

Taraveeh: Twenty-Fifth Night

Surah As-Saff

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

Name

The Surah derives its name from the sentence *yuqatiluna fi sabil-i-hlsaff-an* of verse 4; thereby implying that it is a Surah in which the word *saff* occurred.

Period of Revelation

It could not be known from any reliable tradition, but a study of its subject-matter shows that this Surah probably was sent down in the period closely following the Battle of Uhud, for by reading between the lines perceives a clear description of the conditions that prevailed in that period.

Period of Revelation

The period of the revelation of the first section (vv. 1-8) is A. H. 7, and probably it was sent down, on the occasion of the conquest of Khaiber or soon after it. Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nasa'i and Ibn Jarir have related on the authority of Hadrat Abu Hurairah that he and other Companions were sitting in the Holy Prophet's assembly when these verses were revealed. About Abu Hurairah it is confirmed historically that he entered Islam after the truce of Hudaibiyah and before the conquest of Khaiber, and Khaiber was conquered, according to Ibn Hisham, in Muharram, and, according to Ibn Sa'd, in Jamadi al-Awwal, A.H. 7. Thus presumably Allah might have sent down these verses, addressing the Jews, when their last stronghold had fallen to the Muslims, or these might have been revealed when, seeing the fate of Khaiber, all the Jewish settlements of northern Hijaz had surrendered to the Islamic government.

The second section (vv. 9-11) was sent down shortly after the emigration, for the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had established the Friday congregational Prayer on the 5th day after his arrival at Madinah. The incident that has been referred to in the last verse of this section must have occurred at a time when the people had not yet received full training in the etiquette of religious congregations.

Theme and Subject Matter

As we have explained above, the two sections of this Surah were sent down in two different periods. That is why their themes as well as their audiences are different. Although there is a kind of harmony between them on account of which they have been put together in one Surah, yet we should understand their themes separately before we consider the question of their harmony.

The first section was sent down at a time when all Jewish efforts to obstruct the message of Islam during the past six years had failed. First, in Madinah as many as three of their powerful tribes had done whatever they could to frustrate the mission of the Holy Prophet, with the result that one of the tribes was completely exterminated and the other two were exiled. Then by intrigue and conspiracy they brought many of the Arab tribes together to advance on Madinah, but in the Battle of the Trench they were all repulsed. After this, Khaiber had become their stronghold, where a large number of the Jews expelled from Madinah also had taken refuge. At the time these verses were revealed, that too was taken without any extraordinary effort, and the Jews at their own request agreed to live there as tenants of the Muslims. After this final defeat the Jewish power in Arabia came to an end. Then, Wad-il-Qura, Fadak, Taima', Tabuk, all surrendered one after the other, so much so that all Arabian Jews became subdued to the same Islam which they were not prepared to tolerate before. This was the occasion when Allah Almighty once again addressed them in this Surah, and probably this was the last and final address that was directed to them in the Qur'an. In this they have been reminded of three things:

1. "You refused to believe in this Messenger only because he was born among a people whom you contemptuously call the "gentiles". You were under the false delusion that the Messenger must necessarily belong to your own community. You seemed to have been convinced that anyone who claimed to be a prophet from outside your community, must be an imposter, for this office had been reserved for your race, and a messenger could never be raised among the "gentiles". But among the same gentiles Allah has raised a Messenger who is reciting His Book in front of your very eyes, is purifying souls, and showing the Right Way to the people whose misdeeds are well known to you. This is Allah's bounty, which He may bestow on anyone He may please. You have no monopoly over it so that He may bestow it over whomever you may please and may withhold it from whomever you may desire it to be withheld".
2. "You had been made bearers of the Torah, but you did not understand your responsibility for it nor discharged it as you should have.

You are like the donkey which is loaded with books, and which does not know what burden it is bearing. Rather you are worse than the donkey, for the donkey is devoid of sense, but you are intelligent. You not only shirk your responsibility of being bearers of Allah's revelations deliberately, Yet, you are under the delusion that you are Allah's favorites and the blessing of apostleship has been reserved for you alone. More than that, you seem to entertain the notion that whether you fulfill the demands of Allah's message or not, Allah In any case is bound not to make any other than you the bearer of His message."

3. "If you really were Allah's favorites and you were sure of having a place of honor and high rank reserved with Him, you would not have feared death so much as to prefer a life of disgrace to death. It is only because of this fear of death that you have suffered humiliation after humiliation during the past few years. Your this condition is by itself a proof that you are fully conscious of your misdeeds, and your conscience is aware that if you die with these misdeeds, you will meet with a greater disgrace before Allah in the Hereafter than in this world."

This is the subject-matter of the first section. The second section that was sent down many years later, was appended to this Surah because in it Allah has bestowed Friday on the Muslims as against the Sabbath of the Jews, and Allah wanted to warn the Muslims not to treat their Friday as the Jews had treated their Sabbath. This section was sent down on an occasion when a trade caravan arrived in Madinah right at the time of the Friday congregational service and hearing its din and drum the audience, except for 12 men, left the Prophet's Mosque and rushed out to the caravan, although the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) at that time was delivering the Sermon. Thereupon it was enjoined that after the call is sounded for the Friday Prayer all trade and business and other occupations become forbidden. The believers should then suspend every kind of transaction and hasten to the remembrance of Allah. However, when the Prayer is over, they have the right to disperse in the land to resume their normal occupations. This section could be made an independent Surah in view of the commandments that it contains about the

congregational service on Friday, and could also be included in some other Surah, but, instead, it has been included here particularly in the verses in which the Jews have been warned of the causes of their evil end. Its wisdom in our opinion is the same as we have explained above.

