

## Taraveeh: Twenty-Fourth Night

### Surah Al-Waqi'a

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

#### Name

The Surah takes its name from the word al-waqi`ah of the very first verse.

#### Period of Revelation

According to the chronological order that Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas has given of the Surahs, first Surah Ta Ha was sent down, then Al-Waqi'ah and then Ash-Shu`ara'(Suyuti: Al-Itqan). The same sequence has been reported from Ikrimah (Baihaqi: Dala'il an Nubuwwat).

This is supported also by the story that Ibn Hisham has related from Ibn Ishaq about the affirmation of the Faith by Hadrat Umar (may Allah be pleased with him). It says that when Hadrat Umar entered his sister's

house, Surah Ta Ha was being recited. Hearing his voice the people of the house hid the pages of the Qur'an. Hadrat Umar first seized his brother-in-law and then his sister rose in defense of her husband, he hit her also and wounded her on the head. When Umar saw blood on his sister, he was sorry for what he had done, and said to her: "Show me the manuscript that you have concealed so that I may see what it contains." The sister said: "You are unclean because of your polytheism: wa anna-hu la yamassu-ha ill-at-tahir: "Only a clean person can touch it." So, Hadrat Umar rose and washed himself, and then took up the manuscript to read it. This shows that Sarah Al-Waqi'ah had been sent down by that time for it contains the verse: La yamassu hu ill al mutahharun; and it had been established historically that Hadrat Umar embraced Islam after the first migration to Habash, in the fifth year of the Prophethood.

### **Theme and Subject Matter**

Its theme is the Hereafter, Tauhid and refutation of the Makkan disbelievers' suspicions about the Qur'an. What they regarded as utterly incredible was that Resurrection would ever take place, then the entire system of the earth and heavens would be upset, and when all the dead would be resurrected and called to account, after which the righteous would be admitted to Paradise and the wicked cast into Hell. They regarded all this as imaginary, which could not possibly happen in actual fact. In answer to this, it was said: "When the inevitable event will take place, there will be none to belie its happening, nor will anyone have the Power to avert it, nor prove it to, be an unreal happening. At that time all peoples will be divided into three classes: (1) The foremost in rank and position; (2) the common righteous people and (3) those who denied the Hereafter and persisted in disbelief and polytheism and major sins till the last." How these three classes of the people will be rewarded and punished has been described in detail in vv. 7-56.

Then, in vv. 57-74 arguments have been given, one after the other, to prove the truth of the two basic doctrines of Islam, which the disbelievers were refusing to accept, viz. the doctrines of Tauhid and the Hereafter. In these arguments, apart from everything else that exists in the earth and heavens, man's attention has been drawn to his own body and to the food that he eats and to the water that he drinks and to the fire on which he cooks his food, and he has been invited to ponder the question : What right do you have to behave independently of, or serve any other than, the God Whose creative power has brought you into being, and Whose provisions sustain you And how can you entertain the idea that after having once brought you into existence He has become so helpless and powerless that He cannot recreate you once again even if he wills to?

Then, in vv. 75-82 their suspicions in respect of the Qur'an have been refuted and they have been made to realize how fortunate they are that instead of deriving any benefit from the great blessing that the Qur'an is, they are treating it with scant attention and have set only this share of theirs in it that they deny it. If one seriously considers this matchless argument that has been presented in two brief sentences about the truth of the Qur'an, one will find in it the same kind of firm and stable system as exists among the stars and planets of the Universe, and the same is the proof of the fact that its Author is the same Being Who has created the Universe. Then the disbelievers have been told that this Book is inscribed in that Writ of Destiny which is beyond the reach of the creatures, as if to say "You think it is brought down by the devils to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), whereas none but the pure angels has any access to the means by which it reaches Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) from the well guarded Tablet."

In conclusion, man has been warned, as if to say: "You may brag and boast as you like and may shut your eyes to the truths in your arrogance of independence, but death is enough to open your eyes. At death you become helpless: you cannot save your own parents; you cannot save your



children; you cannot save your religious guided and beloved leaders. They all die in front of your very eyes while you look on helplessly. If there is no supreme power ruling over you, and your this assumption is correct that you are all in all in the world, and there is no God, then why don't you restore to the dying person his soul? Just as you are helpless in this, so it is also beyond your power to stop Allah from calling the people to account and mete out rewards and punishments to them. You may or may not believe it, but every dying person will surely see his own end after death. If he belongs to those nearest to God, he will see the good end meant for them if he be from among the righteous, he will see the end prepared for the righteous; and if he be from among the deniers of the truth, he will see the end destined for the criminals.

## Surah Al-Hadid

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

### Name

The Surah takes its title from the sentence, Wa anzalna' l-hadida, of verse 25.

