



CHAPTER 108

Al-Kauthar: The Abundance of Good

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 3 verses)

As against *The Abundance of Wealth* spoken of in ch. 102, which leads man away from the real object of life, this chapter speaks of *The Abundance of Good*, and of the means to attain it. The two means to attain it are here stated to be prayer to God, which fills the heart with the noblest of aspirations, and sacrifice, which means the devoting of one's life to the service of humanity. It is one of the earliest revelations.

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent,
the Merciful.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1 Surely We have given thee abundance of good.^a

إِنَّا آعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ

2 So pray to thy Lord and sacrifice.^a

فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ

1a. *Al-kauthar* (from the same root *kathura* as *takāthur* — see 102:2a) means *the abundance* or *the abundance of good*. “It has been said that *the kauthar* here means *the abundance of good* which God will give to the followers of the Prophet on the day of Resurrection. ... And what is mentioned in commentaries about *the kauthar* was all given to the Prophet; that is to say, he was given abundance of good, and he was promised the triumph of Islām over all religions and he was granted help against his enemies and he was granted intercession for his community, and he was granted of goodness that which cannot be counted” (LA). ‘Ikrimah said that *kauthar* meant abundant good and the Qur’ān and wisdom; Sa’id said that God granted him abundance of good of every kind, and on being asked if it was a river in paradise replied, the river and all (good) besides it (IJ). According to I’Ab, *the kauthar* is the abundance of good which God gave the Prophet (B. 65:cviii). From what is stated further on, it is clear that it is not the Prophet alone who is promised this abundance of good but also every true follower of his who makes use of the means for the attainment of it as described in the next verse.

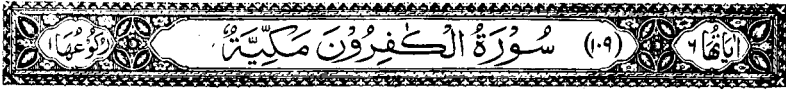
2a. Two ways are pointed out in this verse to attain the abundance of good promised in the first verse, praying to God, and *naḥr* or *sacrifice*, which means the devoting of one’s life to the good of humanity. Prayer is communion with God which raises in man’s heart the highest aspirations and makes him drink deep at the fountain of Divine morals.

3 Surely thy enemy is cut off (from good).^a

إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ ۝

To aspire after good is the first need. If there is no aspiration for good, it is simply impossible to do good; hence prayer is mentioned first. And when these noble aspirations arise, man is told to lay down his very life for the service of humanity, not of one group or one nation or one community. The word *naḥr* means *the uppermost part of the breast* and *naḥara* means *he stabbed an animal in the naḥr* (LL), and thus stands for *sacrificing an animal*. But the sacrifice of an animal itself stands for sacrifice of self, for which see 22:34a, 38a.

3a. The word *abtar* (from *batr*, meaning *the cutting off of a thing entirely*), as applied to a beast, means *one whose tail is cut off*. As applied to a man it conveys several significances, for instance, *in want or poor, suffering loss, one from whom all good or prosperity is cut off, having no offspring or progeny* (LL). All good is cut off from him because he walks contrary to the ways in which good can be attained.



CHAPTER 109

Al-Kāfirūn: The Disbelievers

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 6 verses)

The Disbelievers — hence the title — are told in this chapter that they shall be requited for their misdeeds, while the Prophet and the faithful will reap the reward of their deeds. It belongs to the early Makkan period.

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent,
the Merciful.

1 Say: O disbelievers,

2 I serve not what you serve,

3 Nor do you serve Him Whom I
serve,

4 Nor shall I serve that which ye
serve,

5 Nor do you serve Him Whom I
serve.

6 For you is your recompense and
for me my recompense.^a

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ ۝

لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ۝

وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عِبُدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ۝

وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَا عَبَدْتُمْ ۝

وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عِبُدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ۝

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ ۝

6a. Among the various significances of *dīn* is *recompense* or *reward* (LL), and this is what is meant here. It is a prophecy that those who serve Allāh will have a goodly reward from Him, while those who serve idols will not obtain any help from their false gods. The next chapter refers to the reward of the truthful, Divine help and victory, and men entering into Islām in hosts, while the one following it shows that the recompense of the idol-worshippers is that their wealth and all their efforts will be entirely unavailing. Those who think that these words indicate that the Holy Prophet had despaired of the disbelievers are mistaken. Not for a single moment did he cease to invite the disbelievers to accept Islām and to forsake the worship of idols.