Surah Al-Munafiqun

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

Name

The Surah takes its name from the sentence *Idha jaa kal-munafiquna* of verse 1. This is the name of the Surah as well as the title of its subject matter, for in it a review has been made of the conduct and attitude of the hypocrites themselves.

Period of Revelation

As we shall explain below this Surah was sent down either during the Holy Prophet's return journey from his campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq, or immediately after his arrival back at Madinah, and we have established by argument and research in the Introduction to Surah An-Nur that the campaign against Bani al-Mustaliq had taken place in Sha'ban A. H. 6: Thus, the date of the revelation of this Surah is determined precisely.

Historical Background

Before we mention the particular incident about which this Surah was sent down, it is necessary to have a look at the history of the hypocrites of Madinah, for the incident that occurred on this occasion was not a chance

happening but had a whole series of events behind it, which ultimately led up to it.

Before the Holy Prophet's emigration to Madinah the tribes of the Aus and the Khazraj, fed up with their mutual rivalries and civil wars, had almost agreed on the leadership of one man and were making preparations to crown him their king. This was Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul, the chief of the Khazraj. Muhammad bin Ishaq has stated that among the people of Khazraj his authority was never contested and never had the Aus and the Khazraj rallied to one man before this. (Ibn Hisham, vol. II, p. 234)

Such were the conditions when the voice of Islam reached Madinah and the influential people of both the tribes started becoming Muslims. When before the Emigration, invitation was being extended to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) to come to Madinah, Hadrat Abbas bin Ubadah bin Nadlah Ansari wanted to defer this invitation for the reason that Abdullah bin Ubayy also might join in the declaration of allegiance and invitation to the Holy Prophet, so that Madinah might become the centre of Islam by common consent. But the delegation that arrived in Makkah to declare their allegiance did not give any importance to the proposal of Abbas bin Ubadah, and all its members, who included 75 men from both the tribes, became ready to invite the Holy Prophet in the face of every danger. (Ibn Hisham, vol. II, P. 89). We have given the details of this event in the Introduction to Surah Al-Anfal.

Then, when the Holy Prophet arrived in Madinah, Islam had so deeply penetrated every house of the Ansar that Abdullah bin Ubayy became helpless and did not see any other way to save his leadership than to become a Muslim himself. So, he entered Islam along with many of his followers from among the chiefs and leaders of both the tribes although their hearts were burning with rage from within. Ibn Ubayy in particular was filled with grief, for the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had deprived him of his kingship. For several years his hypocritical faith and

grief of being deprived of his kingdom manifested itself in different ways. On the one hand, when on Fridays the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) took his seat to deliver the Sermon, Abdullah bin Ubayy would stand up and say "O people, the Messenger of Allah is present among you, by whom Allah has honored you; therefore, you should support him and listen to what he says and obey him." (Ibn Hisham, vol. III, p.111). On the other, his hypocrisy was being exposed day by day and the true Muslims were realizing that he and his followers bore great malice against Islam, the Holy Prophet and the Muslims.

Once when the Holy Prophet was passing on the way Abdullah bin Ubayy spoke to him in harsh words. When the Holy Prophet complained of it to Hadrat Sa'd bin Ubadah; he said:"O Messenger of Allah, don't be hard on him, for when Allah sent you to us we were making a diadem to crown him, and, by God, he thinks that you have robbed him of his kingdom." (Ibn Hisham vol:II, pp. 237-238).

After the Battle of Badr when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) invaded the Jewish tribe of Bani Qainuqa on their breaking the agreement and unprovoked revolt, this man stood up in support of them, and holding the Holy Prophet by his armor, said:"These 700 fighters have been helping and protecting me against every enemy; would you cut them down in one morning? By God, I will not leave you until you pardon my clients." (Ibn Hisham, vol. III, pp. 51-52).

On the occasion of the Battle of Uhud this man committed open treachery and withdrew from the battlefield with 300 of his companions. One should note that at this critical moment when he so acted, the Quraish had marched upon Madinah with 3,000 troops and the Holy Prophet had marched out with only 1,000 men to resist them. Of these 1,000 this hypocrite broke away with 300 men and the Holy Prophet was left with only 700 men to meet 3,000 troops of the enemy in the field.

After this incident the common Muslims of Madinah came to realize fully that he was certainly a hypocrite and his those Companions also were found who were his associates in hypocrisy. That is why when on the very first Friday, after the Battle of Uhud, this man stood up as usual to make a speech before the Holy Prophet's Sermon, the people pulled at his garment, saying "Sit down you are not worthy to say such things." That was the first occasion in Madinah when this man was publicly disgraced. Thereupon he was so filled with rage that he left the mosque jumping over the heads of the people. At the door of the Mosque some of the Ansar said to him, "What are you doing? Go back and ask the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) to pray for your forgiveness." He retorted "I do not, want him to pray for my forgiveness." (Ibn Hisham, vol. III, p. 111).

Then in A. H. 4 the Battle of Bani an-Nadir took place. On this occasion he and his companions supported the enemies of Islam even more openly. On the one side, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his devoted Companions were preparing for war against their enemy, the Jews, and on the other, these hypocrites were secretly sending messages to the Jews to the effect: "Stand firm we are with you: if you are attacked, we will help you, and if you are driven out, we too will go out with you." The secret of this intrigue was exposed by Allah Himself, as has been explained in Surah Al-Hashr: 11-17 above.