### Period of Revelation

This is unanimously a Madani Surah, and a study of its subject matter shows that it was probably sent down some time during the interval between the Battle of Uhud and the Truce of Hudaibiyah. This was the time when the tiny Islamic State of Madinah had been hemmed in by the disbelievers and the handful of the ill equipped Muslims were entrenched against the combined power of entire Arabia. In this state Islam not only stood in need of the sacrifice of Life from its followers, but it also needed monetary help and assistance. In this Surah a forceful appeal has been

made for the same. This view is further strengthened by verse 10 in which Allah has addressed the believers to the effect "Those of you who would spend and fight after the victory can never be equal to those who have spent and fought before the victory." And the same is supported by the traditions that Ibn Marduyah has related on the authority of Hadrat Anas. In respect of the verse: *Alam ya'n-i lilladhina aamanu an takhsha'a qulubuhumli-dhikrillah-i*, he says that 17 years after the commencement of the revelation of the Qur'an this verse was sent down to arouse the believers to action. Reckoned thus the period of the revelation of this Surah falls between the 4th and the 5th year after the hijrah.

### Theme and Subject Matter

The theme of this Surah is to exhort the Muslims to spend in the cause of Allah. At the most critical juncture of the history of Islam when it was engaged in a life and death struggle against Arab paganism, this Surah was revealed to persuade the Muslim's to make monetary sacrifices in particular, and to make them realize that Islam did not merely consist in verbal affirmation and some outward practices but its essence and spirit is sincerity towards Allah and His Religion. The faith of the one who was devoid of this spirit and who regarded his own self and wealth as dearer to himself than Allah and His Religion, was hollow and therefore of little worth in the sight of Allah.

For this object, first the attributes of Allah Almighty have been mentioned so that the listeners may fully realize as to Who is addressing them. Then, the following themes have been expressed in sequence:

1. The inevitable demand of the Faith is that one should not shirk spending one's wealth for the sake of Allah. This would not only be contrary to the Faith but also wrong realistically. For the wealth indeed belongs to Allah, on which man has been given proprietary rights only as His vicegerent. Yesterday this wealth was in other people's possession today it is with one particular man, and tomorrow

it will pass into someone else's hand. Ultimately, it will go back to Allah, Who is the inheritor of everything in the universe. Only that much of this wealth will be of any use to a man, which he spends in the cause of Allah during the period it is in his possession.

2. Although making sacrifices for the sake of Allah is commendable in any case, the true worth of these sacrifices is determined by the nature of the occasion. There is an occasion when the power of paganism is overwhelming and there is a danger that it might subdue and overcome Islam completely; there is another occasion when Islam is in a stronger position in its struggle against un-Islam and the believers are attaining victories. Both these states are not equal as regards their respective importance. Therefore, the sacrifices that are made in these different states would also not be equal. Those who sacrifice their lives and expend their wealth to further promote the cause of Islam when it is already strong cannot attain to the rank of those who struggled with their lives and their wealth to promote and uphold the cause of Islam when it was weak.
3. Whatever is spent for the cause of the Truth is a loan on Allah, and Allah will not only return it increasing it manifold but will also give from Himself the best reward for it.
4. In the Hereafter the Light shall be bestowed only on those believers who would have spent their wealth in the cause of Allah. As for the hypocrites who watched and served only their own interests in the world, and who least bothered whether the Truth or falsehood prevailed will be segregated from the believers in the Hereafter although they might have lived in close association with them in the world. They will be deprived of the Light, and they will be counted among the disbelievers.
5. The Muslims should not behave like those followers of the earlier Books, whose lives have been spent in the worship of the world and whose hearts have become hardened due to negligence with the passage of time. He cannot be a believer whose heart does not melt at the remembrance of Allah and does not bow to the Truth sent down by Him.



6. The sincere upholders of the Truth and the true witnesses of the Faith in the sight of Allah are only those believers who spend their wealth in His way sincerely, without any desire of show.
7. The life of this world is only a short lived spring and a means of pride and show. Its sports and pastimes, its adornments and decorations, its pride of place, its wealth and possessions, for which the people try to vie with one another, are transient. Its likeness is of the crop which flourishes and blooms, then turns pale and then finally is reduced to chaff. The everlasting life is the life hereafter when results of great consequence will be announced. Therefore, if one has to vie with another for something, one should strive for Paradise.
8. Whatever good man meets with and whatever hardship he suffers in the world, are pre-ordained by Allah. A true believer is he who does not lose heart in affliction and is not puffed-up with pride in good times. It is the character of a hypocrite and disbeliever that he is puffed up with pride when Allah favors him with His blessings, behaved boastfully and shows stinginess when called upon to spend in the cause of the same God Who blessed him, and also counsels others to be stingy like himself.
9. Allah sent His Messengers with clear signs and the Book and the Law of Justice so that the people may adhere to justice; besides, He sent down iron also so that power may be used to establish the Truth and vanquish falsehood. Thus, Allah likes to see as to who from among the people would rise to support and succor His true Religion even at the risk of their lives. These opportunities Allah has created for man's own advantage and development; otherwise Allah does not stand in need of others for His works.
10. Prophets came from Allah in the past, and by their preaching some people adopted the Right Path, but most of them persisted in wickedness. Then the Prophet Jesus came, whose teachings brought about many moral improvements in the lives of the people, but his community invented monasticism. Now Allah has sent the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be His peace and blessings). Those who affirm faith in him and pass their life fearing Allah's accountability, will be given by Allah a double share of His mercy and He will bless them with the Light by which they will see and walk the straight path among

the crooked paths met with at every step in the life of this world. Although the followers of the earlier revelation regard themselves as the monopolists of Allah's bounties, the fact remains that Allah Himself controls His bounties He may bless with these whomever He pleases.

