Literally, the word *khair* means 'any good thing'. Idiomatically, the word *khair*, in Arabic, means 'wealth' implying that 'wealth' is an embodiment of goodness and benefit. However, some type of wealth can involve man in untold misery. In the Hereafter, this will be the position of all wealth acquired through unlawful means. Sometimes, wealth in this world too can prove to be nuisance and disaster. Nonetheless, according to Arabic idiom, worldly goods in this verse have been described as *khair* as the same word in another verse [2:180] إِنَّ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا "...he leaves some wealth...". In this verse as well the word *khair* means 'wealth'.

To recap, having taken oath by war-horses, the subject states two

points: [1] man is ungrateful or he is a blamer of his Lord who remembers misfortunes and forgets His favours; and [2] he is passionate in his love for wealth. Both these points are evil, rationally as well as from the Shari‘ah point of view. These statements warn man against these evils. The evil of ingratitude is quite obvious and needs no elaboration, but the evil of man's violent love for wealth is not that obvious, and needs some elaboration. Wealth is the axis of man's needs and necessities. Shari'ah has not only permitted its acquisition, but it has also made its acquisition obligatory to the degree of his needs. Therefore, what is condemned in the verse is either the 'intense' or excessive love for wealth that makes one neglectful to one's obligations, and oblivious of the divine injunctions, or the sense is that earning wealth, even saving it according to one's needs is though permissible, having its love in the heart is bad. Let us consider the following illustration: When man feels the need to answer the call of nature, he does it out of necessity. In fact, he makes arrangements for it, but he does not develop love or passion for it in his heart. Likewise, when he falls sick and takes medication, or even undergoes surgery, but he does not develop attachment for it in his heart. He does it only out of necessity. The believer should treat the wealth in this way: A believer should acquire wealth, as Allah has commanded him, to the extent of his need, save it, look after it and utilize it whenever and wherever necessary, but his heart should not be attached to it. How elegantly Maulānā Rūmī رحمه الله تعالى has put it in one of his verses!

آب اندر زیر کشتی پُشتی است..... آب در کشتی هلاک کشتی است

"As long as the water remains under the boat, it helps the boat [to sail]; but if the water seeps into the boat, it sinks it."

Likewise, as long as the wealth floats around the boat of heart, it would be useful; but when it seeps into the heart, it will destroy it. Towards the conclusion of the Sūrah a warning has been sounded against these two evil qualities of man for which he will be punished in the Hereafter.

Verses [100:9-11] أَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِي الْقُبُورِ وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ. إِنَّ رَبَّهُم بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيرٌ [Does he not then know [what will happen] when all that is contained in the graves will be overturned, and all that is contained in the hearts will

be exposed. Surely your Lord, that day, is fully aware of them.) Divine retribution will be meted out, in the Hereafter, to each person commensurate with his deeds, good or bad, as Allah is well-aware of them. Therefore, it would be wise for man to abstain from ingratitude, and he should not have such a violently passionate love for wealth and indulgence in worldly riches as to be unable to separate the good from the bad.

Special Note

The current set of verses describes these evil qualities of man in general terms, while Prophets عليهم السلام, friends of Allah and many of His righteous servants are free from these evil qualities or from any earthly attachments. They acquire wealth through lawful means and abstain from acquiring it through unlawful means. They are ever so grateful to Allah for the wealth He has given them and spend it in the way of Allah. So how these evils are attributed to man in general terms? The answer is that most people have these evil qualities, but this does not imply that all, without any exception, are characterized by these qualities. The upright people are excluded from the general statement. Some of the scholars restrict the word 'man' to 'unbelievers'. These two evil qualities are the essential characteristics of unbelievers, and if they are found in a Muslim [God forbid!], he needs to reflect and be careful. Allah knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-‘Adiyāt
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Qāri'ah (The Striking Event)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 11 verses

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 11

الْقَارِعَةُ ﴿١﴾ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا أَذْرٰكَ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ ﴿٣﴾ يَوْمَ يَكُوْنُ
النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوْثِ ﴿٤﴾ وَتَكُوْنُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوْثِ
﴿٥﴾ فَاَمَّا مَنْ ثَقَلَتْ مَوَازِيْنُهُ ﴿٦﴾ فَهُوَ فِىْ عِيْشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ ﴿٧﴾ وَاَمَّا
مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِيْنُهُ ﴿٨﴾ فَاُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَمَا أَذْرٰكَ مَا هِيَهٗ ﴿١٠﴾ نَارٌ
حَامِيَةٌ ﴿١١﴾

The Striking Event! [1] What is the Striking Event? [2] And what may let you know what the Striking Event is? [3] (It will happen) on a day when people will be like scattered moths, [4] and the mountains will be like carded wool. [5] Then, the one whose scales (of good deeds) are heavy [6] will be in a happy life. [7] But he whose scales are light, [8] his abode will be Abyss. [9] And what may let you know what that (Abyss) is? [10] A blazing fire! [11]

Human Deeds, Good or Bad, will be Weighed

This Sūrah mentions the weighing of human deeds. He whose scales are heavy will be led to Paradise, and he whose scales are light will be led to Hell. Please see Mā'arifur Qur'an, Vol. 3/ pp 539-547, for a full and complete analysis of the Weighing of human deeds. The analysis also

allays the doubts raised against the concept of weighing of deeds.

We have also explained there that it appears from reconciliation of conflicting narrations and Qur'ānic verses that the weighing on Plain of Resurrection will take place twice. The first weighing will be to separate the believers from the non-believers. Anyone whose Book of Deeds is put on the scale and contains the belief (*'Īmān*) will be heavy, and the scale of anyone whose Ledger of Deeds does not contain *'Īmān* will be light. At this stage, the believers will be separated from the non-believers. Weighing on the second time will be to distinguish between good and evil deeds of the believers. The reference, in the present Sūrah, is probably to the first weighing in which the scale of every believer will be heavy regardless of his other deeds, while the scale of an unbeliever will be light, even though he might have performed some good acts.

It is explained in Mazḥarī that the Holy Qur'ān generally contrasts the unbelievers and righteous believers, when speaking of retribution [reward or punishment], because the latter are the perfect believers. As for the believers who have performed righteous as well as unrighteous deeds, the Qur'ān is generally silent on the issue. However, the principle may be noted that on the Day of Judgement human deeds will not be counted, but weighed. Fewer good deeds with high degree of faith and sincerity, and in accordance with Sunnah will be heavier than many good deeds - prayers, fasting, charity and pilgrimage with lesser degree of faith and sincerity, or not completely in accordance with Sunnah.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Qāri'ah
Ends here

Sūrah At-Takāthur (Competition in Amassing)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 8 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 8

الْهَيْكُمُ التَّكَاثُرُ ﴿١﴾ حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ ﴿٢﴾ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ
 ﴿٣﴾ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾ كَلَّا لَو تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٥﴾
 لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ ﴿٦﴾ ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ
 عَنِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٨﴾

You are distracted by mutual competition in amassing (worldly benefits), [1] until you reach the graves. [2] No! (This is not a correct attitude.) You will soon know (the reality). [3] Again, you will soon know. [4] No! if you have had sure knowledge (of the Hereafter, you would not have been so distracted) [5] You will certainly see the Hell, [6] then you will see it with an eye of certainty. [7] Then you will be asked about all the pleasures (you enjoyed in the world). [8]

Special Merit of Sūrah At-Takāthur

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have once asked the noble Companions: "Is there anyone from amongst you who has the strength to recite one thousand verses a day?" The blessed Companions replied: "Who can recite a thousand verses a day?" The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Can you not recite Sūrah At-Takāthur?" This implies that Sūrah At-Takāthur equals in weight and worth to a thousand verses, thus stressing its great

importance. [Maẓharī with reference to Ḥākīm and Baihaqī on the authority of Ibn Umar رضي الله عنه].

Warning Against Materialistic Attitude

Verse [1] **أَلْهَيْكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ** (You are distracted by mutual competition in amassing [worldly benefits].) The word *takāthur* is derived from the root *kathrah*, and means 'to amass much wealth'. Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه and Ḥasan Baṣrī رضي الله عنه have assigned this interpretation to it. Qatādah رضي الله عنه says that this word is also used in the sense of 'taking pride in the abundance of material goods'. Sayyidnā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited this verse and explained its meaning, thus: "Acquiring wealth but not paying out of it the obligatory dues." [Qurṭubī].

Verse [2] **حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ** (until you reach the graves.) Here the words 'reaching the graves' mean 'to die and be buried in the graves', as the following Prophetic Ḥadīth bears testimony to this interpretation. Referring to verse [2] of this Sūrah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ** "until death overtakes you" [Ibn Kathīr, from by Ibn Abī Ḥātim]. The verse thus implies that many people are engrossed in acquiring worldly goods and racing each other in wealth and children etc. and remain neglectful of the Hereafter till death comes upon them, and then they are seized by the divine punishment. Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Shikhhīr رضي الله عنه reports that one day he visited the Holy Prophet ﷺ while the latter was reciting Sūrah At-Takāthur and was saying:

يقول ابن آدم مالي مالي وهل لك من مالك إلا ما أكلت فأفنت أو لبست فأبليت أو تصدقت فامضيت، وفي رواية لمسلم وما سوى ذلك فذهب وتاركه للناس.