But in spite of being so exposed the reason why the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) was still treating him kindly was that he had a large band of the hypocrites behind him. Many of the chiefs of both the Aus and the Khazraj were his supporters. At least a third of the population of Madinah consisted of his companions, as became manifest on the occasion of the Battle of Uhud. Under such conditions it was not prudent to wage a war with these internal enemies combined with the external enemies. On this very account, in spite of being fully aware of their hypocrisy the Holy Prophet continued to deal with them according to their apparent profession of faith for a long time. On the other hand, these

people too neither possessed the power nor the courage to fight the believers openly as disbelievers, or to join hands with an invader and face them in the battlefield. Apparently they were a strong hand but inwardly they had the weakness which Allah has vividly portrayed in Surah Al-Hashr: 12-14. Therefore; they thought their well being lay only in posing as Muslims. They came to the mosque, offered the prayers gave away the zakat, and would make tall oral claims to the faith, which the true Muslims never felt the need to do. They would offer a thousand justifications for each of their hypocritical acts by which they would try to deceive their compatriots, the Ansar, into believing that they were with them. By these designs they were not only saving themselves from the disadvantages which could naturally accrue if they separated themselves from the Ansar brotherhood, but also taking advantage of the opportunities to make mischief which were available to them as members of the Muslim brotherhood.

These were the causes which enabled Abdullah bin Ubayy and like minded hypocrites to get an opportunity to accompany the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) in his campaign against the Bani al-Mustaliq, and they simultaneously engineered two great mischiefs which could shatter the Muslim unity to pieces. However, by virtue of the wonderful training in discipline that the Muslim; had received through the pure teaching of the Quran and the companionship of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) both mischiefs were stopped in time, and the hypocrites themselves were disgraced instead. One of these was the mischief that has been mentioned in Surah An-Nur above, and the other which has been mentioned in this Surah.

This incident has been related by Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Nasai, Tirmidhi, Baihaqi, Tabari, Ibn Marduyah, Abdur Razzaq, Ibn Jarir Tabari, Ibn Sa'd and Muhammad bin Ishaq through many reliable channels. In some traditions the expedition in which it took place has not been named, and in others it has been connected with the Battle of Tabuk. But the authorities

on the battles fought by the Holy Prophet and history are agreed that this incident took place on the occasion of the campaign against the Bani al-Mustaliq. The following seems to be the real story when all the traditions are read together.

When after crushing down the power of Bani al-Mustaliq the Islamic army had made a halt in the settlement at the well of al Muraisi. Suddenly a dispute arose between two men on taking water from the well; One of them was Jehjah bin Masud Ghifari, a servant of Hadrat Umar appointed to lead his horse. The other was Sinan bin Wabar al-Juhani, whose tribe was an ally of a clan of the Khazraj. Harsh words between them led to fighting and Jehjah kicked Sinan, which the Ansar, on account of their ancient Yamanite tradition, took as a great insult and disgrace. At this Sinan called out the men of Ansar and Jehjah the Emigrants for help. Hearing about the quarrel Ibn Ubayy started inciting and calling the men of the Aus and the Khazraj to come out and help their ally. From the other side some Emigrants also came out. The dispute might have led to a fight between the Ansar and the Muhajirin themselves at the very place where they had just fought an enemy tribe jointly and crushing it had halted in its own territory. But hearing the noise the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) emerged and said: "what is this call of paganism? What have you to do with such a call? Leave it: it is a dirty thing." Thereupon the leading men of the two sides met and settled the dispute; Sinan pardoned Jehjah and peace was restored.

After this every person whose heart was disaffected came to Abdullah bin Ubayy and they all said to him, "Until now we had our hopes attached to you and you were protecting us, but now it seems you have become a helper of these paupers against us. Ibn Ubayy was already enraged: These words made him burst out, thus: "This is what you have done to yourselves. You have given these people shelter in your country, and have divided your property among them. So much so that they have now become our rivals. Nothing so fits us and the paupers of Quraish (or the Companions of Muhammad) as the ancient saying 'Feed your dog to fatten it and it will

devour you.' If you hold back your property from them, they would go elsewhere. By God, when we return to Madinah, the honorable ones will drive out from it the mean ones."

Zaid bin Arqam, a young boy, also happened to be present in the assembly at that time. He heard this and mentioned it before his uncle, and his uncle who was one of the Ansar chiefs went to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and told him the whole story. The Holy Prophet called Zaid and asked him what had happened and he repeated every word of what he had heard. The Holy Prophet said, "Zaid, you are perhaps displeased with Ibn Ubayy; you might have been mistaken in hearing; you might have imagined Ibn Ubayy said this." But Zaid was sure and firm. He said, "No, I swear by God I have heard him say this and that." Thereupon the Holy Prophet called Ibn Ubayy, and he came and swore that he had not said any such thing. The people of the Ansar also said "Sir, a boy says this: he might have been mistaken in what he heard Ibn Ubayy is a venerable old man and our chief. Do not believe what a boy says against him." The elderly people of the tribe reproved Zaid also, who became depressed and held his peace. But the Holy Prophet knew Zaid as well as Abdullah bin Ubayy. Therefore, he fully understood what had actually happened.