## Surah Al-Mujadila

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

### Name

This Surah is entitled Al Mujadalah as well as Al Mujadilah, the title being derived from the word tujadiluka of the very first verse. As at the outset mention has been made of the woman who pleaded with the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) the case of zihar pronounced by her husband and urged him to suggest a way out of the difficult situation in order to save her and, her children's life from ruin, and Allah has described her pleading by the word "mujadalah", the Surah came to be known by this very title. If it is read as "mujadalah", it would mean "pleading and arguing", and if it is read as "mujadilah", it would mean "the woman who pleaded and argued."

### Period of Revelation

There is no tradition to tell as to when this incident of pleading and arguing took place, but there is a hint in the subject matter of the Surah on the basis of which it can be said with certainty that it happened some time after the battle of the Trench (Shawwal, 5 A. H.). In Surah Al-Ahzab, Allah while



negating that an adopted son could be one's real son, had just said this and no more; "And Allah has not made those of your wives whom you divorce by zihar your mothers." But in that Surah there was nothing to the effect that to divorce a wife by zihar was a sin or a crime, nor anything about the legal injunction concerning it. Contrary to it, in this Surah the whole law relating to zihar has been laid down, which shows that these detailed injunctions were sent down some time after the brief reference to it in Surah Al-Ahzab.

### Subject Matter and Topics

In this Surah instructions have been given to the Muslims about the different problems that confronted them at that time.

From the beginning of the Surah to verse 6 legal injunctions about zihar have been given, along with which the Muslims have been strictly warned that it is contrary to their profession of the Faith that they should still persist in the practices of ignorance after they have accepted Islam, that they should break the bounds set by Allah, or refuse to abide by them, or that they should make their own rules and regulations contradictory to them. For this there is not only the punishment of disgrace and humiliation in the world but in the Hereafter too there will be strict accountability for it.

In vv. 7-10 the hypocrites have been taken to task for their secret whisperings and consultations by which they conspired and intrigued against the "Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), and because of their hidden malice and grudge greeted him, like the Jews, in a manner as to wish him ill instead of well. In this connection, the Muslims have been consoled, as if to say: "These whisperings of the hypocrites can do no harm to you; therefore, you should go on doing your duty with full trust in Allah". Besides, they have also been taught this moral lesson: "The true believers, when they talk secretly together, do not talk of

sin and transgression and disobedience to the Messenger if they have to talk secretly together they should talk of goodness and piety."

In vv. 11-13 the Muslims have been taught certain manners of social behavior and given instructions to eradicate certain social evils which were prevalent among the people then as they are today. If some people are sitting in an assembly, and more people arrive, they do not show even the courtesy as to squeeze in so as to make room for others, with the result that the new-comers have to keep standing, or to sit in the door-way, or to go back, or seeing that there is enough room yet start jumping over the people's heads to find room for themselves. This often used to be experienced in the Holy Prophet's assemblies. Therefore, Allah gave the instruction, as if to say: "Do not behave selfishly and narrow mindedly in your assemblies but do accommodate the new-comers also with an open heart."

Likewise, another vice found among the people is that when they go on a visit to somebody (an important person, in particular), they prolong their sitting and do not at all mind that encroaching upon his time unduly would cause him hardship. Then, if he tells them to leave, they mind it; if he himself rises up from their assembly, they complain of his lack of manners; if he tells them indirectly that he has some other business also to attend to, for which he needs time, they turn a deaf ear to his request. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself also had to experience such misconduct of the people, who in their earnestness to benefit by his teaching did not at all see that they were wasting his precious time so badly needed for other important works. At last, Allah in order to eradicate this bad manner enjoined that when the people are asked to rise up from an assembly, they should rise up and disperse.

Another vice prevalent among the people was that each person wished to have secret counsel individually with the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) without any real need, or would like that he should approach

him during an assembly and whisper something to him. This was not only embarrassing for the Holy Prophet but also annoying for the people who sat in the assembly. That is why Allah imposed the restriction that anyone who wanted to consult him in private, should first give away something in charity. The object was that the people should be warned of this bad manner and made to give it up. Thus, the restriction was kept in force for a short while, and when the people had corrected their behavior, it was withdrawn.

From verse 14 to the end of the Surah members of the Muslim society, which was a mixture of the sincere Muslims and the hypocrites and the waverers, have been told plainly as to what is the criterion of sincerity in Islam. One kind of Muslims are those who are friends with the enemies of Islam: they do not hesitate for the sake of their interests to be treacherous to the religion which they profess to believe in; they spread all sorts of doubts and suspicions against Islam and prevent the people from adopting the Way of Allah. But since they are part of the Muslim community their false profession of Faith serves them as a cover and shield. The second kind of Muslims are those who, in the matter of Allah's Religion, do not care even for their own father, brother, children, and family, to say nothing of others. They do not cherish any feeling of love for the person who is an enemy of God and His Messenger and His Religion. Allah in these verses has explicitly stated that the people of the first kind, in fact, belong to Satan's party however hard they may try to convince others of their Islam by swearing oaths. And the honor of belonging to Allah's party is possessed only by the Muslims of the second kind. They alone are the true Muslims: they alone will attain to true success, and with them alone is Allah well pleased.



