

Taraveeh: Ninth Night

Surah At-Tauba continues:

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

In order to make their noble qualities look all the more conspicuous and dignified by contrast, the characteristics of the Believers have been mentioned, and they have been reassured that Allah, the Sovereign of the Universe, is their helper and guardian. Accordingly, because of their sincerity, He has forgiven the Three Believers who did not take part in the expedition. **111 - 118**

In the concluding portion, general instructions have been given to the Believers for their guidance. **119 - 127**

This is the conclusion: "Follow the Messenger who is gentle and compassionate and your greatest well-wisher, and trust in Allah, the Lord of the Universe". **128 - 129**

Surah Yunus:

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

Name

The Surah takes its name from V. 98, in which there is a reference to Prophet Yunus (Jonah). The name, as usual, is symbolical and does not indicate that the Surah deals with the story of Prophet Jonah.

Period of Revelation

We learn from traditions, and this is supported by the contents of the Surah itself, that the whole of this Surah was revealed at Makkah. But there are some people who are of the opinion, that some of its verses were revealed at Al-Madinah. This is, however, a superficial view. The continuity of the theme clearly shows that this does not comprise isolated verses or discourses that were revealed at different times and on different occasions. On the contrary, it is, from the beginning to the end, a closely connected discourse which must have been revealed at one sitting. Besides this, the nature of its theme is itself a clear proof that the Surah belongs to the Makkan period.

Time of Revelation

We have no tradition in regard to the time of its revelation, but its subject matter gives clear indication that it must have been revealed during the last stage of the Holy Prophet's residence at Makkah. For the mode of the

discourse suggests that at the time of its revelation, the antagonism of the opponents of the Message had become so intense that they could not tolerate even the presence of the Holy Prophet and his followers among themselves, and that things had come to such a pass as to leave no hope that they would ever understand and accept the Message of the Prophet. This indicates that the last stage of the Prophet's life among the people had come, and the final warning like the one in this Surah had to be given. These characteristics of the discourse are clear proof that it was revealed during the last stage of the Movement at Makkah.

Another thing that determines more specifically the order of the Surahs of the last stage at Makkah is the mention (or absence) of some open or covert hint about Hijrat (Emigration) from Makkah. As this Surah does not contain any hint whatsoever about this, it is a proof that it preceded those surahs which contain it.

Now that we have specified the time of its revelation, there is no need of repeating its historical background because that has already been stated in Surahs VI and VII.

Subject

This discourse deals with the invitation to the Message, admonition and warning. In the very introductory verses, the invitation has been extended like this:-

"The people consider it a strange thing that this Message is being conveyed by a human being and charge him with sorcery, whereas there is nothing strange in it nor has it any connection with sorcery or sooth saying. It simply informs you of two realities. First, Allah, Who has created the universe and manages it, is, in fact, your Master and Lord, and He alone is entitled to your worship. The second reality is that after the life in this world,

there will be another life in the Next World, where you shall have to render full account of the life of this world and be rewarded or punished according to whether you adopted the righteous attitude as required by Him after acknowledging Him as your Masters or acted against His will. Both of these realities, which the Messenger is presenting before you, are "realities" in themselves whether you acknowledge them as such or not. He is inviting you to accept these and regulate your lives in accordance with them; if you accept these, you will have a very blessed end; otherwise you shall meet with evil consequences."

Topics

After the introduction, the following topics have been dealt with in an appropriate order:

- Proofs of the doctrines of Tauhid, Providence and Life-after-death have been given by such arguments as may satisfy the minds and hearts of those who listen to the Message without prejudice and bigotry with the sole intention of safeguarding themselves against deviation and its evil results and not for the sake of seeking opportunities for useless discussions.
- Those misunderstandings which were (and always are) hindering people from accepting the doctrines of Tauhid and the Hereafter, have been removed and they have been warned to guard against those negligences that stand in their way.
- Those doubts have been removed and answers to those objections given which were being raised about the Prophet-hood of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and the Message brought by him.
- Graphic descriptions of the life in the Hereafter have been presented in order to warn the people beforehand so that they should mend their ways here and be not sorry afterwards for their conduct in this world.