(ابن كثير وقرطبي بروايت مسلم، ترمذى احمد)

"The Son of ‘Adam says: 'My wealth, my wealth.' But you do not reap any benefit from your wealth except for that which you ate and you finished it, or that which you clothed yourself with and you wore it out, or that which you gave as charity and you have spent it."

And in a narration by Muslim: "Everything else other than that will go away, and he will leave it for other people.(i.e. inheritors)" [Ibn Kathīr and Qurṭubī as transmitted by Muslim, Tirmidhī and Aḥmad].

Imām Bukhārī records from Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of

Allah ﷻ said:

لو كان لابن آدم وادياً من ذهب لاحتب ان يكون له واديان ولن يملأه الا التراب
ويتوب الله على من تاب.

"If the Son of 'Ādam has a valley of gold, he would love to have two valleys, and nothing but the dust of grave will fill his mouth. And Allah accepts the repentance of him who turns to Him in penitence."

Sayyidnā 'Ubayy Ibn Ka'b رضي الله عنه, referring to the Tradition quoted above, says, "We used to think that this was a part of the Qur'ān until the first verse of Sūrah At-Takāthur was revealed." It seems that the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the verse and interpreted it in his own words. As a result, some of the Companions were under the impression that the Prophetic words were part of the Qur'ān. Later on, when the Sūrah was recited in its entirety, it did not contain the Prophetic words. This made them realize that the Prophetic words were actually of explanatory nature, and not part of the Qur'ān.

Verse [102:5] كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ (No! if you have had sure knowledge..) The word 'if' requires a principal clause that seems missing here, but the context suggests that the sense is the following: "If you had the sure knowledge of accountability on the Day of Judgement, you would not have engrossed yourselves in mutual competition in acquiring worldly goods and taking pride in their abundance."

Verse [102:7] ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ (...then you will see it with an eye of certainty.) The phrase 'ain-ul-yaqīn' (translated above as 'eye of certainty') refers to the certainty attained by physical observation, and this is the highest degree of certainty. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that when Holy Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام was on the mount of Ṭūr, his people started worshipping a calf. Allah informed him about this while he was still on the mountain. This piece of information did not affect Mūsā عليه السلام so much. However, when he returned and saw the Children of Israel, with his own eyes, worshipping the calf, he became so indignant that the tablets of Torah involuntarily fell from his hands. [Transmitted by Aḥmad and Ṭabarāni with an authentic chain of narrators, as quoted by Maḏharī].

Verse [102:8] ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ (Then you will be asked about all the pleasures [you enjoyed in the world].) This means that, on the Day of

Judgment, all of you will be questioned whether you had shown gratitude towards Allah's favors, or did you misuse them and were ungrateful to Allah? Some of these favors and bounties are explicitly mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'ān:

إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا

(...Surely, the ear, the eye and the heart - each one of them shall be interrogated about.) [17:36]

These organs and their faculties comprehend millions of blessings of Allah, and man will be questioned as to how he used them every moment of his life.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said that first question that will be put by Allah to every person is: "Did I not give you good health, and did I not give you cold water to quench your thirst?" (Tirmidhī, and Ibn Ḥibbān, with rating as *ṣaḥīḥ*, from Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه, as quoted by Ibn Kathīr)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is also reported to have said that no man will be able to move from his place unless he answers five questions: [1] How did he spend his life?; [2] In what pursuits did he expend his youthful energy?; [3] How did he earn his wealth - (by lawful means or unlawful means?); [4] Where did he spend his wealth - (in lawful ways or unlawful ways?); and [5] Did he act upon the knowledge Allah gave him? (Bukhārī).

Mujāhid, the leading authority on Tafsīr, says that this question on the Day of Judgement relates to every delight of the world that he enjoyed - whether it is in connection with food, clothes, house, wife, children, kingdom, government or honor. Qurtubī, having cited this, concludes that this is absolutely true, because the question does not specify any particular blessing.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah At-Takāthur
Ends here

Sūrah Al-'Aṣr (The Time)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 3 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿٣﴾

I swear by the Time, [1] man is in a state of loss indeed, [2] except those who believed and did righteous deeds, and advised each other for truth, and advised each other for patience. [3]

Virtue of [Studying] Sūrah al-'Aṣr

Sayyidnā 'Ubaidullāh Ibn Hiṣn رضي الله عنه reports that whenever two Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ met, they would not part company until one of them had recited Sūrah Al-'Aṣr in its entirety to the other. [Transmitted by At-Ṭabarānī]. Imām Shāfi'ī says that if people thought about Sūrah Al-'Aṣr carefully, it would be enough for their guidance. It is a concise but comprehensive Sūrah, which in three verses, outlines a complete way of human life based on the Islamic worldview.

In this Sūrah, Allah swears an oath by the 'Time' and says that mankind is in a state of loss; exception, however, is made of people who are characterized by four qualities: [1] faith; [2] righteous deeds; [3] advising each other for Truth; and [4] advising each other for patience. This is the only path to salvation in this world, as well as in the next world. The Qur'ānic prescription comprises, as we have just seen, of four

elements. The first two of them relate to man's own personal betterment, and the other two relate to other people's guidance and reform. [Ibn Kathīr].

Relationship between 'Time' and 'Human Loss'

The first point we need to analyze here is the relationship between the 'oath of time' and 'its subject' because there needs to be a relationship between an 'oath' and its 'subject'. The commentators, generally, state that all conditions of man, his growth and development, his movements, his actions and morality - all take place within the space of 'Time'. Man will lose the capital of his existence. Hours, days, months, and years of life pass quickly, spiritual and material potentialities decline, and abilities fade. Man is like a person who possesses great capital and, without his permission and will, every day, a portion of that capital is taken away. This is the nature of life in this world; the nature of continual loss. How well this has been put poetically:

حَيَاتُكَ أَنْفَاسٌ تُعَدُّ فَكُلَّمَا.....مَضَى نَفْسٌ مِنْهَا انْتَقَصَتْ بِهِ جُزْءٌ

"Your life comprises a few breaths that can be counted; when one of them is sent out, a part of your life has diminished."

Allah has granted man the invaluable capital of his life, so that he may invest it in profitable business venture. If he invests his capital of life sensibly in good works, there will be no limit to the profitable returns; but if he invests it unwisely in evil works, then, let alone attracting profitable returns, he will even lose his capital, and. In addition, he will incur the dreadful scourge of committing numerous sins. If however a person did not invest his life-capital in good deeds or in evil deeds, then he, at least, loses both the profit as well as the capital. This is not merely a poetic imagery, but is supported by a Prophetic Ḥadīth, according to which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said:

كُلٌّ يَغْدُو فَبَاعَ نَفْسَهُ، فَمَعَتْهَا أَوْ مَوْبَقُهَا

"When a person wakes up in the morning, he invests his soul or life in a business enterprise: some of the investors free or save the capital from loss and others destroy it."

The Qur'ān itself has used the word *tijārah* in relation to 'faith' and 'righteous deed', thus:

هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَى تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ

"...shall I tell you about a trade that saves you from a painful punishment? [61:10]"

Since 'Time' is man's capital of life, the man himself is the trader. Under normal circumstances, his capital is not a frozen thing that may be kept for a while and used up later when the need arises. The capital is fluid or flowing all the time, every minute and every second. The man who invests it needs to be very wise, intelligent and agile, so that he is able to swiftly and readily reap the profit from a flowing capital. One of the old scholars said that he had learnt the meaning of this verse from an ice-seller whose trade required utmost diligence, and if he were neglectful for a moment, his entire capital would melt away. That is why this verse has sworn an oath by the 'time' to indicate that it is a melting capital, and the only way to escape loss is to take every moment of his life as valuable, and use it for the four acts mentioned in the Sūrah.

Another possible reason for swearing by 'Time' may be that the 'Time' (in the sense of history) bears testimony to the fact mentioned in the Sūrah. If one thinks on the causes of the rise and decline of individuals and nations, he would certainly believe that it is only these four acts (mentioned in the forthcoming verses) that may ensure the real success and betterment of mankind. Whoever has ever abandoned them has suffered a great loss, as is evident from numerous events recorded by history.

Let us now study the 'four principles' mentioned in the Sūrah. As pointed out earlier, faith and righteous deeds are related to man's moral and spiritual growth and development. They are not in need of elaboration. However, the last two principles ['advising each other for truth'] and ['advising each other for patience'] require some elaboration.

The infinitive *tawāṣī* is derived from *waṣīyyah* which means 'to advise somebody strongly and effectively about the best thing to do in a particular situation'. The term *waṣīyyah* also refers to a 'will or testament' where a testator advises his executor regarding the disposal of his estate on his death.