# Surah Al-Hashr

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

## Name

The Surah derives its name from the mention of the word al-hashr inverse thereby implying that it is the Surah in which the word al-hashr has occurred.

## Period of Revelation

Bukhari and Muslim contain a tradition from Hadrat Sa'id bin Jubair to the effect "When I asked Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas about Surah Al-Hashr, he replied that it was sent down concerning the battle against the Bani an-Nadir just as Surah Al-Anfal was sent down concerning the Battle of Badr. In another tradition from Hadrat Sa'id bin Jubair, the words cited from Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) are: Qul: Surah an-Nadir: Say, it is Surah an-Nadir." The same thing has been related also from Mujahid, Qatadah, Zuhri, Ibn Zaid, Yazid bin Ruman, Muhammad bin Ishaq and others. They are unanimous that the followers of the Book whose banishment has been mentioned in it, imply the Banian-Nadir. Yazid bin Ruman, Mujahid and Muhammad bin Ishaq have stated that this whole Surah, from beginning to end, came down concerning this very battle.

As for the question as to when this battle took place, Imam Zuhri has stated on the authority of Urwah bin Zubair that it took place six months after the Battle of Badr. However, Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Hisham and Baladhuri regard it as an event of Rabi' al-Awwal, A. H. 4, and the same is correct. For all traditions agree that this battle took place after the incident of Bi'r Ma'unah, and historically also it is well known that the incident of Bir Ma'unah occurred after the Battle of Uhud and not before it.

## Historical Background

In order to understand the subject matter of this Surah well, it is necessary to have a look at the history of the Madinah and Hejaz Jews, for without it, one cannot know precisely the real causes of the Holy Prophet's dealing with their different tribes the way he did.

No authentic history of the Arabian Jews exists in the world. They have not left any writing of their own in the form of a book or a tablet which might throw light on their past, nor have the Jewish historians and writers of the non-Arab world made any mention of them, the reason being that after their settlement in the Arabian peninsula they had detached themselves from the main body of the nation, and the Jews of the world did not count them as among themselves. For they had given up Hebrew culture and language, even the names, and adopted Arabism instead. In the tablets that have been unearthed in the archaeological research in the Hejaz no trace of the Jews is found before the first century of the Christian era, except for a few Jewish names. Therefore, the history of the Arabian Jews is based mostly on the verbal traditions prevalent among the Arabs most of which had been spread by the Jews themselves.

The Jews of the Hejaz claimed that they had come to settle in Arabia during the last stage of the life of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). They said that the Prophet Moses had dispatched an army to expel the Amalekites from the land of Yathrib and had commanded it not to spare even a single soul of that tribe. The Israelite army carried out the Prophet's command, but spared the life of a handsome prince of the Amalekite king and returned with him to Palestine. By that time the Prophet Moses had passed away. His successors took great exception to what the army had done, for by sparing the life of an Amalekite it had clearly disobeyed the Prophet and violated the Mosaic law. Consequently, they excluded the army from their community, and it had to return to Yathrib and settle there forever. (Kitab al-Aghani, vol. xix, p. 94). Thus the Jews claimed that they

had been living in Yathrib since about 1200 B.C. But, this had in fact no historical basis and probably the Jews had invented this story in order to overawe the Arabs into believing that they were of noble lineage and the original inhabitants of the land.

The second Jewish immigration, according to the Jews, took place in 587 BC. when Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, destroyed Jerusalem and dispersed the Jews throughout the world. The Arab Jews said that several of their tribes at that time had come to settle in Wadi al-Qura, Taima, and Yathrib. (Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan). But this too has no historical basis. By this also they might have wanted to prove that they were the original settlers of the area.

As a matter of fact, what is established is that when in A. D. 70 the Romans massacred the Jews in Palestine, and then in A. D. 132 expelled them from that land, many of the Jewish tribes fled to find an asylum in the Hejaz, a territory that was contiguous to Palestine in the south. There, they settled wherever they found water springs and greenery, and then by intrigue and through money lending business gradually occupied the fertile lands. Ailah, Maqna, Tabuk, Taima, Wadi al Qura, Fadak and Khaiber came under their control in that very period, and Bani Quraizah, Banial-Nadir, Bani Bahdal, and Bani Qainuqa also came in the same period and occupied Yathrib.