When Hadrat Umar came to know of this, he came to the Holy Prophet and said: "Please allow me to put this hypocrite to the sword. Or, if you do not think it is fit to give me the permission you may tell Muadh bin Jabal, or Abbad bin Bishr, or Sad bin Mu'adh, or Muhammad bin Maslamah from among the Ansar, to go and kill him." But the Holy Prophet said: "No, the people will say Muhammad kills his own Companions." After this he ordered the people to set off immediately, although it was at a time when the Holy Prophet was not accustomed to travel. The forced march continued for 30 hours at a stretch so that the people became exhausted. Then he halted, and as soon as they touched the ground they fell asleep. This he did to distract their minds from what had happened at the well of al-Muraishi. On the way, Hadrat Usaid bin Hudair, an Ansar chief, met the Holy

Prophet, and said: "O Messenger of Allah, today you ordered the people to set off at a time which was disagreeable for traveling, a thing you have never done before." The Holy Prophet replied: "Have you not heard of what your friend said?" When he asked who he meant, the Holy Prophet replied: Abdullah bin Ubayy. He asked what he had said. The Holy Prophet answered: "He has asserted that when he returns to Madinah the honorable ones will drive out from it the mean ones. He answered: "By God, O Messenger of Allah, you are the honorable one and he is the mean one; you will drive him out whenever you want to."

By and by the news spread among the Ansar soldiers and it enraged them against Ibn Ubayy. The people advised him to go to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and request for his forgiveness, but he retorted: "You asked me to believe in him, and I believed in him; you asked me to pay the zakat on my property, and I paid the zakat too; now the only thing left is that I should bow down to Muhammad." This further enraged the believing Ansar and everyone started reproaching and cursing him roughly. When the caravan was about to enter Madinah, Abdullah, the son of Abdullah bin Ubayy, stood before his father with a drawn out sword, and said: "You had said that when you reached Madinah, the honorable ones would drive out the mean ones. Now, you will know who is honorable you or Allah and His Messenger. By God, you cannot enter Madinah until the Messenger of Allah (upon whom be Allah's peace) permits you to enter." At this Ibn Ubayy cried out: "O people of Khazraj, look, my own son is preventing me from entering Madinah." The people conveyed this news to the Holy Prophet, and he said: "Tell Abdullah to let his father come home." Abdullah said, "If this is the Holy Prophet's order, then you may enter." Thereupon the Holy Prophet said to Hadrat Umar: "Now what do you think, Umar? Had you killed him on the day when you asked my permission to kill him, many people would have trembled with rage. Today if I order them to kill him, they will kill him immediately." Hadrat Umar replied "By

God, I realize there was greater wisdom behind what the Apostle of Allah said than what I said."

These were the circumstances under which this Surah was sent down most probably after the Holy Prophet's return to Madinah.

Surah At-Tagabun

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

Name

The Surah takes its name from the sentence Dhalika yaum-ut taghabun of verse 9, thereby implying that it is the Surah in which the word attaghabun has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Muqatil and Kalbi say that it was partly revealed at Makkah and partly at Madinah. Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas and Ata bin Yasar say that vv.1-13 were revealed at Makkah and vv. 14-18 at Madinah. But the majority of commentators regard the whole of the surah as a Madinan Revelation. Although there is no internal evidence to help determine its exact period of revelation, yet a study of its subject matter shows that it might probably have been sent down at an early stage at Madinah. That is why it partly resembles the Makkah Surahs and partly the Madinah Surahs.

Theme and Subject Matter

The theme of this surah is invitation to the Faith and obedience (to Allah) and the teaching of good morals. The sequence followed is that the first four verses are addressed to all men; verses 5-10 to those men, who do not believe in the invitation of the Qur'an; and verses 11-18 to those who accept and believe in this invitation.

In the verses addressed to all men, they have been made aware in a few brief sentences of the four fundamental truths:

First, that the universe in which they live is not Godless, but its Creator, Master and Ruler is an All Powerful God, and everything in it testifies to His being most Perfect and absolutely faultless.

Second, that the universe is not without purpose and wisdom, but its Creator has created it with truth no one should be under the delusion that it is a mock show, which began without a purpose and will come to an end without a purpose.

Third, that the excellent form that God has created you with and the choice that He has given you to choose between belief and unbelief is not a useless and meaningless activity so that it may be of no consequence whether you choose belief or unbelief. In fact, God is watching as to how you exercise your choice.

Fourth, that you have not been created irresponsible and un-answerable. You have to return ultimately to your Creator, and have to meet the Being who is aware of everything in the universe, from Whom nothing is hidden, to Whom even the innermost thoughts of the minds are known.

After stating these four fundamental truths about the Universe and Man, the address turns to the people who adopted the way of unbelief, and their attention is drawn to a phenomenon which has persisted throughout human

history, namely that nation after nation has arisen and ultimately gone to its doom. Man by his intellect and reason has been explaining this phenomenon in a thousand ways, but Allah tells the real truth and declares that the fundamental causes of the destruction of the nations were only two:

First, that they refused to believe in the Messengers whom He sent for their guidance, with the result that Allah too left them to themselves, and they invented their own philosophies of life and went on groping their way from one error to another.

Second, that they also, rejected the doctrine of Hereafter, and thought this worldly life to be an end in itself, and that there was no life hereafter when they would have to render an account of their deeds before God. This corrupted their whole attitude towards life, and their impure morals and character so polluted the world that eventually the scourge of God itself had to descend and eliminate them from the scene.

After stating these two instructive truths of human history, the deniers of the message of Truth have been admonished to wake up and believe in Allah, His Messenger and the Light of Guidance that Allah has sent in the form of the Qur'an if they want to avoid the fate met by the former peoples.

