

وَالْعَصْرُ - إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

(By Al-`Asr. Verily man is in loss, except those who believe and perform righteous deeds.)
(103:1-3) Concerning Allah's statement,

فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ

(Then they shall have a reward without end.) meaning, that will not end, as we have mentioned previously. Then Allah says,

فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ

(Then what causes you to deny) meaning, `O Son of Adam!'

بَعْدُ بِالذِّينِ

(after this the Recompense) meaning, `in the recompense that will take place in the Hereafter. For indeed you know the beginning, and you know that He Who is able to begin (the creation) is also able to repeat it which is easier. So what is it that makes you deny the final return in the Hereafter after you have known this' Then Allah says,

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمَ الْحَاكِمِينَ

(Is not the Allah the best of judges) meaning, `is He not the best of judges, Who does not oppress or do any injustice to anyone' And from His justice is that He will establish the Judgement, and He will give retribution to the person who was wronged in this life against whoever wronged him. This is the end of the Tafsir of Surat wat-Tin waz-Zaytun and all praise and thanks are due to Allah.

The Tafsir of Surah Iqra' (Surat Al-`Alaq)

(Chapter - 96)

Which was revealed in Makkah

This was the First of the Qur'an revealed

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

(اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ - خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ
عَلَقٍ - اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ - الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ -
عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ)

(1. Read! In the Name of your Lord Who created.) (2. He has created man from a clot.) (3. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.) (4. Who has taught by the pen.) (5. He has taught man that which he knew not.)

The Beginning of the Prophethood of Muhammad and the First of the Qur'an revealed

Imam Ahmad recorded that `A'ishah said: The first thing that began happening with the Messenger of Allah from the revelation was dreams that he would see in his sleep that would come true. He would not see any dream except that it would come true just like the (clearness of) the daybreak in the morning. Then seclusion became beloved to him. So, he used to go to the cave of Hira' and devote himself to worship there for a number of nights, and he would bring provisions for that. Then he would return to Khadijah and replenish his provisions for a similar number of nights. This continued until the revelation suddenly came to him while he was in the cave of Hira'. The angel came to him while he was in the cave and said, "Read!" The Messenger of Allah said,

«قُلْتُ: مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ»

(I replied: "I am not one who reads.) Then he said, "So he (the angel) seized me and pressed me until I could no longer bear it. Then he released me and said: `Read!' So I replied: `I am not one who reads.' So, he pressed me a second time until I could no longer bear it. Then he released me and said:

(اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ)

(Read in the Name of your Lord who has created.) until he reached the Ayah,

(مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ)

(That which he knew not.)" So he returned with them (those Ayat) and with his heart trembling until he came (home) to Khadijah, and he said,

«زَمُّونِي زَمُّونِي»

(Wrap me up, wrap me up!) So they wrapped him up until his fear went away. After that he told Khadijah everything that had happened (and said),

«قَدْ خَشِيتُ عَلَى نَفْسِي»

(I fear that something may happen to me.) Khadijah replied, "Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your relatives, you speak the truth, you help the poor and the destitute, you serve your guests generously, and you help the deserving, calamity afflicted people." Khadijah then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqah bin Nawfal bin Asad bin `Abdul-`Uzza bin Qusay, who, during the period of ignorance became a Christian and used to scribe the Scriptures in Arabic. He would write from the Injil in Hebrew as much as Allah willed for him to write. He was an old man and had lost his eyesight. Khadijah said to him, "O my cousin! Listen to the story of your nephew." Waraqah asked, "O my nephew! What have you seen" Allah's Messenger described what he saw. Waraqah said, "This is An-Namus whom Allah had sent to Musa. I wish I was young and could live until the time when your people would drive you out." Allah's Messenger asked,

«أَوْ مُخْرَجِيَّ هُمْ؟»