CHAPTER 110

Al-Naşr: The Help

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 3 verses)

This chapter speaks of the great Divine *Help* (from which it receives its title) and victory with which the Holy Prophet's endeavours in the cause of Truth were crowned. According to I'Ab it was an indication of the Holy Prophet's approaching end (B. 65:cx, 2). Ibn 'Umar is reported as saying that this chapter was revealed during the last pilgrimage of the Holy Prophet, and that he lived only eighty days after its revelation (AH). It was therefore revealed at Makkah during the Madinah period towards the close of the Prophet's life. As a complete chapter it may be said to be the last revelation of the Holy Prophet, and, coming down at Makkah, it showed how those wonderful prophecies, announced in utter loneliness and helplessness, were now fulfilled by the Prophet visiting Makkah with the whole of Arabia at his feet.

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 When Allāh's help and victory comes,^a

2 And thou seest men entering the religion of Allāh in companies,

3 Celebrate the praise of thy Lord and ask His protection.^a Surely He is ever Returning (to mercy).

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ

وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي

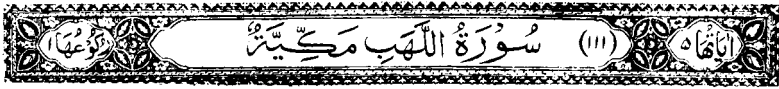
دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ

إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا

1a. The great victory which had come was the triumph of the religion of Islām in the whole of Arabia. Deputation after deputation from all parts of Arabia came to Madinah and accepted Islām. History does not present another example of the wonderful transformation wrought by the Prophet within the short space of twenty years.

3a. On witnessing the greatest triumph known to history, the Prophet is told to celebrate the praise of his Lord, and to ask protection. For whom was protection to be asked? If it was for himself, it was a protection against elation at an unprecedented victory, because elation ill befitted a Teacher of righteousness. But more likely, he was required to ask protection for the masses which were now accepting Islām in companies. In fact he was required to ask Divine forgiveness or protection for his erstwhile oppressors, forgiveness for his deadly enemies, who were guilty of the gravest crimes.



CHAPTER 111

Al-Lahab: The Flame

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 5 verses)

The chapter shows that the fiery-tempered opponents of Truth led their lives in heart-burning, which assumes the palpable shape of flames of fire in another life (v. 3). The chapter is entitled *Lahab* in reference to this, or in reference to the name of the Prophet's uncle, 'Abd al-'Uzzā, who was in deadly opposition to the Prophet, Abū Lahab being his *kunya*, occurring in the first verse. This chapter thus deals with the end of opposition to Truth — heart-burning in this life and palpable fire in the Hereafter. It is an early Makkan revelation.

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent,
the Merciful.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

1 Abū Lahab's hands will perish
and he will perish.^a

تَبَّتْ يَدَا اَبِيْ لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ۝

2 His wealth and that which he
earns will not avail him.

مَا اَعْطٰی عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَاَمَّا كَسَبَ ۝

3 He will burn in fire giving rise to
flames^a —

سَيَصْلٰی نَارًا اٰذَاتَ لَهَبٍ ۝

1a. A man of a fiery temper may be called *abū-lahab* or *father of flame*, as *abu-l-khair* (*father of goodness*) means a *good man*. 'Abd al-'Uzzā, an uncle of the Holy Prophet, being a son of his grandfather 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, was known by this name, because of his ruddy complexion or because of his fiery temper. It is related that the Holy Prophet, being commanded to warn his near relatives, called them together and delivered the Divine message, at which 'Abd al-'Uzzā cried out: "Mayest thou perish! Was it for this that thou didst summon us?" (B. 65:cxī). It is also related that he followed the Prophet when he went out to preach, saying to the people that the Prophet was a mad relative of his.

His hands will perish means that all that he did in opposition to the Prophet will end in naught. And it is added that he himself will perish. He is reported to have died seven days after hearing of the defeat of the Quraysh at Badr.

3a, see next page.

4 And his wife — the bearer of slander;^a

وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ۖ

5 Upon her neck a halter of twisted rope!^a

فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ ۖ

3a. He burned in fire in this very life owing to the fact that his life was a life of heart-burning, on account of his failure to check the advance of Truth. This fire gave rise to flames which burned others as well, including his own wife, who is spoken of in the next verse. There is also a reference to the palpable shape which this fire will take in the Hereafter.

