

## Taraveeh: Fifth Night

### Surah An-Nisaa:

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

Though this verse also deals with the family laws contained in verses **1 - 35**, it has been added as a supplement at the end of this Surah because it was revealed long after An-Nisa was being recited as a complete Surah. **176**

### Surah Al-Maida:

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

Name

This Surah takes its' name from verse 112 in which the word mai'dah occurs. Like the names of many other surahs, this name has no special

relation to the subject of the Surah but has been used merely as a symbol to distinguish it from other surahs.

### Period of Revelation

The theme of this Surah indicates, and traditions support it, that it was revealed after the treaty of Hudaibiyah at the end of 6 A. H. or in the beginning of 7 A. H. That is why it deals with those problems that arose from this treaty.

The Holy Prophet with 1400 Muslims went to Makkah in Zil-Qaadah 6 A. H. to perform Úmrah. but the Quraish spurred by their enmity, prevented him from its performance, though it was utterly against all the ancient religious traditions of Arabia. After a good deal of hard and harsh negotiations, a treaty was concluded at Hudaibiyah according to which it was agreed that he could perform Úmrah the following year. That was a very appropriate occasion for teaching the Muslims the right way of performing a pilgrimage to Makkah with the true Islamic dignity, and enjoining that they should not prevent the disbelievers from performing pilgrimage to Makkah as retaliation for their misbehavior. This was not difficult at all as many disbelievers had to pass through Muslim territory on their way to Makkah. This is why the introductory verses deal with the things connected with pilgrimage to Makkah and the same theme has been resumed in vv. 101-104. The other topics of this Surah also appear to belong to the same period.

The continuity of the subject shows that most probably the whole of the surah was revealed as a single discourse at one and the same time. It is also possible that some of its verses were revealed at a later period and inserted in this Surah at different places where they fitted in. But there appears to be not the least gap anywhere in the surah to show that it might have comprised two or more discourses.

## Occasion of Revelation

This Surah was revealed to suit the requirements of the changed conditions which were now different from those prevailing at the time of the revelation of Al-i-'Imran and An-Nisa. Then the shock of the set-back at Uhud had made the very surroundings of Al-Madinah dangerous for the Muslims, but now Islam had become an invulnerable power and the Islamic State had extended to Najd on the east, to the Red Sea on the west, to Syria on the north and to Makkah on the south. This set-back which the Muslims had suffered at Uhud had not broken their determination. It had rather spurred them to action. As a result of their continuous struggle and unparalleled sacrifices, the power of the surrounding clans, within a radius of 200 miles or so, had been broken. The Jewish menace which was always threatening Al-Madinah had been totally removed and the Jews in the other parts of Hijaz had become tributaries of the State of Al-Madinah. The last effort of the Quraish to suppress Islam had been thwarted in the Battle of the Ditch. After this, it had become quite obvious to the Arabs that no power could suppress the Islamic movement. Now Islam was not merely a creed which ruled over the minds and hearts of the people but had also become a State which dominated over every aspect of the life of the people who lived within its boundaries. This had enabled the Muslims to live their lives without let or hindrance, in accordance with their beliefs.

Another development had also taken place during this period. The Muslim civilization had developed in accordance with the principles of Islam and the Islamic viewpoint. This civilization was quite distinct from all other civilizations in all its details, and distinguished the Muslims clearly from the non Muslims in their moral, social and cultural behavior. Mosques had been built in all territories, prayer had been established and Imam (leader) for every habitation and clan had been appointed. The Islamic civil and criminal laws had been formulated in detail and were being enforced through the Islamic courts. New and reformed ways of trade and commerce



had taken the place of the old ones. The Islamic laws of marriage and divorce, of the segregation of the sexes, of the punishment for adultery and calumny and the like had cast the social life of the Muslims in a special mould. Their social behavior, their conversation, their dress, their very mode of living, their culture etc., had taken a definite shape of its own. As a result of all these changes, the non-Muslims could not expect that the Muslims would ever return to their former fold.

Before the treaty of Hudaibiyah, the Muslims were so engaged in their struggle with the non-Muslim Quraish that they got no time to propagate their message. This hindrance was removed by what was apparently a defeat but in reality a victory at Hudaibiyah. This gave the Muslims not only peace in their own territory but also respite to spread their message in the surrounding territories. Accordingly the Holy Prophet addressed letters to the rulers of Iran, Egypt and the Roman Empire and the chiefs of Arabia, inviting them to Islam. At the same time the missionaries of Islam spread among the clans and tribes and invited them to accept the Divine Way of Allah. These were the circumstances at the time when Al-Ma'idah was revealed.