Besides, they have been warned that the Day shall eventually come when all the former and the latter generations will be collected at one place and the fraud and embezzlement committed by each will be exposed before all mankind. Then the fate of each man will be decided finally on the basis as to who had adopted the path of the Faith and righteousness and who had followed the way of disbelief and denial of the Truth. The first groups halt deserve eternal Paradise and the second shall be doomed to everlasting Hell.

Then, addressing those who adopt the way of the Faith, a few important instructions have been given:

First, that whatever affliction befalls a person in the world, it befalls him by Allah's leave. Whoever in this state of affliction remains steadfast to the Faith, Allah blesses his heart with guidance; otherwise although the affliction of the one who in confusion or bewilderment turns away from the path of the Faith, cannot be averted except by Allah's leave, yet he becomes involved in another, the greatest affliction of all, namely that his heart is deprived of the guidance of Allah.

Secondly, that the believer is not required to affirm the faith with the tongue only, but after the affirmation of the Faith he should practically obey Allah and His Messenger. If he turns away from obedience he would himself be responsible for his loss, for the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be His peace) has become absolved from the responsibility after having delivered the message of Truth.

Thirdly, that the believer should place his trust in Allah alone and not in his own power or some other power of the world.

Fourthly, that the worldly goods and children are a great trial and temptation for the believer, for it is their love which generally distracts man from the path of faith and obedience. Therefore, the believers have to beware some of their children, and wives lest they become robbers for them on the Way of God directly or indirectly; and they should spend their wealth for the sake of God so that their self remains safe against the temptations of Satan.

Fifthly, that every man is responsible only to the extent of his power and ability. Allah does not demand that man should exert himself beyond his power and ability. However, the believer should try his best to live in fear of God as far as possible, and should see that he does not transgress the bounds set by Allah in his speech, conduct and dealings through his own negligence.

Surah At-Talaq

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

Name

At-Talaq is not only the name of this Surah but also the title of its subject matter, for it contains commandments about Talaq (divorce) itself. Hadrat `Abdullah bin Mas`ud has described it as Surah an-Nisa al-qusra also, i.e. the shorter Surah an-Nisa.

Period of Revelation

Hadrat Abdullah bin Masud has Pointed out, and the internal evidence of the subject matter of the Surah confirms the same, that it must have been sent down after those verses of surah Al-Baqarah in which commandments concerning divorce were given for the first time. Although it is difficult to determine precisely what is its exact date of revelation, yet the traditions in any case indicate that when the people started making errors in understanding the commandments of Surah Al-Baqarah, and practically also they began to commit mistakes, Allah sent down these instructions for their correction.

Theme and Subject Matter

In order to understand the commandments of this Surah, it would be useful to refresh one's memory about the instructions which have been given in the Qur'an concerning divorce and the waiting period (Iddat) above.

"Divorce may be pronounced twice; then the wife may either be kept back in fairness or allowed to separate in fairness." (Al Baqarah 229)

"And the divorced women (after the pronouncement of the divorce) must wait for three monthly courses... and their husbands are fully entitled to take them back (as their wives) during this waiting period, if they desire reconciliation." (Al Baqarah 228)

"Then, if the husband divorces his wife (for the third time), she shall not remain lawful for him after this divorce, unless she marries another husband..." (Al-Baqarah: 230)

"When you marry the believing women, and then divorce them before you have touched them, they do not have to fulfill a waiting period, the completion of which you may demand of them." (Al-Ahzab : 49)

"And if those of you who die, leave wives behind, the women should abstain (from marriage) for four months and ten days." (Al-Baqarah 234)

The rules prescribed in these verses were as follows:

1. A man can pronounce at the most three divorces on his wife.
2. In case the husband has pronounced one or two divorces he is entitled to keep the woman back as wife within the waiting period and if after the expiry of the waiting period the two desire to re-marry, they can re-marry there is no condition of legalization (tahlil). But if the husband has pronounced three divorces, he forfeits his right to keep her as his wife within the waiting period, and they cannot re-marry unless the woman re-marries another husband and he subsequently divorces her of his own free will.
3. The waiting period of the woman, who menstruates and marriage with whom has been consummated, is that she should pass three monthly courses. The waiting period in case of one or two divorces is that the woman is still the legal wife of the husband and he can keep her back as his wife within the waiting period. But if the husband has pronounced three divorces, this waiting period cannot be taken advantage of for the purpose of reconciliation, but it is only meant to

restrain the woman from re-marrying another person before it comes to an end.

4. There is no waiting period for the woman, marriage with whom has not been consummated, and who is divorced even before she is touched. She can re-marry, if she likes, immediately after the divorce.
5. The waiting period of the woman whose husband dies, is four months and ten days.

Here, one should understand well that Surah At- Talaq was not sent down to annul any of these rules or amend it, but it was sent down for two purposes;

First, that the man who has been given the right to pronounce divorce should be taught such judicious methods of using this right as do not lead to separation, as far as possible however, if separation does take place, it should only be in case all possibilities of mutual reconciliation have been exhausted. For in the Divine Law provision for divorce has been made only as an unavoidable necessity; otherwise Allah does not approve that the marriage relationship that has been established between a man and a woman should ever break. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) has said "Allah has not made lawful anything more hateful in His sight than divorce." (Abu Daud). And: "Of all the things permitted by the Law, the most hateful in the sight of Allah is the divorce, (Abu Daud)

The second object was to complement this section of the family law of Islam by supplying answers to the questions that had remained after the revelation of the commandments in Surah Al-Baqarah. So, answers have been supplied to the following questions: What would be the waiting period of the women, marriage with whom has been consummated and who no longer menstruate, or those who have not yet menstruated, in case they are divorced? What would be the waiting period of the woman, who is pregnant, or the woman whose husband dies, if she is divorced? And what arrangements would be made for the maintenance and lodging of the

different categories of divorced women, and for the fosterage of the child whose parents have separated on account of a divorce?