4a. The flames that sprang from the fire in which Abū Lahab lived enveloped his own wife, so that even she took part in the opposition to the Prophet. Her part in opposition is here described as being *ḥammālat al-ḥaṭab*, which is generally translated as meaning *bearer of fuel*. It is thought that the reference here is to the thorny bushes which she brought from the wood to spread in the Prophet's way. But according to Mjd, the words mean *bearer of slander*, as she used to spread false reports against the Prophet (B. 65:cxi, 3). The same explanation is given by lexicologists who say that *ḥaṭab* means *fuel* as well as *calumny* or *slander*, *yaḥmilu al-ḥaṭaba* means *he goes about with slander* or *calumny* (LL). A similar explanation is given by Qatādah, who adds that she used to spread false reports about the Prophet (Rz).

5a. It is said that Abū Lahab's wife died by being strangled by the very rope in which she used to bring thorns. But *jid* is explained by LL as meaning the *part of the neck on which the necklace is borne*, and it is related that she was a wealthy woman who possessed a necklace of jewelry. Maybe the twisted rope is a reference to her jewelry, as a jewelled necklace is as worthless in the eye of God as a rope. It is to the inner worth that God looks and not to the outward ornaments. Being a bearer of slander and calumny, she was morally as low as a woman with a halter of palm-fibre on her neck.



CHAPTER 112

Al-Ikhlāṣ: The Unity

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 4 verses)

This is really the concluding chapter of the Holy Qurʾān — the two chapters that follow only show how the protection of the Lord is to be sought — and it gives the sum and substance of the teachings of the Holy Qurʾān, which is the declaration of the *Unity* of the Divine Being. *Ikhlāṣ* means *purification* of a thing from dross, and as this chapter purifies the Unity of God of all dross of polytheism, it is called *al-Ikhlāṣ*. The chapter is one of the earliest revelations.

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent,
the Merciful.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1 Say: He, Allāh, is One.

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝

2 Allāh is He on Whom all depend.

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝

3 He begets not, nor is He begotten;

لَمْ يَلِدْ ۙ وَ لَمْ يُولَدْ ۝

4 And none is like Him.^a

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۝

4a. This, a very early Makkan revelation, points out the fundamental errors of many religions, including Christianity, in its four short sentences. The first verse proclaims the absolute Unity of the Divine Being, and deals a death-blow to all forms of polytheism, including the doctrine of the Trinity.

In the second verse Allāh is said to be *Ṣamad*, which the Holy Prophet is reported to have explained as meaning *the Lord to Whom recourse is had in every need* (AH), so that all have need of Him and He has need of none. This statement negatives the doctrine according to which soul and matter are co-eternal with God and God stands in need of them to bring about creation. The doctrine prevails in India, and could not have been known to the Holy Prophet.

The third verse points out the error of those religions which describe God as being father or son, such as the Christian religion.

The fourth verse negatives such doctrines as the doctrine of incarnation, according to which a mere man is likened to God.

Thus four kinds of *shirk* are rejected here, a belief in the plurality of gods (v. 1), a belief that other things possess the perfect attributes of the Divine Being (v. 2), a belief that God is either a father or a son (v. 3), and a belief that others can do that which is ascribable only to God.



CHAPTER 113

Al-Falaq: The Dawn

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 5 verses)

This chapter and the one that follows — both together known as *mu'awwidhatān* from *'ādha*, *he sought refuge* — teach man how to seek refuge in Allāh and how to betake himself to His protection. This subject being referred to in Makkah revelations, as in ch. 16 and 41, the two chapters must have been revealed at Makkah, and most probably they belong to the early Makkah period. The stories regarding their revelation at Madinah, as stated by some commentators, must be rejected as concoctions of a later age. This chapter is called *Al-Falaq* or *The Dawn*, that word occurring in the first verse, showing that Truth would ultimately dispel all darkness.

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent,
the Merciful.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1 Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of
the dawn,^a

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ۝

2 From the evil of that which He
has created,

مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ۝

3 And from the evil of intense
darkness,^a when it comes,

وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ ۝

1a. *Falaq* signifies the *daybreak* (LL), meaning primarily *cleaving* or *splitting*, the daybreak being so called because it cleaves through the darkness. Hence it comes to signify *the plain appearing of the Truth after its having been dubious* (T, LL). The reference in the *Lord of the dawn* is to the gradual manifestation of the Truth and its ultimate triumph.