Among the tribes that settled in Yathrib the Bani al Nadir and the Bani Quraizah were more prominent for they belonged to the Cohen or priest class. They were looked upon as of noble descent and enjoyed religious leadership among their co-religionists. When they came to settle in Madinah there were some other tribes living there before, whom they subdued and became practically the owners of this green and fertile land. About three centuries later, in A. D. 450 or 451, the great flood of Yaman occurred which has been mentioned in vv. 16-17 of Surah Saba above. As a result of this different tribes of the people of Saba were compelled to leave Yaman and disperse in different parts of Arabia. Thus, the Bani



Ghassan went to settle in Syria, Bani Lakhm in Hirah (Iraq), Bani Khuzaah between Jeddah and Makkah and the Aus and the Khazraj went to settle in Yathrib. As Yathrib was under Jewish domination, they at first did not allow the Aus and the Khazraj to gain a footing and the two Arab tribes had to settle on lands that had not yet been brought under cultivation, where they could hardly produce just enough to enable them to survive. At last, one of their chiefs went to Syria to ask for the assistance of their Ghassanide brothers; he brought an army from there and broke the power of the Jews. Thus, the Aus and the Khazraj were able to gain complete dominance over Yathrib, with the result that two of the major Jewish tribes, Bani an-Nadir and Bani Quraizah were forced to take quarters outside the city. Since the third tribe, Bani Qainuqa, was not on friendly terms with the other two tribes, it stayed inside the city as usual, but had to seek protection of the Khazraj tribe. As a counter measure to this Bani an-Nadir and Bani Quraizah took protection of the Aus tribe so that they could live in peace in the suburbs of Yathrib.

Before the Holy Prophet's arrival at Madinah until his emigration the following were the main features of the Jews position in Hejaz in general and in Yathrib in particular:

1. In the matter of language, dress, civilization and way of life they had completely adopted Arabism, even their names had become Arabian. Of the 12 Jewish tribes that had settled in Hejaz, none except the Bani Zaura retained its Hebrew name. Except for a few scattered scholars none knew Hebrew. In fact, there is nothing in the poetry of the Jewish poets of the pre-Islamic days to distinguish it from the poetry of the Arab poets in language, ideas and themes. They even inter-married with the Arabs. In fact, nothing distinguished them from the common Arabs except religion. Notwithstanding this, they had not lost their identity among the Arabs and had kept their Jewish prejudice alive most ardently and jealously. They had adopted superficial Arabism because they could not survive in Arabia without it.

2. Because of this Arabism the western orientalists have been misled into thinking that perhaps they were not really Israelites but Arabs who had embraced Judaism, or that at least majority of them consisted of the Arab Jews. But there is no historical proof to show that the Jews ever engaged in any proselytizing activities in Hejaz, or their rabbis invited the Arabs to embrace Judaism like the Christian priests and missionaries. On the contrary, we see that they prided themselves upon their Israelite descent and racial prejudices. They called the Arabs the Gentiles, which did not mean illiterate or uneducated but savage and uncivilized people. They believed that the Gentiles did not possess any human rights; these were only reserved for the Israelites, and therefore, it was lawful and right for the Israelites to defraud them of their properties by every fair and foul means. Apart from the Arab chiefs, they did not consider the common Arabs fit enough to have equal status with them even if they entered Judaism. No historical proof is available, nor is there any evidence in the Arabian traditions, that some Arab tribe or prominent clan might have accepted Judaism. However, mention has been made of some individuals, who had become Jews. The Jews, however, were more interested in their trade and business than in the preaching of their religion. That is why Judaism did not spread as a religion and creed in Hejaz but remained only as a mark of pride and distinction of a few Israelite tribes. The Jewish rabbis, however, had a flourishing business in granting amulets and charms, fortunetelling and sorcery, because of which they were held in great awe by the Arabs for their "knowledge" and practical wisdom.
3. Economically they were much stronger than the Arabs. Since they had emigrated from more civilized and culturally advanced countries of Palestine and Syria, they knew many such arts as were unknown to the Arabs; they also enjoyed trade relations with the outside world. Hence, they had captured the business of importing grain in Yathrib and the upper Hejaz and exporting dried dates to other countries. Poultry farming and fishing also were mostly under their controls. They were good at cloth weaving too. They had also set up wine shops here and there, where they sold wine which they imported from Syria. The Bani Qainuqa generally practiced crafts such as that of the

goldsmith, blacksmith and vessel maker. In all these occupations, trade and business these Jews earned exorbitant profits, but their chief occupation was trading in money lending in which they had ensnared the Arabs of the surrounding areas. More particularly the chiefs and elders of the Arab tribes who were given to a life of pomp, bragging and boasting on the strength of borrowed money were deeply indebted to them. They lent money on high rates of interest and then would charge compound interest, which one could hardly clear off once one was involved in it. Thus, they had rendered the Arabs economically hollow, but it had naturally induced a deep rooted hatred among the common Arabs against the Jews.