Surah At-Tahrim

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

Name

The Surah derived its name from the words lima tuharrimu of the very first verse. This too is not a title of its subject matter, but the name implies that it is the Surah in which the incident of tahrim(prohibition, forbiddance) has been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

In connection with the incident of tahrim referred to in this Surah, the traditions of the Hadith mention two ladies who were among the wives of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) at that time Hadrat Safiyyah and Hadrat Mariyah Qibtiyyah. The former (i. e. Hadrat Safiyyah) was taken to wife by the Holy Prophet after the conquest of Khaiber, and Khaiber was conquered, as has been unanimously reported, in A. H. 7. The other lady, Hadrat Mariyah, had been presented to the Holy Prophet by Muqawqis, the ruler of Egypt, in A. H. 7 and she had borne him his son, Ibrahim, in Dhil-Hijjah, A. H. 8. These historical events almost precisely determine that this Surah was sent down sometime during A.H. 7 or A. H 8.

Theme and Topics

This is a very important Surah in which light has been thrown on some questions of grave significance with reference to some incidents concerning the wives of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace).

First, that the powers to prescribe the bounds of the lawful and the unlawful, the permissible and the forbidden, are entirely and absolutely in the hand of Allah and nothing has been delegated even to the Prophet of Allah himself, not to speak of any other man. The Prophet as such can declare something lawful or unlawful only if he receives an inspiration from Allah to do so whether that inspiration is embodied in the Qur'an, or imparted to, him secretly. However, even the Prophet is not authorized to declare anything made permissible by Allah unlawful by himself, much less to say of another man.

Second, that in any society the position of a Prophet is very delicate. A minor incident experienced by an ordinary man in his life may not be of any consequence, but it assumes the status of law when experienced by a Prophet. That is why the lives of the Prophets have been kept under close supervision by Allah so that none of their acts, not even a most trivial one, may deviate from Divine Will. Whenever such an act has emanated from a Prophet, it was rectified and rectified immediately so that the Islamic law and its principles should reach the people in their absolute purity not only through the Divine Book but also through the excellent example of the Prophet, and they should include nothing which may be in disagreement with Divine Will,

Thirdly, and this automatically follows from the above mentioned point, that when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was checked on a minor thing, which was not only corrected but also recorded, it gives us complete satisfaction that whatever actions and commands and instructions we now find in the pure life of the Holy Prophet concerning which there is nothing

on record in the nature of criticism or correction from Allah, they are wholly based on truth, are incomplete conformity with Divine Will and we can draw guidance from them with full confidence and peace of mind.

The fourth thing that we learn from this discourse is that about the Holy Messenger himself, whose reverence and respect Allah Himself has enjoined as a necessary part of the Faith of His servants, it has been stated in this Surah that once during his sacred life he made a thing declared lawful by Allah unlawful for himself only to please his wives; then Allah has severely reproofed for their errors those very wives of the Holy Prophet, whom He Himself has declared as mothers of the faithful and worthy of the highest esteem and honor by them. Then, this criticism of the Prophet and the administration of the warning to the wives also has not been made secretly but included in the Book, which the entire Ummah has to read and recite forever. Obviously, neither the intention of making mention of it in the Book of Allah was, nor it could be, that Allah wanted to degrade His Messenger and the mothers of the faithful in the eyes of the believers; and this also is obvious that no Muslim has lost respect for them, in his heart after reading this Surah of the Qur'an. Now, there cannot be any other reason of mentioning this thing in the Qur'an than that Allah wants to acquaint the believers with the correct manner of reverence for their great personalities. The Prophet is a Prophet, not God, that he may commit no error. Respect of the Prophet has not been enjoined because he is infallible, but because he is a perfect representative of Divine Will, and Allah has not permitted any of his errors to pass by unnoticed. This gives us the satisfaction that the noble pattern of life left by the Prophet wholly and fully represents the will of Allah. Likewise, the Companions of the holy wives of the Prophet, were human, not angels or super men. They could commit mistakes. Whatever ranks they achieved became possible only because the guidance given by Allah and the training imparted by Allah's Messenger had molded them into the finest models. Whatever esteem and reverence they deserve is on this very basis and not on the presumption

that they were infallible. For this reason, whenever in the sacred lifetime of the Prophet (upon him be peace) the Companions or holy wives happened to commit an error due to human weakness, they were checked. Some of their errors were corrected by the Holy Prophet, as has been mentioned at many places in the Hadith; some other errors were mentioned in the Qur'an and Allah Himself corrected them so that the Muslims might not form any exaggerated notion of the respect and reverence of their elders and great men, which might raise them from humanity to the position of gods and goddesses. If one studies the Quran carefully, one will see instances of this one after the other. In Surah Al-Imran, in connection with the Battle of Uhud, the Companions have been addressed and told:

"Allah did fulfill His promise (of help) to you : in the initial stage of the battle, it was you who were killing them by Allah's leave until you lost heart and disputed about your duty and disobeyed your leader, when Allah showed you what (the spoils) you coveted for there were among you sortie who hankered after the life of this world, and others: who cherished the life after death. Then Allah caused your retreat before the disbelievers in order to test you, but the fact is that even then Allah pardoned you, for Allah is very gracious to the believers." (v. 152).