The two parts are in fact two chapters of the same testament: [1] advice to truth; and [2] advice to patience and fortitude. These two concepts may be explained in different ways. One way to explain them is

that *ḥaqq* ('truth') refers to the package of 'correct faith' and 'good deeds', and *ṣabr* ('patience') refers to abstinence from all sins and evil deeds. Thus the first concept refers to 'enjoining good actions' and the second concept refers to 'forbidding evil actions'. The cumulative sense of the Sūrah is that believers have been enjoined not only to adopt right faith and good deeds themselves, but to advise others strongly and effectively to adopt them, and thus help in the creation of a healthy atmosphere around them.

It is also possible to interpret 'Truth' as referring to articles of faith, and to interpret 'patience' as referring to all good actions and abstinence from evil deeds. The word *ṣabr*, originally meaning 'to withhold oneself and to bind oneself', encompasses binding oneself down to the performance of righteous deeds and abstaining from sins.

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Taimiyyah has stated in one of his monographs that there are normally two factors that restrain a person from faith and righteous deeds: The first cause is some doubts about the true faith. When such doubts arise in the mind of people, it destroys their faith and leaves them confused and confounded. As a result, it adversely affects their righteous deeds. The second cause is the selfish desires that stop man from doing good, and involve him in evil deeds. In this situation, he theoretically believes that he should do good and abstain from sins, but his selfish desires lead him to stray from the right path. The current verse indicates to remove both causes of one's distraction. By stressing upon 'advice of truth' it has catered to the first cause, and that it should be removed by reforming others on theoretical and academic level, and by emphasizing on 'advice of patience' it has taken care of the second cause by enjoining upon the Muslims to advise others to give up the base desires and remain firm against their evil demands. Put differently, 'enjoining the truth' means 'improving the knowledge of Muslims or their intellectual development' and 'enjoining patience' means 'improving the practical life of Muslims'.

Need to Salvage the Entire Muslim Society

This Sūrah lays down the important principle of guidance for the Muslims that inviting other Muslims to keep to the true faith and good deeds is as much necessary as their own submission to the Holy Qur'ān and Sunnah. Without sincere efforts, to the best of one's ability, to invite

others to the right path, one's own good deeds are not enough to one's salvation. Especially, if a person does not take care of the spiritual and moral welfare of his wife, children and family and turns a blind eye to their unrighteous deeds, he is blocking his way to salvation - no matter how pious he himself might be. Therefore, the Qur'ān and the Sunnah make it obligatory upon every Muslim to do his best to invite others to the good deeds, and warn them against the evil acts. Unfortunately, let alone the general public, many learned people are lax in this matter. They think it is sufficient for them to be concerned about their own moral and spiritual well-being. They are not concerned about the well-being of their family and children. May Allah grant us the ability to act upon this verse.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-‘Aṣr
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Humazah (The Backbiter)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 9 verses

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 9

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ، ﴿٢﴾ يُحَسِّبُ
 أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ، ﴿٣﴾ كَلَّا لَيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ ﴿٤﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا
 الْحُطَمَةُ ﴿٥﴾ نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمَوْقُودَةُ ﴿٦﴾ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْآفِئِدَةِ ﴿٧﴾ إِنَّهَا
 عَلَيْهِمْ مُّوَصَّدَةٌ ﴿٨﴾ فِي عَمَدٍ مُّمدَّدةٍ ﴿٩﴾

Woe to every backbiter, derider [1] who accumulates wealth and counts it. [2] He thinks that his wealth has made him eternal. [3] Never! He will certainly be thrown into the Crusher. [4] And what may let you know what the Crusher is? [5] It is Allah's kindled fire, [6] that will peep into the hearts. [7] It will be closed on them, [8] in outstretched columns. [9]

Warning against dreadful end of those committing three obnoxious sins

This Sūrah warns of the severe punishment on three grave sins, and then highlights the nature of that severe punishment. The three sins are backbiting, deriding and selfish hoarding of wealth. The words *hamz* and *lamz* are used in several senses. Most commentators agree that the word *hamz*, from which is derived the word *humazah*, means to 'backbite', that is, to speak ill of a person behind his back. The word *lamz*, from which is

derived the word *lumazah*, means to 'slander' or 'to deride', that is, to speak ill of a person to his face. Both these sins are morally and socially obnoxious and deadly. The Qur'ān and the Sunnah have sounded a stern warning against these sins. However, 'backbiting' is, from one perspective, worse than 'slander'. 'Backbiting' is worse because the ill of a person is spoken behind his back; the victim is not present to defend himself and put an end to it; thus the sin continues to be committed to a greater and increasing degree. 'Slander', on the other hand, though an obnoxious sin in itself, is relatively less in degree than backbiting, because the victim is present to defend himself and put an end to face-to-face insulting or fault-finding with him. From another perspective 'slander' is worse than 'backbiting', because to speak ill of a person to his face is tantamount to insulting him and denigrating him. This is morally and socially more harmful and hurting, and therefore its punishment is more dreadful. According to a *Hadīth*, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said,

شَرَّ أَعْبَادِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى الْمَشَاءُ وَنَ بِالنَّمِيمَةِ الْمُفْرِقُونَ بَيْنَ الْأَجْبَةِ الْبَاعُونَ الْبِرَاءَ الْعِنْتَ

"The worst servants of Allah are those who speak ill of someone, creating enmity between friends and finding fault with innocent people."

The third evil quality denounced severely in this Sūrah is greed, that is, the selfish hoarding of wealth, against which is the stern warning of the dreadful end of those who have passion for worldly riches. This verse, however, refers to the love of, and passion for, wealth which is accumulated and counted over and over again. Other verses and *Aḥādīth* bear testimony to the fact that amassing of wealth in principle is not prohibited or sinful. Therefore, verse [2] must be interpreted in the light of those verses and traditions. This verse purports to say that anyone who accumulates wealth and does not pay his obligatory dues or has greed for wealth that leads him to pride and arrogance, or has love of wealth that engrosses him in the hoarding of wealth so profoundly that he forgets his religious obligations, his practice is condemned in the strongest terms, and a person attaching such profound love, greed and passion for material riches will suffer eternal perdition as described in the verses that follow.

Verse [104:7] تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ (that will peep into the hearts). In other words, the fire of Hell will reach their hearts. The basic property of fire is to burn every particle of the things that fall into it. When people are put

into the Hell-fire, it will devour every limb and organ of the body until it reaches their heart, but the person will not die. This characteristic of the Hell-fire is especially highlighted in the verse because the fire of this world kills the person even before reaching the heart. The fire of the Hell, on the other hand, will reach the heart in the state of life, and man will experience the torture of the burning of the heart while alive.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Humazah
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Fīl

(The Elephant)

This Sūrah is Makki, and it has 5 verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ ﴿١﴾ أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي
تَضَلُّيلٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ ﴿٣﴾ تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّنْ
سِجِّيلٍ ﴿٤﴾ فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّا كُوِلٍ ﴿٥﴾

Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the People of the Elephant? [1] Has He not turned their plan into nullity? [2] And He sent upon them flying birds in flocks, [3] throwing upon them stones of baked clay, [4] and thus He turned them into an eaten-up chaff. [5]

Commentary

The subject-matter of the Sūrah

This Sūrah refers to the story of the People of the Elephants who came with an army of elephants for the purpose of destroying the House of Allah in (The Holy Ka'bah) in Makkah. But their plan backfired and the Divine scourge overtook them. Allah destroyed the army with a flock of ordinary birds. Thus their plans were foiled and thwarted.

When did the event take place?

This event took place in the very year in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ was born at Makkah, according to some traditions and the popular view among the historians. [Ibn Kathīr]. The scholars of *ḥadīth* have taken this

event as a special type of *mu'jizah* (miracle) of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but the term *mu'jizah*, in its real sense, refers to an abnormal event shown by Allah to prove the claim of a prophet to having been sent by Him. Therefore, a *mu'jizah* is shown after a prophet's Divine commission. However, sometimes it happens that a miraculous event takes place before a prophet's claim to prophet-hood. This, in the parlance of the scholars of *ḥadīth*, is called *irhāṣ* which means 'prologue or introduction'. The word *rahṣ* means a 'foundation stone' [Qāmūs]. As the miraculous events taking place before the advent of prophets or before their claim to prophet-hood are meant to introduce and affirm that soon a particular prophet will be Divinely commissioned, they are referred to as *irhāṣ*. Many miraculous incidents of this nature [*irhāṣāt*] occurred before the birth and the advent of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and one of them was the incident of the 'People of the Elephants' who were miraculously prevented by the Heavenly scourge from destroying the House of Allah.