4. The demand of their trade and economic interests was that they should neither estrange one Arab tribe by befriending another, nor take part in their mutual wars. But, on the other hand, it was also in their interests, that they should not allow the Arabs to be united and should keep them fighting and entrenched against each other, for they knew that whenever the Arab tribes united, they would not allow them to remain in possession of their large properties, gardens and fertile lands, which they had come to own through their profiteering and money lending business. Furthermore, each of their tribes also had to enter into alliance with one or another powerful Arab tribe for the sake of its own protection so that no other powerful tribe should overawe it by its might. Because of this they had not only to take part in the mutual wars of the Arabs but they often had to go to war in support of the Arab tribe to which their tribe was tied in alliance against another Jewish tribe which was allied to the enemy tribe. In Yathrib the Bani Quraizah and the Bani an-Nadir were the allies of the Aus while the Bani Qainuqa of the Khazraj. A little before the Holy Prophet's emigration, these Jewish tribes had confronted each other in support of their respective allies in the bloody war that took place between the Aus and the Khazraj at Buath.

Such were the conditions when Islam came to Madinah, and ultimately an Islamic State came into existence after the Holy Prophet's (upon whom be Allah's peace) arrival there. One of the first things that he accomplished



soon after establishing this state was unification of the Aus and the Khazraj and the Emigrants into a brotherhood, and the second was that he concluded a treaty between the Muslims and the Jews on definite conditions, in which it was pledged that neither party would encroach on the rights of the other, and both would unite in a joint defense against the external enemies. Some important clauses of this treaty are as follows, which clearly show what the Jews and the Muslims had pledged to adhere to in their mutual relationship:

"The Jews must bear their expenses and the Muslims their expenses. Each must help the other against anyone who attacks the people of this document. They must seek mutual advice and consultation, and loyalty is a protection against treachery. They shall sincerely wish one another well. Their relations will be governed by piety and recognition of the rights of others, and not by sin and wrongdoing. The wronged must be helped. The Jews must pay with the believers so long as the war lasts. Yathrib shall be a sanctuary for the people of this document. If any dispute or controversy likely to cause trouble should arise, it must be referred to God and to Muhammad the Apostle of God; Quraish and their helpers shall not be given protection. The contracting parties are bound to help one another against any attack on Yathrib; Every one shall be responsible for the defence of the portion to which he belongs" (Ibn Hisham vol.ii, pp. 147 to 150).

This was an absolute and definitive covenant to the conditions of which the Jews themselves had agreed. But not very long after this they began to show hostility towards the Holy Prophet of Allah (upon whom be Allah's peace) and Islam and the Muslims, and their hostility and perverseness went on increasing day by day. Its main causes were three:

First, they envisaged the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) merely as a chief of his people, who should be content to have concluded a political agreement with them and should only concern himself with the

worldly, interests of his group. But they found that he was extending an invitation to belief in Allah and the Apostleship and the Book (which also included belief in their own Prophets and scriptures), and was urging the people to give up disobedience of Allah and adopt obedience to the Divine Commands and abide by the moral laws of their own prophets. This they could not put up with. They feared that if this universal ideological movement gained momentum it would destroy their rigid religiosity and wipe out their racial nationhood.

Second, when they saw that the Aus and the Khazraj and the Emigrants were uniting into a brotherhood and the people from the Arab tribes of the surrounding areas, who entered Islam, were also joining this Islamic Brotherhood of Madinah and forming a religious community, they feared that the selfish policy that they had been following of sowing discord between the Arab tribes for the promotion of their own well being and interests for centuries, would not work in the new system, but they would face a united front of the Arabs against which their intrigues and machinations would not succeed.

Third, the work that the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be Allah's 'peace) was carrying out of reforming the society and civilization included putting an end to all unlawful methods" in business and mutual dealings. More than that; he had declared taking and giving of interest also as impure and unlawful earning. This caused them the fear that if his rule became established in Arabia, he would declare interest legally forbidden, and in this they saw their own economic disaster and death.

For these reasons they made resistance and opposition to the Holy Prophet their national ideal. They would never hesitate to employ any trick and machination, any device and cunning, to harm him. They spread every kind of falsehoods as to cause distrust against him in the people's minds. They created every kind of doubt, suspicion and misgiving in the hearts of the new converts so as to turn them back from Islam. They would make

false profession of Islam and then would turn apostate so that it may engender more and more misunderstandings among the people against Islam and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace). They would conspire with the hypocrites to create mischief and would cooperate with every group and tribe hostile to Islam. They would create rifts between the Muslims and would do whatever they could to stir them up to mutual feuds and fighting. The people of the Aus and the Khazraj tribes were their special target, with whom they had been allied for centuries. Making mention of the war of Buath before them they would remind them of their previous enmities so that they might again resort to the sword against each other and shatter their bond of fraternity into which Islam had bound them. They would resort to every kind of deceit and fraud in order to harm the Muslims economically. Whenever one of those with whom that had business dealings, would accept Islam, they would do whatever they could to cause him financial loss. If he owed them something they would worry and harass him by making repeated demands, and if they owed him something, they would withhold the payment and would publicly say that at the time the bargain was made he professed a different religion, and since he had changed his religion, they were no longer under any obligation towards him. Several instances of this nature have been cited in the explanation of verse 75 of Surah Al Imran given in the commentaries by Tabari, Nisaburi, Tabrisi and in Ruh al Ma'ani.