3a. *Ghāsiq* is derived from *ghasaq*, which signifies *intense darkness* (R). Hence it means darkness in which there is no ray of light, and stands for the dark difficulties with which an affair is sometimes attended — difficulties through which a man is unable to see his way. Man is, therefore, here taught to pray that his affairs may not be enveloped in utter darkness.

4 And from the evil of those who cast
(evil suggestions) in firm resolutions,^a

وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ ۖ

5 And from the evil of the envier
when he envies.^a

وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ ۙ

4a. *Naffāthāt* is the plural of *naffāth*, which is an intensive nominative from *nafātha*, meaning primarily *he blew*. But *nafātha fi qalbi-hi* means *he put a thing into his heart* (LL), and *nafātha fi rū'i* means *he inspired or put it into my mind* (N). *'Uqad* is the plural of *'uqdah*, which signifies *a tie* (LL), and *judgment and consideration of one's affairs* (T), and *management, regulating and ordering of one's affairs* (LL). It also signifies *a promise of obedience or vow of allegiance* (LA, LL). Hence the *naffāthāt fi l-'uqad* are really those who put evil suggestions into the resolution of men or into the management of their affairs. Note that *naffāthāt* are not necessarily *women*; the word equally applies to *jamā'āt*, or *companies of men* (Rz).

This verse deals with the second difficulty in the management of an affair. The first difficulty is its being enveloped in utter gloom (v. 3); the second is that darkness is dispelled, but the resolution to accomplish the affair is yet weak.

5a. This is the third difficulty. Success is now in sight, but there are those who envy that success. Therefore, Divine protection has still to be sought when a man is successful in accomplishing an affair.

Note that the Prophet, who was charged with the heavy task of establishing truth in the world and making it triumphant over falsehood, had to face all these difficulties, and his faithful followers, whose goal of life is the same as that of the Prophet, stand most in need of resorting to this prayer with which the Holy Qur'an draws to a close.



CHAPTER 114

Al-Nās: The Men

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 6 verses)

The introductory note on the last chapter may also be read here. *Al-Nās*, or *The Men*, the name of this concluding chapter of the Holy Qur'an, has reference to the fact that it is for the perfection of mankind that the Holy Qur'an has been revealed. This name is taken from the opening verses of the chapter in which God is spoken of as *Rabb of men*, i.e., their *Nourisher unto perfection, King of men*, i.e., the real *Controller of their affairs*, and the *Ilāh of men*, i.e., the *Controller of their hearts*.

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent,
the Merciful.

- 1 Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of men,
- 2 The King of men,
- 3 The God of men,
- 4 From the evil of the whisperings of the slinking (devil),
- 5 Who whispers into the hearts of men,
- 6 From among the jinn and the men.^a

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ
 مَلِكِ النَّاسِ
 إِلَهِ النَّاسِ
 مِنَ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ
 الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ
 مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ

6a. These verses are, as it were, a complement to the previous chapter. Three kinds of mischief are pointed out there which may be done to the cause of Truth. Here a fourth, but the gravest mischief of all, is pointed out. This is the mischief of the *slinking devil*, who comes stealthily and casts evil suggestions into the hearts of men. The whispering of the evil one is the greatest mischief because its source is *in the hearts of men* (v. 5). The word *khannās* is derived from *khānasa*, meaning *he held back* or *hung back*, and also *he hid himself* (LL), and *al-khannās* is *the devil*, because he retires or shrinks or hides himself (LL).

Man is here taught to seek refuge in God Who is, in the first place, the *Rabb* of mankind, i.e., its Nourisher by degrees to Perfection; secondly, He is the *Malik* or *King of mankind*, i.e., holds control over them, so far as the physical laws of nature are concerned; thirdly, He is the *Ilāh* of mankind, Who alone deserves to be worshipped and before Whom the whole of mankind must ultimately bow. In other words, the protection of God is sought because He is the Nourisher Who brings to perfection, and He holds control over Matter as well as Mind. The Divine purpose is thus again disclosed at the end, as it is disclosed in the very beginning (1:1) of the Holy Qur'ān. It is to bring mankind to perfection. Nothing in this world can frustrate this purpose, as God holds control over matter as well as mind.