Story of the People of the Elephants

Ibn Kathīr, the leading authority on Prophetic Tradition and history, recounts the story as follows: Yemen was under the control of the rulers of Ḥimyar. They were idolaters. Their last king was Dhū Nuwās, an idolater himself, was the enemy of the righteous Christians of his time, who believed in and worshipped One Allah. He persecuted the believers, who were opposed to idol-worship, by burning them alive. Most scholars agree that he killed, in cold blood, by throwing about 20 000 sincere and righteous Christians in his city into a large fire pit, burning them alive in an effort to get them to give up their sincere religion. This is the story of the 'People of Fire-Pit' referred to in [85:4-7]. Two men somehow managed to escape from him. They fled to Syria and took refuge with Caesar, who was himself a Christian and the emperor of Syria. They requested the emperor to avenge this cruel act of Dhū Nuwās. Caesar wrote to Najāshi (Negus), the king of Abyssinia [now Ethiopia], who was closer to the home of the man. Najāshi sent two governors with him: Arbāt and Abrahah, along with a huge army.

The army invaded Yemen and freed the whole country from the possession of Ḥimyar. Dhū Nuwās tried to escape, but was drowned in the sea and died. Yemen thus became part of the Abyssinian dominion and Abrahah was appointed its viceroy. However, he and Arbāt fought

each other until Arbāṭ was eventually killed and Abrahah emerged victorious. The latter was appointed the commander of the Abyssinian army in Yemen, and the governor of that region. Having captured Yemen, he built a superbly luxurious cathedral in his area. The purpose was to attract the people of Yemen to make pilgrimage to this cathedral instead of *Ka'bah* in Makkah. It was huge and tall so that a person standing at the bottom was not able to see the top. He decorated the structure with gold, silver and other precious gems. In short, he meant it to be an architectural masterpiece, second to none or unsurpassed in the world, to be revered by all and sundry and divert pilgrims from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah to his cathedral in Yemen. He did this after he had witnessed the love and enthusiasm of the Yemeni Arabs - which were the same as those felt all over the Arabia - for the *Ka'bah*, with the aim of making them forsake their attachment to the Mosque of Makkah and turn instead to his new luxurious cathedral. Thus he proclaimed throughout his kingdom that no one should ever visit the *Ka'bah* in Makkah, and that the pilgrimage should from now on take place to his so-called '*Ka'bah*' in Yemen.

Although the Arabs were idol-worshippers, the love and reverence for the religion of Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام and the *Ka'bah* had permeated their hearts. As a result, the 'Andān, Qaḥṭān and Quraish tribes were enraged and infuriated by this proclamation. One night, someone entered the church and defecated in it. According to other narratives, a nomadic tribe halted near the church and started a fire for their own needs. The wind on that day was blowing violently and the cathedral caught on fire and sustained much loss. When Abrahah came to know about it, and learnt that a Quraishi had done this, he swore to march to the House of Makkah and destroy it stone by stone. Thus he prepared himself and set out with a huge and powerful army, so that none might prevent him from carrying out his mission. He asked for Najāshī's permission. He permitted him and sent for him, particularly for this expedition, a special elephant whose name was Maḥmūd. It was unusually huge in size and powerful in strength the like of which had never been seen before. The king of Abyssinia sent in eight more elephants as reinforcements for the army. Their intention was to use this extraordinary elephant to demolish the *Ka'bah*. They planned to do this by fastening chains to the pillars of the

Ka'bah and placing the other ends around the neck of the elephant. Then they would make the elephant pull on them in order to tear down the walls of the *Ka'bah* [God forbid!] all at once. When the Arabs heard of Abrahah's expedition, they considered it their moral obligation to defend the Sacred House and thwart the evil plans of the conspirators. Thus, the Arabs raised a large army under the command of Dhū Nafr, a Yamenite Arab. He called the Arabs to go to war against Abrahah and fight in defense of the Sacred House, so that the enemy is unable to tear it down. The people responded to him readily and entered into battle with the enemy, but he defeated them. This was due to Allah's will that no humans should protect His House and His intent to expose the enemy to embarrassment and venerate the Sacred Sanctuary to the highest degree. Dhū Nafr was captured and taken prisoner.

The army continued on its way until it came to the settlement of the Banū Khath'am tribe. Their leader, Nufail Ibn Ḥabīb, led his entire tribe against the army, but they too were defeated and Nufail was taken prisoner. Abrahah at first decided to kill him, but at second thought he forgave him and took him as his guide to show him the way to Ḥijāz.

When the army approached Ṭā'if, the people of Thaḳīf went out to Abrahah. They wanted to pacify him, because they had heard about the fate of those who had resisted him previously. Also, they were afraid that he would demolish their temple consecrated in the name of their idol Al-Lāt. Therefore, they did not resist him on the understanding that he would not touch the idol of Lāt. He was compassionate to them, and they sent a guide with him by the name of Abū Righāl. When they arrived in a place called Al-Maghmas, near Makkah, they settled there. This was the pasture where the camels of the Quraish grazed. Abrahah sent his troops on a foray to capture the camels and other grazing animals of the Makkans. They accomplished their mission. They also drove away about two hundred camels of 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, grandfather of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the leader of the Quraish. Abrahah then sent an emissary named Ḥanāṭah Al-Ḥimyārī to enter Makkah and bring to him the leader of the Quraish. He mandated him to convey to the leader of the Quraish his message that the king did not come to fight with the Makkans unless they stood in his way of destroying their Sacred Sanctuary. Arriving in the city, Ḥanāṭah was directed to 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib

Ibn Hāshim, to whom he communicated Abrahah's message. According to Ibn Ishāq's narration, 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib replied: "By Allah! We too have no desire to fight him, nor do we have the might to do so. This is the Sacred Sanctuary of Allah built by His friend Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. If He wills to prevent Abrahah from pulling it down, He will protect it. And if He allows him to approach it, by Allah, we have no means to defend it." So Ḥanāṭah told him: "Come with me to Abrahah." So 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib went with him.

When Abrahah saw him, he was highly impressed, because 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib had the most handsome, charming and attractive personality. He descended from his throne and sat with the latter on a carpet on the ground. He then said to his interpreter to ask him: "What do you need?" 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib replied to the interpreter: "I want the king to give back my two hundred camels which his soldiers have taken from me." Then Abrahah told his interpreter to relay to him: "When I first set my eyes on you, I admired you greatly and had great respect for you. But all that is now lost. You speak only of your two hundred camels while you fully well know that I have come to tear down your *Ka'bah* which is the embodiment of your religion and the religion of your forefathers. You did not even say a single word to persuade me to spare it." 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib calmly responded: "I am the owner of my camels and am concerned about them. I am not the owner of Allah's House. The Master of the House knows how best to protect His House." Abrahah rudely rebuffed: "Your God cannot protect it from me." 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib made a rejoinder: "Then do as you like or [take your chance!]" According to other narratives, there were other chiefs of Quraish with 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib at the time of this negotiation. They proposed to Abrahah that if he withdrew from the Sanctuary, the entire region of Tihamah would pay him a third of their agricultural produce annually as tribute. But he turned down the offer. He then gave back 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib's camels to him. 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib took his camels and went back home, ordering his people to leave Makkah and seek shelter at the top of the mountains. He feared that atrocities might be committed by the army against them. Then he went with a few figures of the Quraish to the Sacred Sanctuary. He held the metal ring of the door of *Ka'bah* and prayed Allah to give them victory over Abrahah and his army. While hanging on to the ring of the *Ka'bah*'s door, he earnestly

implored: "We have no strength to face the army of Abrahah. So, O my Lord! Defend Your *Ka'bah*." Having so prayed in all earnestness, 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib led all the Makkans to the neighbouring mountains, because they were convinced that Allah's scourge would overtake Abrahah and his troops. This is the reason why they spoke to Abrahah about their camels, and not about the House of Allah.

When the next morning dawned, Abrahah prepared to enter the sacred city of Makkah. He prepared the elephant named Maḥmūd and mobilized his army, and they turned the elephant towards the *Ka'bah*. At that moment Nufail Ibn Ḥabīb, whom Abrahah had captured earlier, approached it and stood next to it, and taking it by its ear, he said: "Return safely where you came from, because you are, verily, in the Sacred City of Allah." Then he released the elephant's ear and it knelt and sat down forthwith. The elephant drivers exerted all efforts to persuade the elephant to enter the City, but their efforts were in vain. Then they tried striking it with large iron spears and putting iron arrowheads in its trunk. They beat it on its head with axes and used hooked staffs to pull it out of its resistance and make it stand, but it refused. So they turned it towards Yemen, and it rose and walked quickly. Then they turned it towards Syria, it walked fast. Then they turned it towards the east and it walked briskly. Then they turned it towards Makkah, it knelt and sat down again .