## Topics

It deals with the following three main topics:

1. Commandments and instructions about the religious, cultural and political life of the Muslims.

In this connection, a code of ceremonial rules concerning the journey for Haj has been prescribed; the observance of strict respect for the emblems of Allah has been enjoined; and any kind of obstruction or interference with the pilgrims to the Kaabah has been prohibited. Definite rules and regulations have been laid down for what is lawful and unlawful in the matter of food, and self-imposed foolish restrictions of the pre-Islamic age have been abolished. Permission has been given to take food with the

people of the Book and to marry their women. Rules and regulations for the performance of Wudu (ablutions) and bath and purification and Tayammum (ablutions with dust) have been prescribed. Punishment for rebellion, disturbance of peace and theft have been specified. Drinking and gambling have absolutely been made unlawful. Expiation for the breaking of oath has been laid down and a few more things have been added to the law of evidence.

## 2. Admonition to the Muslims.

Now that the Muslims had become a ruling body, it was feared that power might corrupt them. At this period of great trial, Allah had admonished them over and over again to stick to justice and to guard against the wrong behavior of their predecessors, the people of the Book. They have been enjoined to remain steadfast to the Covenant of obedience to Allah and His Messenger, and to observe strictly their commands and prohibitions in order to save themselves from the evil consequences which befell the Jews and the Christians who had violated them. They have been instructed to observe the dictates of the Holy Quran in the conduct of all their affairs and warned against the attitude of hypocrisy.

## 3. Admonition to the Jews and the Christians.

As the power of the Jews had been totally weakened and almost all their habitations in north Arabia had come under the rule of the Muslims, they have been warned again about their wrong attitude and invited to follow the Right Way. At the same time a detailed invitation has also been extended to the Christians. The errors of their creeds have been clearly pointed out and they have been admonished to accept the guidance of the Holy Prophet. . Incidentally, it may be noted that no direct invitation has been made to the Majusis and idolaters living in the adjoining countries, because there was no need for a separate address for them as their condition had already been covered by the addresses to the mushrik Arabs.

## Subject: Consolidation of the Islamic Community

In continuation of the instructions about the consolidation of the Islamic Community given in Surah AN-NISA, the Muslims have been directed to observe and fulfill all their obligations: further regulations have been prescribed to train the Muslims for that purpose.

They have also been particularly warned as rulers to guard against the corruption, of power and directed to observe the Covenant of the Quran. They have also been exhorted to learn lessons from the failings of their predecessors, the Jews and the Christians, who in their turn have been admonished to give up their wrong attitudes towards the Right Way and accept the guidance taught by Prophet Muhammad (God's peace be upon him).

### Topics and their Interconnection

The Believers have been exhorted to fulfill scrupulously all of their obligations and follow the regulations prescribed by the Divine Law about food, sex, Salat, justice, etc. **1 - 10**

The Muslims have been warned to guard against the errors of their predecessors; they should follow the Right Path and avoid the bad example of the Jews and the Christians, who broke their Covenants and went astray into evil ways. They, in their turn, have been admonished to give up their wrong ways and accept Islam. **11 - 26**

The story of the two sons of Adam has been related to reproach the Jews for their plot to kill the Holy Prophet and his Companions. (v. 11 & E.N. 30). The story has also been used to emphasize the sanctity of human life. **27 - 32**

To achieve this object, punishments have been prescribed for those who create chaos in the Islamic State, and the Believers have been urged to



exert their utmost to establish the Right Way; the sanctity of property has also been emphasized. **33 - 40**

The Holy Prophet (and through him the Muslims) has been reassured that he should not mind the enmity, the evil designs and the machinations of the Jews, but continue exerting his utmost to establish the Right Way in accordance with the Guidance of the Quran; for nothing better could be expected from those who had forsaken their own Torah. He should deal with the Christians likewise, for they, too, had forsaken their Gospel. **41 - 50**

In view of the degenerate moral condition of the Jews and the Christians, the Believers have been warned not to make them their friends and confidants. Likewise they should be on their guard against the evil designs of the hypocrites, the disbelievers and the like and should rely on the true Believers alone. The people of the Book have, in their turn been exhorted to give up their enmity and adopt the right attitude, for they cannot get salvation without this. **51 - 69**

The theme of the corruptions of the Jews and Christians has been resumed. The Christians especially have been reproved for their errors in regard to the doctrine of Tauhid. At the same time they have been preferred to the hard hearted Jews, for there are among them some who are more inclined towards the Truth. **70 - 86**

In this portion of the Surah, further regulations about the lawful and the unlawful, in addition to those contained in vv. 1 - 10, have been given. **87 - 108**

At the end of the Surah, the mention of the conversation that will take place between Allah and His Prophets on the Day of Judgment, has been made for the benefit of the erring people to serve as a corrective to their creeds. The conversation with Prophet Christ has been cited as a specimen to warn particularly the Christians, who profess to believe in him, and

generally all those people who put false hopes in their Prophets, etc. **109 - 119**

**Conclusion:** "O man-kind! The Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah: therefore you should become His true servants and fear Him, for He has full powers over everything." **120**