In surah An-Nur, in connection with the Slander against Hadrat Aisha, the Companions were told,

"When you heard of it, why did not the believing men and the believing women have a good opinion of themselves, and why did they not say: this is a manifest slander?.....Were it not for Allah's grace and mercy towards you in this world and in the Hereafter, a painful scourge would have visited you because of the slander. (Just consider) when you passed this lie on from one tongue to the other and uttered with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge. You took it as a trifling matter whereas it was a grave offense in the sight of Allah. Why did you not, as soon as you heard of it, say 'It is not proper for us to utter such a thing? Glory be to Allah! This

is a great slander'. "Allah admonishes you that in future you should never repeat anything like this, if you are true believers." (vv. 12-17).

In surah Al-Ahzab, the holy wives have been addressed thus: "O Prophet, say to your wives If you seek the world and its adornments, come, I shall give you of these and send you off in a good way. But if you seek Allah and His Messenger and the abode of the Hereafter, you should rest assured that Allah has prepared a great reward for those of you, who do good." (vv. 28-29).

In Surah Jumu'ah about the Companions it was said:

"And when they saw some merchandise and amusement they broke off to it and left you (O Prophet) standing (in the course of the Sermon). Say to them : that which is with Allah is far better than amusement and merchandise, and Allah is the best of all providers." (v. 11).

In Surah Al-Mumtahinah, Hadrat Hatib bin Abi Balta'ah, a Companion who had fought at Badr, was severely taken to task because he had sent secret information to the disbelieving Quraish about the Holy Prophet's invasion before the conquest of Makkah.

All these instances are found in the Qur'an itself, in the same Qur'an in which Allah Himself has paid tribute to the Companions and the holy wives for their great merits, and granted them the certificate of His good pleasure, saying: "Allah became well pleased with them and they with Allah." It was this same moderate and balanced teaching of the reverence and esteem of the great men, which saved the Muslims from falling into the pit of man worship in which the Jews and the Christians fell, and it is a result of the same that in the books that the eminent followers of the Sunnah have compiled on the subjects of the Hadith, Commentary of the Qur'an and History, not only have the excellences and great merits of the Companions and holy wives and other illustrious men been mentioned, but also no hesitation has been shown in mentioning the incidents relating to their

weaknesses, errors and mistakes, whereas those scholars were more appreciative of the merits and excellences of the great men and understood the bounds and limits of reverence better than those who claim to be the upholders of reverence for the elders today.

The fifth thing that has been explicitly mentioned in this Surah is that Allah's Religion is absolutely fair and just. It has for every person just that of which he becomes worthy on the basis of his faith and works. No relationship or connection even with the most righteous person can be beneficial for him in any way and no relationship or connection with the most evil and wicked person can be harmful for him in any way. In this connection three kinds of women have been cited as examples before the holy wives in particular. One example is of the wives of the Prophets Noah and Lot, who, if they had believed and cooperated with their illustrious husbands, would have occupied the same rank and position in the Muslim community. which is enjoyed by the wives of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). But since they were disbelievers, their being the wives of the Prophets did not help them and they fell into Hell. The second example is of the wife of Pharaoh, who in spite of being the wife of a staunch enemy of God believed and chose a path of action separate from that followed by the Pharaoh's people, and her being the wife of a staunch disbeliever did not cause her any harm, and Allah made her worthy of Paradise. The third example is of Hadrat Maryam (Mary) (peace be upon her), who attained to the high rank because she submitted to the severe test to which Allah had decided to put her. Apart from Mary no other chaste and righteous girl in the world ever has been put to such a hard test that in spite of being unmarried, she might have been made pregnant miraculously by Allah's command and informed what service her Lord willed to take from her. When Hadrat Maryam accepted this decision, and agreed to bear, like a true believer, everything that she inevitably had to bear in order to fulfill Allah's will, then did Allah exalt her to the noble rank of Sayyidatu an-nisa' fil- Jannah: "Leader of the women in Paradise" (Musnad Ahmad).

Besides, another truth that we learn from this Surah is that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) did not receive from Allah only that knowledge which is included and recorded in the Qur'an, but he was given information about other things also by revelation, which has not been recorded in the Qur'an. Its clear proof is verse 3 of this Surah. In it we are told that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) confided a secret to one of his wives, and she told it to another. Allah informed the Holy Prophet of this secret. Then, when the Holy Prophet warned his particular wife on the mistake of disclosure and she said: "Who has informed you of this mistake of mine?" he replied: "I have been informed of it by Him Who knows everything and is All Aware." Now, the question is where in the Qur'an is the verse in which Allah has said "O Prophet, the secret that you had confided to one of your wives, has been disclosed by her to another person, or to so and so? If there is no such verse in the Qur'an, and obviously there is none, this is an express proof of the fact that revelation descended on the Holy Prophet besides the Qur'an as well. This refutes the claim of the deniers of Hadith, who allege that nothing was sent down to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) apart from the Qur'an.

Surah Al-Mulk

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

Name

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

Period of Revelation

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

Theme and Subject Matter

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

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

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

have to admit that you really deserved the punishment that was being meted out to you."

In vv. 12-14, the truth that has been impressed on the minds is that the Creator cannot be unaware of His creation, as if to say: "He is aware of each open and hidden secret of yours, even of the innermost ideas of your hearts. Hence, the right basis of morality is that man should avoid evil, fearing the accountability of the unseen God, whether in the world there is a power to take him to task for this or not, and whether in the world there is a possibility of being harmed by such a power or not. Those who adopt such a conduct in the world alone will deserve forgiveness and a rich reward in the Hereafter."