This was one aspect of the manifestation of the Divine power unfolding itself miraculously. On the other hand, some flocks of birds were seen coming from the sea. Each bird carried three pebbles of the size of gram seeds or lentils, one in each claw and two in its beak. According to Wāqidi's narration, the birds looked unusual which were never seen before. They looked smaller than pigeons, and their claws were red in colour. They flew over Abrahah's army and pelted them with the pebbles. Each pebble was more devastating than the bullet of a revolver . When it fell on anything, it tore directly through the body and settled deep in the ground. Seeing this scourge, the elephants fled in panic, except one which was harmed and destroyed by the pebble. Not all of Abrahah's men were destroyed instantly. People escaped in different directions. They died excruciatingly on their way back. As Allah had willed that the most distressful scourge should be inflicted upon Abrahah, He did not allow

him to die immediately. In fact, Allah afflicted him with a deadly disease. A kind of poison spread thoroughly through his entire body and caused every single part to decay - his limbs began to rot and separate from the rest of his body and he started losing one finger after another. His body was carried back in that state to Yemen. By the time they arrived back in Ṣan'ā', the capital of Yemen, his body was broken down limb by limb until he eventually died. Two of Maḥmūd's (name of elephant) drivers remained in Makkah, but both of them became blind and paralyzed. Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq reports that Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها narrates that she saw them blind and paralyzed. Her sister, Sayyidah Asmā' رضي الله عنها, says that she saw the two blind and paralyzed men begging. The 'People of the Elephants' is a momentous event in Arab history, which was witnessed by hundreds of Arabs. It is to this well-known historical incident that this Sūrah refers.

Lexical Analysis

Verse [105:1] أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ (Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the people of the Elephant?) In the phrase *alam tara* [have you not seen], the second person pronoun refers to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is interesting to note that the event took place before the blessed birth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He could not have seen or witnessed it with his own eyes. However, the incident was so widely known as if the Prophet ﷺ had seen it with his own eyes, which is a sign of the certainty of its happening. Such a knowledge is described by the word *ru'yat* [seeing]. As reported earlier, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها and her sister, Sayyidah Asmā' رضي الله عنها, both say that they had seen the two camel drivers had become blind and paralyzed and used to go around begging. In this way, the traces of this event were seen even after the birth of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Verse [105:3] طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ (... birds in flocks.) The word *abābīl* is plural and is said to have no singular. It means birds in flocks, or swarms of birds. It is not the name of a particular bird. In Urdu usually *abābīl* refers to 'swallows', they are not implied in the verse as indicated in the above narration. These birds were somewhat smaller in size than pigeon and they were birds that were never seen before. [Sa'īd Ibn Jubair, as quoted by Qurṭubī].

Verse [105:4] بِحِجَارَةٍ مِنْ سِجِّيلٍ (...stones of baked clay.) The word *sijjīl* is a

compound Persian word, Arabicized, made up of two Persian words: *sang* [stone] and *gil* [clay]. They refer to ordinary or common clay rolled into little balls and then baked to harden. These pebbles are not heavy or hard like rocks chipped off mountains. They in themselves did not have any devastating power, but it was Allah who created in these stones the high capability of explosion and blowing-up even more than the bullets of a revolver.

Verse [105:5] فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ (And thus He turned them into an eaten-up chaff .) The word 'aṣf means 'chaff, straw, husk or bran'. Usually the 'aṣf is scattered and when it is eaten or devoured by animals, it does not remain in the same state. This is what happened to Abrahah and his army .

Conclusion

The miraculous event of the 'People of the Elephant' enhanced in the hearts of the entire Arabian society the love, respect and honor of the Quraish. When Arabia witnessed that Allah has, on their behalf, miraculously destroyed their enemy, they were convinced that the Quraish are men of God, and custodians of the Sacred House of Allah [Qurṭubī]. That is why they were respected and protected wherever they went; although other caravans in Arabia had to fear attacks from highway robbers, the Quraish travelled untouched and enjoyed high social status. As a result, they could freely and safely carry out their commercial activities in the neighboring states, and enjoy economic prosperity. The Sūrah that follows refers to these journeys and invites the Quraish to be thankful to Allah and worship Him alone for providing them with all of their needs.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Fīl
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Quraish

(The Quraish)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 4 verses

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 4

لَا يَلْفُ قُرَيْشٍ ﴿١﴾ إِلَّا فِيهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ ﴿٢﴾ فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ
هَذَا الْبَيْتِ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ ۖ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ ﴿٤﴾

Because of the familiarity of the Quraish, [1] that is, their familiarity with the trips of winter and summer, [2] they must worship the Lord of this House, [3] who gave them food against hunger, and gave them security against fear. [4]

Commentary

The Subject-matter of Sūrah Al-Fīl and Sūrah Al-Quraish

All commentators concur that the subject-matter of the two Sūrahs is so closely related that in some of the copies of the Qur'ān they had been written as a single Sūrah without the insertion of *bismillah* between them. But when Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه compiled a standard copy of the Holy Qur'ān with the consensus of all the companions of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, he separated these two Sūrahs and inserted *bismillah* between them, and the two Sūrahs.

Lexical Analysis

لَا يَلْفُ قُرَيْشٍ (Because of the familiarity of the Quraish 106:1). The particle *li* is a preposition. According to the rules of Arabic grammar, it should be linked with another sentence. What is that sentence here? In answer to this question, different possibilities are highlighted by the exegetes.

Keeping in view the close relation of the present Sūrah with the previous one, some of them have held that the following sentence should be taken as understood here: *أَنَا أَهْلَكْنَا أَصْحَابَ الْفِيلِ* "We [Allah] destroyed the 'people of the elephant' so that the Quraish, who were familiar with two commercial trips during winter and summer, may not have any obstacle in their trips, and by this trading activity they might develop a certain prestige for them and respect them." A second school of interpreters has taken the following sentence as understood: *اعجبوا* (One should wonder on the Quraish undertaking winter and summer journeys freely and safely.) A third school of interpreters says that this is the *lam* of *ta'lil* and it is syntactically related to the sentence that follows it *فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ* (they must worship the Lord of this House.) The Sūrah draws attention to the fact that the Quraish used to make two trade-journeys - one in winter to Yemen and another in summer to Syria. These trade-journeys made them wealthy and affluent. This was possible because Allah annihilated their enemies, the people of the elephant, in an exemplary way and created in the hearts of the people an awe and reverence for them. People held them in high esteem, respect and honor in all the territories where they went.

Superiority of Quraish

This Sūrah indicates that Quraish, of all the tribes of Arabia, was most acceptable in the sight of Allah. The Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: "Verily, Allah selected Kinānah from the offspring of Prophet Ismā'īl عليه السلام and selected Quraish from the progeny of Kinānah. From the Quraish, Allah selected Banū Hāshim and from Banū Hāshim He selected me." [Baghawī on the authority of Wāthilah Ibn Asqa]. Another Tradition reports that the Messenger of Allah عليه السلام said: "People will follow Quraish in matters of good as well as in matters of evil." [Muslim on the authority of Jābir, as quoted by Maḥzarī]. The reason for the selection of the tribes mentioned in the first Tradition is presumably on account of their special abilities, innate capacities and natural endowments. Even in the days of paganism and ignorance, when people practiced *kufr* and *shirk*, their morals and inborn abilities were of a very high standard. They had the perfect capacity to accept the truth. This is the reason why most of the blessed Companions and Friends of Allah were Quraishites. [Mazhari]

Verse [106:2] *رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ* (...their familiarity with the trips of winter and summer.) It is a known fact that Makkah is situated in an utterly bleak and arid valley where no agricultural produce grows, nor are there any orchards where the people of Makkah could reap any kind

of fruits. Therefore, the founder of the House of Allah, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm Khalīl-ullah ﷺ, prayed to Allah at the time of founding the city, thus: [2:126] رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا آرْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ (My Lord, make this a city of peace, and provide its people with fruits) and this fact is mentioned in [28:57], thus: يُجْبَىٰ إِلَيْهِ ثَمَرَاتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ (to which the fruits of everything are drawn)". The Quraish thus needed to make these commercial trips out of Makkah into the neighboring territories to bring the necessities of life to their city. Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه reports that the people of Makkah were in a state of abject poverty and Hāshim, the great grandfather of the Prophet ﷺ, exhorted the Quraish to undertake the trading caravans to the neighboring territories. As Syria was a cold region, they went there in summer; and Yemen had a warm climate, so they went there in winter to carry out their commercial activities. They, after their commercial ventures that brought to them great profits and gains, would return to their city safely due to the respect that the people had for them, because they were the keepers and custodians of Allah's sanctuary. Therefore, whoever knew them would honor them. Even those who came to them and traveled with them, would be safe because of them. Hashim was the leader of the Quraish and maintained the economic principle to distribute among the rich and the poor members of the Quraish the gains and the profits made in their business. As a result, even the poor people lived like the wealthy people. Furthermore, an additional Divine favor was granted to them: Allah spared them the trouble of making these annual trips, in that the areas adjacent to Makkah such as Yemen, Tabālah and Ḥarsh were made fertile, fecund and productive where corns, food grains and other agricultural produce grew abundantly - even more than their need. As a result, they had to carry these agricultural produce to Jeddah where they sold them. Thus most of the necessities were available in Jeddah. The people of Makkah, instead of undertaking the two long journeys, went to Jeddah, merely two stations away, to bring their necessities of life. In the current verse, Allah mentions His favor upon them.