They had adopted this hostile attitude against the covenant even before the Battle of Badr. But when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and the Muslims won a decisive victory over the Quraish at Badr, they were filled with grief and anguish, malice and anger. They were in fact anticipating that in that war the powerful Quraish would deal a death blow to the Muslims. That is why even before the news of the Islamic victory reached Madinah they had begun to spread the rumor that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had fallen a martyr and the Muslims had been routed, and the Quraish army under Abu Jahl was advancing on



Madinah. But when the battle was decided against their hopes and wishes, they burst with anger and grief. Ka'b bin Ashraf, the chief of the Bani an-Nadir, cried out: "By God, if Muhammad has actually killed these nobles of Arabia, the earth's belly would be better for us than its back." Then he went to Makkah and incited the people to vengeance by writing and reciting provocative elegies for the Quraish chiefs killed at Badr. Then he returned to Madinah and composed lyrical verses of an insulting nature about the Muslim women. At last, enraged with his mischief, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) sent Muhammad bin Maslamah Ansari in Rabi al-Awwal, A. H. 3, and had him slain. (IbnSad, Ibn Hisham, Tabari).

The first Jewish tribe which, after the Battle of Badr, openly and collectively broke their covenant were the Bani Qainuqa. They lived in a locality inside the city of Madinah. As they practiced the crafts of the goldsmith, blacksmith and vessel maker, the people of Madinah had to visit their shops fairly frequently. They were proud of their bravery and valor. Being blacksmiths by profession even their children were well armed, and they could instantly muster 700 fighting men from among themselves. They were also arrogantly aware that they enjoyed relations of confederacy with the Khazraj and Abdullah bin Ubbay, the chief of the, Khazraj, was their chief supporter. At the victory of Badr, they became so provoked that they began to trouble and harass the Muslims and their women in particular, who visited their shops. By and by things came to such a pass that one day a Muslim woman was stripped naked publicly in their bazaar. This led to a brawl in which a Muslim and a Jew were killed. Thereupon the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself visited their locality, got them together and counseled them on decent conduct. But the reply that they gave was; "O Muhammad, you perhaps think we are like the Quraish; they did not know fighting; therefore, you overpowered them. But when you come in contact with us, you will see how men fight." This was in clear words a declaration of war. Consequently, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) laid siege to their quarters towards the end of

Shawwal (and according to some others, of Dhi Qa'dah) A. H. 2. The siege had hardly lasted for a fortnight when they surrendered and all their fighting men were tied and taken prisoners. Now Abdullah bin Ubayy came up in support of them and insisted that they should be pardoned. The Holy Prophet conceded his request and decided that the Bani Qainuqa would be exiled from Madinah leaving their properties, armor and tools of trade behind. (Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Hisham, Tarikh Tabari).

For some time after these punitive measures (i. e. the banishment of the Qainuqa and killing of Ka'b bin Ashraf the Jews remained so terror-stricken that they did not dare commit any further mischief. But later when in Shawwal, A. H. 3, the Quraish in order to avenge themselves for their defeat at Badr, marched against Madinah with great preparations, and the Jews saw that only a thousand men had marched out with the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) as against three thousand men of the Quraish, and even they were deserted by 300 hypocrites who returned to Madinah, they committed the first and open breach of the treaty by refusing to join the Holy Prophet in the defense of the city although they were bound to it. Then, when in the Battle of Uhud the Muslims suffered reverses, they were further emboldened. So much so that the Bani an-Nadir made a secret plan to kill the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) though the plan failed before it could be executed. According to the details, after the incident of Bi'r Maunah (Safar, A. H. 4) Amr bin Umayyah Damri slew by mistake two men of the Bani Amir in retaliation, who actually belonged to a tribe which was allied to the Muslims, but Amr had mistaken them for the men of the enemy. Because of this mistake their blood money became obligatory on the Muslims. Since the Bani an-Nadir were also a party in the alliance with the Bani Amir, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) went to their clan along with some of his Companions to ask for their help in paying the blood money. Outwardly they agreed to contribute, as he wished, but secretly they plotted that a person should go up to the top of the house by whose wall the Holy Prophet was sitting and drop a

rock on him to kill him. But before they could execute their plan, Allah informed him in time and he immediately got up and returned to Madinah.

Now there was no question of showing them any further concession. The Holy Prophet at once sent to them the ultimatum that the treachery they had meditated against him had come to his knowledge; therefore, they were to leave Madinah within ten days; if anyone of them was found staying behind in their quarters, he would be put to the sword. Meanwhile Abdullah bin Ubayy sent them the message that he would help them with two thousand men and that the Bani Quraizah and Bani Ghatafan also would come to their aid; therefore, they should stand firm and should not go. On this false assurance they responded to the Holy Prophet's ultimatum saying that they would not leave Madinah and he could do whatever was in his power. Consequently, in Rabi' al-Awwal, A. H. 4, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) laid siege to them, and after a few days of the siege (which according to some traditions were 6 and according to others 15 days) they agreed to leave Madinah on the condition that they could retain all their property which they could carry on three camels, except the armor. Thus, Madinah was rid of this second mischievous tribe of Jews. Only two of the Bani an-Nadir became Muslims and stayed behind. Others went to Syria and Khaiber.