(Will they drive me out) Waraqah replied in the affirmative and said, "Anyone who came with something similar to what you have brought, was treated with hostility and enmity; and if I should remain alive till that day then I would firmly support you." But Waraqah did not remain. He died and the revelation paused until Allah's Messenger became sad according to what we were told. Due to this grief he set out a number of times with the intent of throwing himself from the mountain tops. However, every time he would reach the peak of a mountain to throw himself from it, Jibril would appear to him and say, "O Muhammad! You are truly the Messenger of Allah!" Therefore, his worry would be eased, his soul would be settled and he would return (down from the mountain). Then, when the revelation did not come again for a long time, he set out as he had done before. So when he reached the peak of the mountain, Jibril appeared to him again and said to him the same as he had said before." This Hadith has been recorded in the Two Sahihs by way of Az-Zuhri. We have already discussed this Hadith's chain of narration, its text and its meanings at length in the beginning of our explanation of Sahih Al-Bukhari. Therefore, whoever would like to read it, it is researched there, and all praise and blessings are due to Allah. So the first thing that was revealed of the Qur'an were these noble and blessed Ayat. They are the first mercy that Allah bestowed upon His servants and the first bounty that Allah favored them with.

The Honor and Nobility of Man is in His Knowledge

These Ayat inform of the beginning of man's creation from a dangling clot, and that out of Allah's generosity He taught man that which he did not know. Thus, Allah exalted him and honored him by giving him knowledge, and it is the dignity that the Father of Humanity, Adam, was distinguished with over the angels. Knowledge sometimes is in the mind, sometimes on the tongue, and sometimes in writing with the fingers. Thus, it may be intellectual, spoken and written. And while the last (written) necessitates the first two (intellectual and spoken), the reverse is not true. For this reason Allah says,

(اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ - الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ - عَلَّمَ
الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ)

(Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not.) There is a narration that states, "Record knowledge by writing." There is also a saying which states, "Whoever acts according to what he knows, Allah will make him inherit knowledge that he did not know."

(كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنَّاظِرٌ - أَنْ رَأَاهُ اسْتَكْبَرَ - إِنْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرَّجْعَىٰ - أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَىٰ - عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّىٰ - أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ الْهُدَىٰ - أَوْ أَمَرَ بِالْتَّقَىٰ - أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ - أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَىٰ - كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهِ لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ - نَاصِيَةٍ كَذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ - فَلْيَدْعُ نَادِيَهُ - سَنَدْعُ الزَّبَانِيَةَ - كَلَّا لَا تُطِعْهُ وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ)

(6. Nay! Verily, man does transgress.) (7. Because he considers himself self-sufficient.) (8. Surely, unto your Lord is the return.) (9. Have you seen him who prevents) (10. A servant when he prays) (11. Have you seen if he is on the guidance) (12. Or enjoins Taqwa) (13. Have you seen if he denies and turns away) (14. Knows he not that Allah sees) (15. Nay! If he ceases not, We will scorch his forehead --) (16. A lying, sinful forehead!) (17. Then let him call upon his council.) (18. We will call out the guards of Hell!) (19. Nay! Do not obey him. Fall prostrate and draw near (to Allah)!)

The Threat against Man's Transgression for the sake of Wealth

Allah informs that man is very pleased, most evil, scornful and transgressive when he considers himself self-sufficient and having an abundance of wealth. Then Allah threatens, warns and admonishes him in His saying,

(إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرَّجْعَىٰ)

(Surely, unto your Lord is the return.) meaning, 'unto Allah is the final destination and return, and He will hold you accountable for your wealth, as to where you obtained it from and how did you spend it.'

Scolding of Abu Jahl and the Threat of seizing Him

Then Allah says,

(أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يَنْهَى - عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّى)

(Have you seen him who prevents. A servant when he prays) This was revealed about Abu Jahl, may Allah curse him. He threatened the Prophet for performing Salah at the Ka`bah. Thus, Allah firstly admonished him with that which was better by saying,

(أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَانَ عَلَى الْهُدَى)

(Have you seen if he is on the guidance.) meaning, `do you think this man whom you are preventing is upon the straight path in his action, or

(أَوْ أَمَرَ بِالتَّقْوَى)

(Or enjoins Taqwa) in his statements Yet, you rebuke him and threaten him due to his prayer.' Thus, Allah says,

(أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَى)

(Knows he not that Allah sees) meaning, doesn't this person who is preventing this man who is following correct guidance know that Allah sees him and hears his words, and He will compensate him in full for what he has done Then Allah says by way of warning and threatening,

(كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهِ)

(Nay! If he ceases not,) meaning, if he does not recant from his discord and obstinacy,

(لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ)

(We will scorch his forehead.) meaning, `indeed We will make it extremely black on the Day of Judgement.' Then He says,

(نَاصِيَةٍ كَذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ)

(A lying, sinful forehead!) meaning, the forehead of Abu Jahl is lying in its statements and sinful in its actions.