Verse [106:3] فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ (they must worship the Lord of this House.) Having mentioned the Divine favors, the Quraish are especially enjoined to express their gratitude to 'the Lord of this House'. Here, out of many attributes of Allah, 'the Lord of this House' is singled out, because it was this House that became the source and fountain of all blessings for them.

Verse [106:4] الَّذِينَ أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ (Who gave them food against hunger, and gave them security against fear.) The verse comprehensively captures all that was needed for the Quraish to live

happily and peacefully in the world. The first phrase **أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ** (Who gave them food against hunger) implies that they were provided all year round with every kind of fruit and food. The security referred to in the second phrase **أَمْنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ** (and gave them security against fear) includes security from enemies and robbers (who, out of their respect to them as guardians of Ka'bah, spared them from their attacks), and it also includes security from the punishment in the Hereafter (for those who fulfilled the necessary conditions of faith).

Special Note

Ibn Kathīr says that whoever worships Allah according to the command given in this verse, Allah will give him safety, not only in this world, but also security from punishment in the Hereafter. And whoever deviates from this command, He will deprive him of both types of safety and security as exemplified in the following verse [16:112] :

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ آمِنَةً مُطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعَمِ اللَّهِ فَأَذَاقَهَا اللَّهُ لِبَاسَ الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

(And Allah has given an example that there was a town, secure and satisfied, with its sustenance coming in plenty from every place. Then, it turned ungrateful to the bounties of Allah; so, Allah made it taste hunger and terror [cast over it] like a garment in return of what its people used to do. [16:112])

A Great Benefit

Abul Ḥasan Qazwīnī has stated that anyone who fears his enemy or an affliction, should recite Sūrah Al-Quraish. It will give him security from fear and calamity. This is cited by Imām Jazrī and he says that this Sūrah has been tried and tested successfully for this purpose. Qāḍī Thanā'ullah Pānī Patti رحمه الله تعالى cites this in his Tafsīr Maḥzarī and says that his Shaikh Mirzā Maḥzar Jān-i-Jānān instructed him to recite this Sūrah at the time of fear and danger, and said its recitation has been tested and tried to avert all kinds of calamities and afflictions. Qāḍī Thanā'ullah says that he has experienced it several times.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Quraish
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Mā'un

(The Small Gifts)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 7 verses

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 7

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالذِّينِ ﴿١﴾ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَا
يُحِضُّ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ ﴿٣﴾ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٤﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ
عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ﴿٥﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ ﴿٦﴾ وَيَمْنَعُونَ
الْمَاعُونَ ﴿٧﴾

Have you seen him who denies the Requital? [1] So he is the same one who pushes away the orphan. [2] and does not persuade (others) to feed the needy. [3] So, woe to those performers of *ṣalāh*, [4] who are neglectful of their *ṣalāh*, [5] who (do good only to) show off, [6] and refuse (to give even) small gifts. [7]

The love of the world causes nations to lose faith and consign Allah to oblivion

This Sūrah denounces some of the evil actions of the pagans and the hypocrites, and it holds out a threat of destruction to those who commit them. If these evil actions are committed by believers, who do not reject the true faith, they are still heinous and gravely sinful, but the threat of chastisement made in this sūrah does not apply to them. Therefore, verse [107:1] أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالذِّينِ (Have you not seen him who denies the Requital?), as a preamble, makes plain that the person who performs

these evil deeds is one who cries lies to the Doom, and thus the warning of punishment mentioned in this Sūrah is for those who deny the religion and the Day of Judgement. The verse contains a subtle indication that the moral sins condemned in this Sūrah are far too inconceivable from a believer; only a non-believer or hypocrite would commit them. The morally bad and sinful deeds mentioned here are: [1] oppressing and insulting the orphan, and being unkind to them; [2] despite the means, failing to feed the poor or failing to urge others to feed them; [3] praying [in public only, not in private] only to show the people; and [4] failing to pay the Zakāh [obligatory alms]. These actions are intrinsically bad and gravely sinful, but their commission in the wake of *kufr* [disbelief] and *takdhīb* [rejection] are even more aggravating, because they attract eternal perdition, which in this Sūrah is described as *wail* [heavy affliction or calamity or disaster or destruction].

Verses [107:4-6]. *فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ. الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ. الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ.* (So woe to those performers of *ṣalāh* who are neglectful of their *ṣalāh*, who [do good only to] show off.) These verses describe the characteristics of the hypocrites who used to perform the prayers only to make a display of them to the people and prove that their claim of being sincere Muslims is true. As they do not believe in the obligatory nature of the prayers, they are not regular at them, and they do not observe the prescribed times, but offer them carelessly at the eleventh hour or completely out of time. They perform them only when they must to make a display of them, otherwise they have no place in their lives. The preposition 'an (translated above as 'of) in the prepositional phrase *عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ* "[neglectful] of their *ṣalāh*" is significant. It indicates that they [the hypocrites] are neglectful of the very concept of *ṣalāh*. This does not refer to the unintentional errors, slips and mistakes that Muslims make in their prayers. The Holy Prophet ﷺ also made this type of unintentional mistakes in his prayers. The warning of Hell by the expression of wail does not apply to such mistakes. If that was the case, the prepositional phrase would have been *fi salatihim* [in their prayers] instead of [*an Ṣalatihim* [neglectful of their prayers].

Verse [107:7]. *وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ* (And refuse [to give even] small gifts.) The word *mā'ūn* literally means 'any small or petty thing' and idiomatically it refers to 'small household articles of common use such as axe, hoe, cooking pot which at the time of need neighbors borrow from one another'.

Anyone who is unwilling to lend such small items is morally a very miserly and mean person. However, in the current verse the word *mā'ūn* is taken in the sense of *Zakāh* [obligatory alms] because it is a little amount out of much wealth - only 2½% out of the entire wealth. Majority of the commentators - like Sayyidnā 'Alī, Ibn 'Umar, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Qatādah, Ḍaḥḥāk  and others - hold the view that *mā'ūn* implies *Zakāh*. [Maḏharī]. The threat of *wail* (torment of Hell) can only be for failure to fulfil one's legal obligation. Giving small items to help out one's fellow human beings is a humanitarian and philanthropic gesture that carries much reward in the Hereafter, but it is not an obligation at all, the violation of which could lead to eternal perdition. Traditions reporting that *mā'ūn* refers to pots and pans, and other household items of daily use are to show that if a person is reluctant to part with such small items, how will he have the heart to part with 2½% of his wealth? The Traditions purport to say that these people are so narrow-minded that they are not willing to make the least bit of selfless sacrifice for the welfare and well-being of others. They are morally mean, low and miserly in the extreme. Therefore, they do not pay their legal alms. Thus the threat of punishment in Hell-fire is not on account of failure to do one's neighborly acts of kindness, but for failure to pay the legal alms and perhaps for their extreme niggardliness.

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Mā'ūn
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Kauthar

(The Kauthar)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 3 verses

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ﴿١﴾ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحِرْ ﴿٢﴾ إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ
هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ ﴿٣﴾

(O Prophet,) surely We have given to you Al-Kauthar (a river in Paradise). [1] So, offer *ṣalāh* (prayer) to your Lord, and sacrifice. [2] Surely it is your enemy whose traces are cut off. [3]

Cause of Revelation

It is reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, on the authority of Suddī, and by Baihaqī, in *Dalā'il-un- Nubuwwah*, on the authority of Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Ibn Ḥusain, that the Arabs used to taunt and revile people who have lost their male issues. They used to refer to such a person as '*abtar*', meaning 'having no male offspring or no male issue'. In keeping with this social evil, when the young son of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, namely Qāsim passed away, some leaders of Quraish, especially 'Aṣ Ibn Wa'il, started taunting the Holy Prophet ﷺ telling the people that they no longer need to bother about him, because he had no sons to carry on his name and that he would be forgotten after his death; he is '*abtar*', that is, his lineage is cut off. On this occasion, the Sūrah was revealed. [Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr, Maḥzarī].

According to some narratives, Ka'b Ibn Ashraf, a Jew of Madīnah,

came to Makkah and the Quraish asked him: "You are the leader of the people. What do you think about this young man who claims that he is better than us (in religion), while we are the people who serve the pilgrims; we are the custodians of Ka'bah and supply water to the pilgrims." He replied: "You are better than him." This Sūrah was revealed on that occasion. [Ibn Kathīr cites this incident from Bazzār with an authentic chain of narrators; and Mazharī says that Muslim also transmitted the incident].

According to these narrations, this Sūrah was sent down when the unbelievers of Makkah taunted the Holy Prophet ﷺ because he had lost all his male issues, and called him 'abtar' or insulted him for some other reason. The present Sūrah gives an answer to the taunts of the unbelievers, and maintains that there is no justification for calling the Holy Prophet ﷺ an 'abtar' only because he had no male child alive, not only because his lineal offspring will remain till the Day of Judgment, though from his daughters, but he was destined to be the spiritual father of a multitude of sons in all ages to the end of time, sons who were to be far more faithful, obedient and loving than the sons of any father, and they will outnumber the followers of all the Prophets that came before him. The Sūrah has also dismissed the statement of Ka'b Ibn Ashraf, and highlights the great honor and respect given to him by Allah.