This is the event that has been discussed in this Surah.

### Theme and Subject Matter

The theme of the Surah as stated above, is an appraisal of the battle against the Bani an Nadir. In this, on the whole, four things have been discussed.

1. In the first four verses the world has been, admonished to take heed of the fate that had just befallen the Banian-Nadir. A major tribe which was as strong in numbers as the Muslims, whose people boasted of far more wealth and possession who were by no means ill equipped



militarily and whose forts were well fortified could not stand siege even for a few Days, and expressed their readiness to accept banishment from their centuries old, well established settlement even though not a single man from among them was slain. Allah says that this happened not because of any power possessed by the Muslims but because the Jews had tried to resist and fight Allah and His Messenger, and those who dare to resist the power of Allah, always meet with the same fate.

2. In verse 5, the rule of the law of war that has been enunciated is: the destruction caused in the enemy territory for military purposes does not come under "spreading mischief in the earth."
3. In vv 6-10 it has been stated how the lands and properties which come under the control of the Islamic State as a result of war or peace terms, are to be managed. As it was the first ever occasion that the Muslims took control of a conquered territory, the law concerning it was laid down for their guidance.
4. In vv. 11-17 the attitude that the hypocrites had adopted on the occasion of the battle against the Bani an-Nadir has been reviewed and the causes underlying it have been pointed out.
5. The whole of the last section (vv. 18-24) is an admonition for all those people who had professed to have affirmed the faith and joined the Muslim community, but were devoid of the true spirit of the faith. In it they have been told what is the real demand of the Faith, what is the real difference between piety and wickedness, what is the place and importance of the Quran which they professed to believe in, and what are the attributes of God in Whom they claimed to have believed.

## Surah Al-Mumtahana

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

## Name

In verse 10 of this Surah it has been enjoined that the women who emigrate to dar al-Islam (the Islamic State) and claim to be Muslims, should be examined hence the title Al-Mumtahinah. The word is pronounced both as mumtahinah and as mumtahanah, the meaning according to the first pronunciation being "the Surah which examines", and according to the second, "the woman who is examined."

## Period of Revelation

The Surah deals with two incidents, the time of the occurrence of which is well known historically. The first relates to Hadrat Hatib bin AbzBalta'a, who, a little before the conquest of Makkah, had sent a secret letter to the Quraish chiefs informing them of the Holy Prophet's intention to attack them. The second relates to the Muslim women, who had started emigrating from Makkah to Madinah, after the conclusion of the Truce of Hudaibiyah, and the problem arose whether they also were to be returned to the disbelievers, like the Muslim men, according to the conditions of the Truce. The mention of these two things absolutely determines that this Surah came down during the interval between the Truce of Hudaibiyah and the Conquest of Makkah. Besides, there is a third thing also that has been mentioned at the end of the Surah to the effect; What should the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) make the women to pledge when they come to take the oath of allegiance before him as believers? About this part also the guess is that this too was sent down some time before the conquest of Makkah, for after this conquest a large number of the Quraish women, like their men, were going to enter Islam simultaneously and had to be administered the oath of allegiance collectively.

## Theme and Topics

This Surah has three parts;

The first part consists of vv. 1-9, and the concluding verse 13 also relates to it. In this strong exception has been taken to the act of Hadrat Hatib bin Abi Balta'a in that he had tried to inform the enemy of a very important war secret of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) only for the sake of safeguarding his family. This would have caused great bloodshed at the conquest of Makkah had it not been made ineffective in time. It would have cost the Muslims many precious lives; many of the Quraish would have been killed, who were to render great services to Islam afterward; the gains which were to accrue from conquering Makkah peacefully would have been lost, and all these serious losses would have resulted only because one of the Muslims had wanted to safeguard his family from the dangers of war. Administering a severe warning at this blunder Allah has taught the believers the lesson that no believer should, under any circumstances and for any motive, have relations of love and friendship with the disbelievers, who are actively hostile to Islam, and a believer should refrain from everything which might be helpful to them in the conflict between Islam and disbelief. However, there is no harm in dealing kindly and justly with those disbelievers, who may not be practically engaged in hostile activities against Islam and persecution of the Muslims.

The second part consists of vv. 10-11. In this a social problem has been settled, which was agitating the minds at that time. There were many Muslim women in Makkah, whose husbands were pagans, but they were emigrating and reaching Madinah somehow. Likewise, there were many Muslim men in Madinah, whose wives were pagans and had been left behind in Makkah. The question arose whether the marriage bond between them continued to be valid or not. Allah settled this problem for ever, saying that the pagan husband is not lawful for the Muslim women, nor the pagan wife lawful for the Muslim husband. This decision leads to very important legal consequences, which we shall explain in our notes below.

The third section consists of verse 12, in which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) has been instructed to ask the women who accept



Islam to pledge that they would refrain from the major evils that were prevalent among the womenfolk of the pre-Islamic Arab society, and to promise that they would henceforth follow the ways of goodness which the Messenger of Allah may enjoin.