(فَلْيَدْعُ نَادِيَهُ)

(Then let him call upon his council.) meaning, his people and his tribe. In other words, let him call them in order to seek help from them.

(سَدْعُ الزَّبَانِيَةِ)

(We will call out the guards of Hell!) ` And they are the angels of torment. This is so that he may know who will win -- Our group or his group' Al-Bukhari recorded that Ibn ` Abbas said, "Abu Jahl said, ` If I see Muhammad praying at the Ka` bah, I will stomp on his neck.' So this reached the Prophet , who said,

«لَئِن فَعَلَ لَأَخَذْتُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ»

(If he does, he will be seized by the angels.)" This Hadith was also recorded by At-Tirmidhi and An-Nasa'i in their Books of Tafsir. Likewise, it has been recorded by Ibn Jarir. Ahmad, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasa'i and Ibn Jarir, all recorded it from Ibn ` Abbas with the following wording: "The Messenger of Allah was praying at the Maqam (prayer station of Ibrahim) when Abu Jahl bin Hisham passed by him and said, ` O Muhammad! Haven't I prevented you from this' He threatened the Prophet and thus, the Messenger of Allah became angry with him and reprimanded him. Then he said, ` O Muhammad! What can you threaten me with By Allah, I have the most kinsmen of this valley with me in the large.' Then Allah revealed,

(قَلِيدُ نَادِيَهُ - سَدْعُ الزَّبَانِيَةِ)

(Then let him call upon his council. We will call out the guards of Hell!)" Ibn ` Abbas then said, "If he had called his people, the angels of torment would have seized him at that very instant." At-Tirmidhi said, "Hasan Sahih." Ibn Jarir recorded from Abu Hurayrah that Abu Jahl said, "Does Muhammad cover his face with dust (i.e., from prostration) while he is among you all" They (the people) replied, "Yes." Then he said, "By Al-Lat and Al-` Uzza, if I see him praying like this, I will stomp on his neck, and I will certainly put his face in the dust." So the Messenger of Allah came and he began praying, which made it possible for Abu Jahl to stomp on his neck. Then the people became surprised at him (Abu Jahl) because he began retreating on his heels and covering himself with his hands. Then it was said to him, "What's the matter with you" He replied, "Verily, between me and him is a ditch of fire, monsters and wings." Then the Messenger of Allah said,

«لَوْ دَنَا مِنِّي لَأَخْتَطَفْتُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ عُضْوًا عُضْوًا»

(If he had come near me, the angels would have snatched him limb by limb.) The narrator added; "Allah revealed an Ayah, but I do not know whether it is concerning the Hadith of Abu Hurayrah or not:

(كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنَّاظٍ)

(Nay! Verily, man does transgress.) to the end of the Surah." Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Muslim, An-Nasa'i and Ibn Abi Hatim all recorded this Hadith.

Amusement for the Prophet

Then Allah says,

(كَلَّا لَا تُطِيعُهُ)

(Nay! Do not obey him.) meaning, `O Muhammad! Do not obey him in what he is forbidding from such as steadfastness in worship and performing worship in abundance. Pray wherever you wish and do not worry about him. For indeed Allah will protect you and help you, and He will defend you against the people.'

(وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ)

(Fall prostrate and draw near (to Allah)!) This is just like what has been confirmed in the Sahih of Muslim on the authority of Abu Salih who reported from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah said,

«أَقْرَبُ مَا يَكُونُ الْعَبْدُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَهُوَ سَاجِدٌ،
فَأَكْثِرُوا الدُّعَاءَ»

(The closest that a servant can be to his Lord is when he is in prostration. Therefore, make abundant supplications (i.e., while prostrating).)" It has also been mentioned previously that the Messenger of Allah used to prostrate when he recited

(إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انشَقَّتْ)

(When the heaven is split asunder.) (84:1) and

(اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ)

(Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created.) (96:1) This is the end of the Tafsir of Surah Iqra' (Surat Al-`Alaq). Unto Allah is due all praise and thanks, and He is the Giver of success and protection against error.

The Tafsir of Surat Al-Qadr

(Chapter - 97)

Which was revealed in Makkah

(بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ)

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.