- They have been admonished and warned that the life in this world is really a test and a trial, and that the time allowed for it is only up to the last moment of the earthly life, and that this is the only opportunity that shall be given to them for accepting the Message and achieving success in the test. Therefore, they should make the best use of the opportunity that has been provided for them by the appointment of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) for their guidance and obtain the true knowledge of the Reality from the Quran that is being sent down to him. Otherwise, they shall be remorseful forever and ever.
- Their attention has been drawn to some of their acts of manifest ignorance and deviation which were the direct result of discarding Divine Guidance from their lives.

In this connection, the story of Prophet Noah has been related in brief and that of Prophet Moses in detail in order to impress four things on the minds:

First, "As your behavior towards Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) is like that of the peoples of Prophet Noah and Prophet Moses towards them, you should know it for certain that you also shall meet with the same consequences which they met with." Secondly, "You should not be deluded into believing by the helpless and weak condition of the Prophet and his followers, you are witnessing today, that it will always remain like this. You should know that the same All-Powerful Allah Who supported Prophets Moses and Aaron, is supporting them and that He changes the circumstances in such a sudden and thorough manner that none can foresee it." Thirdly, "If you do not make use of the term that has been granted to you by Allah and mend your ways now, and postpone this to the last moment like followers of the Holy Prophet have been reassured that they should not lose heart because of the severity of the circumstances created by their opponents, especially at the time when they themselves were in an utterly helpless condition. They have also been given instructions as to how they should carry on their Mission under those harsh conditions. Moreover, they have been warned to be on their guard against

the kind of behavior which was adopted by the Israelites, when they were rescued by Allah from the tyranny of the People of Pharaoh.

At the end of the Surah, the Holy Prophet has been commanded to make a declaration to this effect: "This is the Creed and this is the rule of conduct that has been prescribed for me by Allah: no change can be made at all in this: whoso will accept this will do so for his own good and whoso will reject this will do so at his own peril."

Surah Hud

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

Name

This Surah has been named after Prophet Hud whose story has been related in vv. 50-60.

Period of Revelation

If we consider its theme deeply, we come to the conclusion that it was revealed during the same period as Surah Yunus and most probably followed it immediately.

Subject

The Surah deals with the same subject as Surah Yunus, that is, invitation to the Message, admonition and warning, with this difference that the warning is sterner. This is also supported by a Tradition:

It is related that after its revelation, once Hadrat Abu Bakr said to the Holy Prophet, "Of late I have been noticing that you are growing older and older. What is the cause of it?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Surah Hud and the like Surahs have made me old." This shows that it was a very hard time for the Holy Prophet and these stern warnings added greatly to his anxieties that were caused by the persecution from the Quraish, who were doing their worst to crush down the Message of Islam. For it was obvious to the Holy Prophet that the last limit of the respite given by Allah was approaching nearer and nearer and he was afraid lest the term of the respite should expire and his people be seized by the torment.

The invitation is this: Obey the Messenger of Allah; discard shirk, and worship Allah and Allah alone: establish the entire system of your life on the belief that you shall be called to account in the Hereafter.

The admonition is this: Remember that those people who put their faith in the outward appearance of this worldly life and rejected the Message of the Prophets met with dire consequences. Therefore you should consider it seriously whether you should follow the same way that history has proved to be the path to ruin.

The warning is this: You should not be deluded by the delay in the coming of the punishment: it is because of the respite that Allah has granted you by His grace so that you might mend your ways: if you do not make use of this opportunity, you shall be inflicted with an inevitable punishment that will destroy you all except the Believers.

Instead of addressing the people directly, the Quran has used the stories of the people of Noah, Hud, Salih, Lot, Shu'aib and Moses to achieve the above mentioned objects. What is most prominent in their stories is that when Allah passes His judgment on the people, He does not spare anyone whatsoever, even if he be the nearest relative of the Prophet of the time. Only that one is rescued who had believed in the Prophet, and none else,

not even his own son or wife. More than that: the Faith demands from each and every Believer that he should totally forget his relationships when that judgment comes and remember only the relationship of the Faith. For it is against the spirit of Islam to show any regard whatsoever for the relationships of blood and race. And the Muslims demonstrated these teachings practically in the Battle of Badr, four years after the revelation of this Surah.