The River or Fountain of Kauthar

Verse [108:1] **إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَكَ الْكَوْثَرَ** ([O Prophet,] surely, We have given you Al-Kauthar [a river in Paradise].) The word 'Al-Kauthar' literally means 'abundant goodness'. Imām Bukhārī has recorded on the authority of Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه that Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said about 'al-Kauthar': 'It is the abundant goodness that Allah gave to him [Holy Prophet ﷺ]'. A special pupil of Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه said: "I asked Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه that people claim that it is a river in Paradise." Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله عنه replied that the river in Paradise is part of the goodness that Allah gave him. Therefore, Mujāhid interprets that it is the abundant goodness of this world, as well as of the next world. This explanation includes the river in Paradise and other things as well.

The following Ḥadīth is recorded in Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and Nasā'ī from Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه that he said:

بيننا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بين أظهرنا في المسجد إذ اغفى اغفاءً، ثم

رفع رأسه متبسّمًا. قلنا: ما أضحكك يا رسول الله؟ قال: لقد أنزلت عليّ أنفا سورة فقرأ بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم أنا أعطيتك الكوثر الخ ثم قال: اتدرون ما الكوثر؟ قلنا: الله ورسوله أعلم، قال: فأنه نهرٌ وعدني به ربي عز وجل عليه خير كثير، وهو حوض ترد عليه امتي يوم القيامة، أنيته عدد نجوم في السماء، فيحتلج العبد منهم، فأقول ربّ أنه من امتي فيقول: أنّك لا تدري ما أحدث بعدك.

"While we were with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the mosque, he went into some kind of slumber or doziness. Then he lifted his head smiling. We asked : 'O Messenger of Allah! What has caused you to smile?' He replied: 'A Sūrah has just been revealed to me.' Then he recited Bismillah and Sūrah Al-Kauthar. Then he asked: 'Do you know what is Al-Kauthar?' We replied: 'Allah and His Messenger know best,' He said: 'It is a river that my Lord, the Mighty and Majestic, has promised me and it has abundant goodness. It is a fountain where my Ummah will come on the Day of Judgement. Its containers are as numerous as the stars in the sky. Then a servant of Allah from among them will be prevented from it, and I will say: 'O Lord! Verily, he is from my Ummah [followers.] ' Then Allah will say: 'You do not know what he introduced [or innovated] after you.'"

This is the wording of Muslim. Ibn Kathīr, having cited this Tradition, writes further:

وقد ورد في صفة الحوض يوم القيمة أنّه يشخب فيه ميزابان من السماء من نهر الكوثر وان أنيته عدد نجوم السماء.

"It is reported regarding the description of the fountain on the Day of Judgement that two channels will lead from the sky to supply the fountain with the water of Kauthar. It will have more cups than the stars in the sky."

The Tradition cited above clarifies many points.

- [1] It indicates the cause of the revelation of Sūrah Al-Kauthar.
- [2] It gives its authentic interpretation, that is, 'abundant goodness' and that it includes the fountain of Kauthar which will quench the thirst of the Prophet's ﷺ followers on the Day of Judgement.
- [3] The actual river of Kauthar is in Paradise, and the fountain of Kauthar will be on the Plain of Gathering. Two channels will flow from the river of Paradise into the fountain of Gathering, augmenting

its supply of water.

[4] It reconciles the narratives that tell us that the believers will arrive at the fountain of Kauthar before their entry into Paradise.

[5] Some people will be turned away from the fountain, because they later on turned away from Islam, or they were not Muslims at all, but expressed their Islam only hypocritically. Their hypocrisy was exposed after the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Allah knows best!

There are Traditions that describe the cleanness and sweetness of water of Kauthar, and that its banks are adorned with pearls. These qualities cannot be compared with anything in this world.

If the revelation of Sūrah Al-Kauthar is in response to the taunting of the heathens who called him 'abtar' because he had lost his sons, as explained earlier, this Sūrah comforts him. They used to say that when he would pass away, there shall be none to take his name on account of having no male offspring and his activities will cease. This Sūrah tells him that he has been granted Al-Kauthar and completely dismisses the reproach of his enemies, in that his lineage does not stop here in this world, but his spiritual lineage will continue till the Day of Gathering. His spiritual sons and daughters will outnumber the Ummahs of the previous Prophets. They will also enjoy the greatest respect and honor.

Prayer and Sacrifice

Verse [108:2] فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرْ (So, offer *ṣalāh* [prayer] to your Lord, and sacrifice.) The imperative *inḥar* is derived from *naḥr* which means 'to sacrifice by stabbing upwards into the jugular vein [the way of slaughter for camels as opposed to other cattle]'. As the Arabs generally used to sacrifice camels, the verse employs the imperative *wanḥar*. Occasionally, the word *naḥr* is used in the general sense of 'sacrifice'.

Verse [108:1] vehemently denounces the false notion of the unbelievers and gives glad tidings of Kauthar to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in this world as well as in the next world. He will have the abundant goodness in both the worlds immeasurably. The current verse directs the Holy Prophet ﷺ the way to express his gratitude to Allah on this good tiding: [1] prayer; and [2] sacrifice. *Ṣalāh* is the highest form of physical worship; and sacrifice is highest form of pecuniary or monetary form of worship.

Sacrifice in the name of Allah is a fight against idolatry, because the idolaters used to sacrifice in the name of their idols. On that basis, Islamic sacrifice is distinctive and important. On another occasion, the Qur'an jointly mentions prayer and sacrifice, thus: [6:162]

إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

My prayer, my offering, my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. [6:162]

According to Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, 'Ata', Mujāhid, Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمهم الله تعالى and others, the imperative *wanhar* means 'sacrifice or offer oblation'. Some people have attributed to some leading exegetes that they have taken this imperative to mean: 'Fold your hands or arms on the chest' Ibn Kathīr holds such narrations as '*munkar*', (that is, a narration which is narrated by a weak narrator and contradicts the narration of a stronger and more reliable authority.)

The Enemy of the Prophet ﷺ is Cut Off

Verse [108:3] إِنَّ شَانِكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ (Surely, it is your enemy whose traces are cut off.) The word *shāni*' as used in the original is derived from *sha'n* and means 'one who hates, traducer, insulter'. This verse was revealed in connection with the unbelievers who used to taunt the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and referred to him as '*abtar*'. Most narratives identify the traducer as 'Aṣ Ibn Wā'il, others identify him as 'Uqbah and yet others identify him as Ka'b Ibn Ashraf. Allah granted the Messenger of Allah ﷺ the Kauthar, that is, abundant goodness which includes a multitude of children. How wonderful are the works of Allah! There is no scarcity of lineal children of the holy Prophet ﷺ. Furthermore, a Prophet is the spiritual father of his entire Ummah which comprises his spiritual children. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is the spiritual father of his entire Ummah till the end of time and as such will have the largest number of spiritual children compared to the Ummahs of the previous Prophets. In this way, the enemy has been rebutted, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, their argument has been rebuffed that it is not the Prophet ﷺ, but his enemies are, '*abtar*' or cut off.

Note

Imagine how Allah has raised the name of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and exalted his reputation in every nook and corner of the world since the

inception of his prophet-hood till today, and it will continue to be so until the end of time. His blessed name is recited along with Allah's name five times a day from the minarets. In the Hereafter, he will be granted the (Al-Maqām Al-Maḥmūd) Praised Station where he will make the Grand Intercession on behalf of the entire progeny of 'Ādam عليه السلام. On the contrary, ask the world history: Where are the children of 'Āṣ Ibn Wā'il? Where are the children of Ka'b Ibn Ashraf ? where are the children of 'Uqbah, and what happened to their families? Their very own names have been lost to the world. No one cares to remember them. They have become unknown who thought that soon the Holy Prophet ﷺ will become unknown. They have left this world and the strings of their lineage have been cut off. Their names have been preserved in Islamic traditions only for purposes of interpretation of relevant verses. فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَبْصَارِ "So, O People of insight, take note !" [59:2].

