

Taraveeh: Eleventh Night

Surah Ibrahim

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

Name

The Surah takes its name from v. 35 in which mention has been made of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham). But it does not mean that it contains the life story of Prophet Abraham. The name is merely a symbol lid the names of many other surahs, i. e., the Surah in which Abraham's mention has been made.

Period of Revelation

It appears from the tone of the Surah that it belongs to that group of the Surahs which were revealed during the last stage of the Makkan period. For instance, v. 13 ("The disbelievers warned their Messengers, 'you shall have to return to our community or we will assuredly expel you from our

land") clearly indicates that the persecution of the Muslims was at its worst at the time of the revelation of this Surah, and the people of Makkah were bent on expelling the Believers from there like the disbelievers of the former Prophets. That is why in v.14 they have been warned, "We will destroy these evil doers," and the Believers have been comforted as were the believers before them, "and after them settle you in the land" Likewise the stern warning contained in the concluding portion (vv. 43-52 also confirms that the Surah relates to the last stage of the Makkan Period.

Central Theme and Purpose

This Surah is an admonition and a warning to the disbelievers who were rejecting the Message of the Holy Prophet and devising cunning schemes to defeat his Mission. But warning, reproof, censure and reproach dominate admonition. This is because a good deal of admonition had already been made in the preceding Surahs, but in spite of this their obduracy, enmity, antagonism, mischief, persecution etc. had rather increased.

Surah Al-Hijr

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

Name

This Surah takes its name from v. 80.

Period of Revelation

It is clear from its topics and style that the period of its revelation is about the same as that of Surah Ibrahim, for two things are quite prominent in its background. First, it appears from the repeated warnings in this Surah that in spite of the fact that the Holy Prophet had been propagating the

Message for many years, his people in general had not shown any inclination towards its acceptance nay, they had become more and more obdurate and stubborn in their antagonism, enmity and ridicule with the passage of time. Secondly, by that time the Holy Prophet had begun to feel a little tired of making strenuous efforts to eradicate disbelief and opposition of his people. That is why Allah has consoled and comforted him over and over again by way of encouragement.

Topics and the Central Theme

Though the main topics of the surah are : (a) warning to those who rejected his Message, opposed it tooth and nail, and ridiculed him, and (b) comfort and encouragement to the Holy Prophet, it does not mean that this Surah does not contain admonition and instructions. As a matter of fact, the Quran never confines itself to mere warning; rebuke and censure, but resorts to precept in every suitable place. Accordingly, this Surah contains brief arguments for Tauhid on the one hand, and admonition in the story of Adam and Satan on the other.

Surah An-Nahl

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

Name

The name, An-Nahl, of this Surah has been taken from v. 68. This is merely to distinguish it from other Surahs.

Period of Revelation

The following internal evidence shows that this Surah was revealed during the last Makkan stage of Prophet-hood:

- V. 41 clearly shows that persecution had forced some Muslims to emigrate to Habash before the revelation of this Surah.
- It is evident from v. 106 that at that time the persecution of the Muslims was at its height. Therefore a problem had arisen in regard to the utterance of a blasphemous word, without actual disbelief, under unbearable conditions. The problem was that if one did so how he should be treated.
- VV. 112-114 clearly refer to the end of seven year famine that had struck Makkah some years after the appointment of the Holy Prophet as Allah's Messenger.
- There is a reference to V 116 of this Surah in VI: 145, and v. 118 of this Surah contains a reference to VI: 146. This is a proof that both these Surahs (VI and XVI) were sent down in the same period.

The general style of the Surah also supports the view that this was revealed during the last stage at Makkah.

Central Theme

All the topics of the Surah revolve round different aspects of the Message, ie., refutation of shirk, proof of Tauhid, and warning of the consequences of the rejection of and opposition and antagonism to the Message.

Topics of Discussion

The very first verse gives direct and strict warning to those who were rejecting the Message outright, as if to say, "Allah's decision has already been made concerning your rejection of the Message. Why are you then clamoring for hastening it? Why don't you make use of their spite that is being given to you!" And this was exactly what the disbelievers of Makkah needed at the time of the revelation of this Surah. For they challenged the Holy Prophet over and over again: "Why don't you bring that scourge with which you have been threatening us! For we have not only rejected your Message but have been openly opposing it for a long time." Such a

challenge had become a by-word with them, which they frequently repeated as a clear proof that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was not a true Prophet.

Immediately after this warning they have been admonished to give up shirk, for this false creed was the main obstacle in the way of the Message. Then the following topics come over and over again, one after the other:

1. Very convincing proofs of Tauhid and refutation of shirk have been based on the plain signs in the universe and in man's own self.
2. The objections of the disbelievers have been answered, their arguments refuted, their doubts removed and their false pretexts exposed.
3. Warnings have been given of the consequences of persistence in false ways and antagonism to the Message.
4. The moral changes which the Message of the Holy Prophet aims to bring practically in human life have been presented briefly in an appealing manner. The mushriks have been told that belief in Allah, which they also professed, demanded that it should not be confined merely to lip service, but this creed should take a definite shape in moral and practical life.
5. The Holy Prophet and his companions have been comforted and told about the attitude they should adopt in the face of antagonism and persecution by the disbelievers.