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

In vv. 24-27, it has been said: "You have ultimately to appear before your God in any case. It is not for the Prophet to tell you the exact time and date of the event. His only duty is to warn you beforehand of its inevitable

occurrence. Today you do not listen to him and demand that he should cause the event to occur and appear prematurely before you; but when it does occur, and you see it with your own eyes, you will then be astounded. Then, it will be said to you "This is the very thing you were calling to be hastened."

In vv. 28-29 replies have been given to what the disbelievers of Makkah said against the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and his Companions. They cursed the Holy Prophet and prayed for his and the believers destruction. To this it has been said: "Whether those who call you to the right way are destroyed, or shown mercy by Allah, how will their fate change your destiny? You should look after yourselves and consider who would save you if you were overtaken by the scourge of God? You regard those who believe in God and put their trust in Him as the misguided. A time will come when it will become evident as to who was misguided in actual truth.

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

Surah Al-Qalam

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

Name

This Surah is called Nun as well as Al-Qalam, the words with which it begins.

Period of Revelation

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

Theme and Subject Matter

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

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

Then, in order to enlighten the common people the character of a prominent man from among the opponents, whom the people of Makkah

fully well recognized, has been presented, without naming him: At that time, the Holy Prophet's pure and sublime conduct was before them, and every discerning eye could also see what sort of character and morals were possessed by the chiefs of Makkah, who were leading the opposition against him.

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

Then, in vv. 34-47 continuously, the disbelievers have been admonished, in which the address sometimes turns to them directly and sometimes they are warned through the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace). A summary of what has been said in this regard, is this: Well being in the Hereafter inevitably belongs to those who spend their lives in the world in full consciousness of God. It is utterly against reason that the obedient servants should meet in the Hereafter the same fate as the guilty. There is absolutely no basis of the disbelievers misunderstanding that God will treat them in the manner they choose for themselves, whereas they have no guarantee for this. Those who are being called upon to bow before God in the world and they refuse to do so, would be unable to prostrate themselves on the Day of Resurrection even if they wanted to do so, and thus would stand disgraced and condemned. Having denied the Qur'an they cannot escape Divine punishment. The rein they are being given, has deluded them. They think that since they are not being punished in spite of

their denial, they must be on the right path, whereas they are following the path of ruin. They have no reasonable ground for opposing the Messenger, for he is a preacher without any vested interest: he is not asking any reward of them for himself, and they cannot either make the claim that they know with certainty that he is not a true Messenger, nor that what he says is false.

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

Surah Al-Haqqah

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

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word al-Haaqqah with which it opens.

Period of Revelation

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

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

Theme and Subject Matter

The first section (vv. 1-37) is about the Hereafter and the second (vv.38-52) about the Qur'an's being a revelation from Allah and the Holy Prophet's being a true Messenger of Allah.

The first section opens with the assertion that the coming of the Resurrection and the occurrence of the Hereafter is a truth which has to take place inevitably. Then in vv. 4-12, it has been stated that the communities that denied the Hereafter in the past became worthy of Allah's scourge ultimately. In vv. 13-17 the occurrence of Resurrection has been depicted. In vv. 18-37 the real object for which Allah has destined a second life for mankind after the present worldly life has been enunciated. In it we are told that on that Day all men shall appear in the Court of their Lord, where no secret of theirs shall remain hidden each man's record will be placed in his hand. Those who had spent lives in the world with the realization that one day they would have to render an account of their

deeds before their Lord, and who had worked righteously in the world and provided beforehand for their wellbeing in the Hereafter, will rejoice when they see that they have been acquitted and blessed with the eternal bliss of Paradise. On the contrary, those who neither recognized the rights of Allah, nor discharged the rights of men, will have no one to save them from the punishment of Allah, and they will be cast into Hell.

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

Surah Al-Ma'arij

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

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word dhil Ma'arij in verse 3.

Period of Revelation

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

Theme and Subject Matter

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

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

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

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

In conclusion, the disbelievers of Makkah who rushed in upon the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) from every side as soon as they saw him,

in order to make fun of him, have been warned to the effect: "If you do not believe, Allah will replace you by other people who will be better than you", and the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) has been consoled, so as to say: "Do not take to heart their mockery and jesting; leave them to indulge in their idle talk and foolish conduct if they are bent upon experiencing the disgrace and humiliation of the Resurrection; they will themselves see their evil end."

Surah Nuh

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

Name

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

Period of Revelation

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

Theme and Subject

In this surah the story of the Prophet Noah has not been related only for the sake of storytelling, but its object is to warn the disbelievers of Makkah, so as to say: "You, O people of Makkah, are adopting towards Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) the same attitude as the

people of the Prophet Noah had adopted towards him; if you do not change this attitude, you too would meet with the same end." This had not been said in so many words anywhere in the Surah, but in the background of the conditions under which this story was narrated to the people of Makkah, this subject itself became obvious.

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

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

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

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

While studying this Surah, one should keep in view the details of the Prophet Noah's story which have been given in the Qur'an above. For this see Al-Araf: 59-64 Yunus: 71,73, Hud: 25-49, Al-Mu'minun: 23-31, Ash-Shua'ra: 105-122, Al-Ankabut: 14,15, As-Saaffat: 75-82, Al-Qamar: 9-16.