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Kauthar
Ends here

Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn (The Disbelievers)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 6 verses

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 6

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١﴾ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا
أَعْبُدُ ﴿٣﴾ وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُمْ ﴿٤﴾ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ﴿٥﴾
لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ ﴿٦﴾

Say, "O disbelievers, [1] I do not worship that which you worship, [2] nor do you worship the One whom I worship. [3] And neither I am going to worship that which you have worshipped, [4] nor will you worship the One whom I worship. [5] For you is your faith, and for me, my faith." [6]

Virtues and Characteristics of the Sūrah

Sayyidah 'A'shah رضي الله عنها reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said that it is better to recite two sūrahs in the sunnah prayer of fajr, namely, the Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn and Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ. [Transmitted by Ibn Hishām as quoted by Maẓharī]. Ibn Kathīr cites several traditions in which a large number of Companions report that they heard the Messenger of Allah often recite Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn and Al-Ikhlāṣ in the sunnah prayer of fajr and maghrib. Some of the Companions requested the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to teach them some supplications to recite at the time of sleeping. He taught them to recite Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn and said that this will give them immunity from idolatry. [Transmitted by Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd]. Sayyidnā

Jubair Ibn Muṭʿim ؓ says that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked him whether he wished to be the happiest, most prosperous and well-to-do person among his comrades when he goes out on a journey. He replied: "Yes, Messenger of Allah, I certainly do wish that." The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him to recite the last five surahs of the Qurʾān starting from Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn to the end, and to start every surah with *Bismillah*, and to end with *Bismillah*. Sayyidnā Jubair ؓ says that in those days he used to be distressed, miserable and man of little provisions for journeys compared to his comrades. But when he started acting upon this teaching of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he became more prosperous than others. [Maḏharī with reference to Abū Yaʿlā]. Sayyidnā ʿAlī ؓ reports that once a scorpion bit the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, so he asked for water and salt. He applied the water on the spot where the scorpion bit him, and he recited Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn, Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah An-Nās. [Maḏharī]

Cause of Revelation

Ibn Ishāq reports from Sayyidnā Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ that Walīd Ibn Mughīrah, ʿAṣ Ibn Waʿil, Aswad Ibn ʿAbdul-Muṭṭalib and Umayyah Ibn Khalaf approached the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and proposed a compromise to him to the effect that he should worship their idols for a year, and they would worship Allah for a year. [Qurtubī]. According to Sayyidnā Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ, as recorded in Ṭabarānī, the pagans of Makkah proposed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "We shall give you so much of wealth that you will become the richest man in Makkah; we shall give you whichever woman you like in marriage; we are willing to follow and obey you as our leader on condition that you do not speak ill of our gods. If you do not agree to this, then let us agree that you worship our gods for a year and we would worship your God for another year" [Maḏharī].

According to Abū Ṣaliḥ's report, Sayyidnā Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ narrates that the pagans of Makkah made the following proposal for compromise: "At least touch some of our gods, we will believe in you." Upon this, Jibraʿīl ؑ descended with Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn.

This Sūrah is the Sūrah of disavowal from the actions of the pagans, and enjoins the Muslims to worship Allah alone to the exclusion of all forms of pagan worship.

The Traditions cited above indicate that the pagans had made many

proposals to the Holy Prophet ﷺ not once or in a single session, but on different occasions and in different sessions in the hope that at one time or another a compromise might be reached. Therefore, there was a need to respond to all the proposals definitely and decisively, and thus frustrate their hope once and for all. All these incidents might have taken place at different times and different places. The purport of the Sūrah is to prevent or prohibit any such compromise.

Verse [109:2] لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ (I do not worship that which you worship,) In this Sūrah, the statements are repeated. The repetition has been explained in different ways by different authorities. Bukhārī explains it thus: When two identical, or near identical, expressions occur side by side, many commentators interpret one of them as happening in the present time and the other as going to happen in the future time. Thus there is no meaningless repetition. The second and the third verses refer to the present time, meaning 'I do not worship at the present time what you are worshipping, nor do you worship at the present time what I am worshipping'. That is, 'I believe in Oneness of Allah and worship Him only, whereas you believe in multiple gods and goddesses and worship them'. Verses [4 and 5] refer to the future time, meaning 'neither is there a possibility that I will ever worship what you are going to worship in the future, nor will you worship what I will persist in worshipping.' In other words, 'I will persist in my belief of Divine Oneness and worship of Him and you will persist in belief of multiple gods and goddesses and worship of them'. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānawī رحمه الله تعالى has preferred this interpretation in Bayān-ul-Qur'ān, (and the translation given above is based on it.) However, he disagrees with Bukhārī's interpretation of the word *dīn*, which Bukhārī interprets as 'the religion of disbelief and the religion of Islam' respectively, in verse [6] لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ "For you is your faith, and for me, my faith" meaning the proposed compromise or peace agreement is not acceptable. I shall continue to follow my faith and you may go on following your faith, and suffer its disastrous consequences. In Bayān-ul-Qur'ān, however, the word *dīn* has been interpreted as *jazā'* or 'retribution or requital'.

Ibn Kathīr prefers another interpretation. He expounds that the particle *ma* is used in two ways: [1] as *mawṣūlah* or relative pronoun in the sense of *al-ladhī* [that which]; and [2] as *masdariyah* transforming

into infinitive the verb it governs. In this Sūrah, the first *mā* is a relative pronoun in the sense of *al-ladhī*, and the second *mā* is an infinitival particle. Thus in verses [2 & 3] the particle is a relative pronoun and may be paraphrased thus: 'I do not worship the deities that you worship nor do you worship the One Whom I worship' and in verses [4 & 5] the particle is an infinitival particle and may be paraphrased thus: *ولا انا عابدٌ عبادتكم ولا انتم عابدون عبادتى* 'I will never adopt your mode or manner of worship, nor will you adopt the manner in which I worship'. In this way, verses [2 & 3] show that the objects of worship are different from each other, and verses [4&5] show the differences in the modes of worship. In sum, 'neither our objects of worship, nor our manner of worship, are commonly shared by us; they are different.' In this way, it is seen that there is no real repetition, because while the formal expressions might be identical or near identical, but deeper semantic meanings are different. The mode of worship was revealed to the Prophet by Allah ﷺ and passed on to the Muslims through him. The pagan manner of worship is self-fabricated. Ibn Kathīr prefers this interpretation, and says that this is the exact meaning that emanates from the credo of Islam: *لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله* "There is no object worthy of worship except Allah, Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah". Only the mode and manner of worship sanctioned by Allah is credible, and should be followed by Muslims. Ibn Kathīr adds that the concluding verse *لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ* (For you is your faith, and for me, my faith) yields the sense of other verses in the Qur'an, as for instance in [10: 41] *فَأَنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ لِي عَمَلِي وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ* And if they belie you, say, for me, my deeds, and for you, your deeds and in [28:55] *لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ* (For us, our deeds, and for you, your deeds). Thus the sum total of the word *din*, according to Ibn Kathīr, refers to the 'deeds of religion' and its purport would be the same as explicated in Bayān-ul-Qur'an, in that each one will be requited for his own deeds.

Other commentators have interpreted the two sentences in a third way. According to them, the particle is retained in both places as a relative pronoun, and in both the sentence is taken as representing present tense. They in fact maintain that the repetition of the two sentences have been used as a rhetorical device and employed by deliberate design to secure emphasis. Not every repetition is unpleasant or meaningless, even though the same idea may be reiterated by the same

wording, as for instance in [94: 5-6] فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا (Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease. Undoubtedly, along with hardship there is ease) Verse [6] is the repetition of verse [5] and is deliberately reiterated to secure emphasis, as well as to reject outright the several proposals made on different occasions. [Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Jarīr].

Peace Treaty with Unbelievers is Permissible in Some Cases but not in Others

Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn dismisses out of hand the many proposals of compromise offered by the pagans and declares dissociation from them. But the Holy Qur'an itself has said in [8:61] وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا (And if they tilt towards peace, you tilt towards it." that is, enter into peace treaty with the infidels or pagans or non-Muslims. Moreover, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ migrated to Madīnah, he entered into peace treaty with the Jews . Therefore, some of the commentators have opined that Surah Al-Kāfirūn has been abrogated. Their basic argument pivots around the verse لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ (For you is your faith, and for me, my faith). They contend that this is apparently in conflict with the ordinances of *jihād*, but this is not true, because the verse does not guarantee, nor does it even permit, the infidels to maintain their infidelity. It simply means what is stated in [28:55] لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ (For us, our deeds, and for you, your deeds), that is, as you sow, so shall you reap. In fact, the correct position held by the majority of the scholars is that this Sūrah is not abrogated. The proposals of compromise that were offered by the pagans at the time of the revelation of the present Sūrah are still prohibited, and the peace treaties allowed by 8:61 or entered into by the Holy Prophet ﷺ are still permissible. It is necessary to understand the circumstances and conditions of the treaty and take a proper decision accordingly. In one of his Traditions, the Holy Prophet ﷺ laid down the general principle of peace treaty with the infidels and pagans, thus: **الاصْلِحُوا أَحْلَ حَرَامًا أَوْ حَرَّمَ حَلَالًا** (Every compromise is permitted except the one which turns prohibited things into lawful and lawful things into forbidden.) If the various peace proposals made by the pagans are carefully analyzed, they were all certainly and definitely purported to mix elements of pagan beliefs and practices with Islamic beliefs and practices, thus creating confusion; and in some cases they required Muslims to renounce Islam [albeit temporarily] and commit themselves to paganism. Sūrah Al-Kāfirūn