

The Tafsīr of Sūrat Al-Ikhlāṣ (Chapter - 112)

Which was revealed in Makkah

The Reason for the Revelation of this Sūrah and its Virtues

Imām Aḥmad recorded from Ubayy bin Ka'b that the idolators said to the Prophet ﷺ, "O Muḥammad! Tell us the lineage of your Lord." So Allāh revealed

﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾
﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝﴾

﴿Say: "He is Allāh, One. Allāh He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none comparable to Him."﴾^[1]

Similar was recorded by At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Jarīr and they added in their narration that he said,

﴿الصَّمَدُ﴾

“*‘Aṣ-Ṣamad*” is One Who does not give birth, nor was He born, because there is nothing that is born except that it will die, and there is nothing that dies except that it leaves behind inheritance, and indeed Allāh does not die and He does not leave behind any inheritance.

﴿وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾

﴿And there is none comparable to Him.﴾

This means that there is none similar to Him, none equal to Him and there is nothing at all like Him.”^[2]

Ibn Abi Ḥātim also recorded it and At-Tirmidhi mentioned it as a *Mursal* narration. Then At-Tirmidhi said, “And this is the

^[1] Aḥmad 5:133.

^[2] *Tuhfat Al-Aḥwadhī* 9:299, and Aṭ-Ṭabari 24:691.

most correct.”^[1]

A Ḥadīth on its Virtues

Al-Bukhāri reported from ‘Amrah bint ‘Abdur-Raḥmān, who used to stay in the apartment of ‘Ā’ishah, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ, that ‘Ā’ishah said, “The Prophet ﷺ sent a man as the commander of a war expedition and he used to lead his companions in prayer with recitation (of the Qur’ān). And he would complete his recitation with the recitation of ‘Say: He is Allāh, One.’ So when they returned they mentioned that to the Prophet ﷺ and he said,

«سَلُّوهُ لِأَيِّ شَيْءٍ يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ؟»

«Ask him why does he do that.»

So they asked him and he said, ‘Because it is the description of Ar-Raḥmān and I love to recite it. So the Prophet ﷺ said,

«أَخْبِرُوهُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يُحِبُّهُ»

«Inform him that Allāh the Most High loves him.»”

This is how Al-Bukhāri recorded this Ḥadīth in his Book of *Tawḥīd*.^[2] Muslim and An-Nasā’ī also recorded it.^[3]

In his Book of *Ṣalāh*, Al-Bukhāri recorded that Anas said, “A man from the Anṣār used to lead the people in prayer in the *Masjid* of Qubā’. Whenever he began a *Sūrah* in the recitation of the prayer that he was leading them, he would start by reciting ‘Say: He is Allāh, One’ until he completed the entire *Sūrah*.

Then he would recite another *Sūrah* along with it (after it). And used to do this in every *Rak’ah*. So his companions spoke to him about this saying; ‘Verily, you begin the prayer with this *Sūrah*. Then you think that it is not sufficient for you unless you recite another *Sūrah* as well. So you should either recite it or leave it and recite another *Sūrah* instead.’

The man replied, ‘I will not leave it off. If you want me to continue leading you (in prayer), I will do this; and if you all do not like it, I will leave you (i.e., I will stop leading you).’

[1] That is, the narration that is *Mursal*. *Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhī* 9:301.

[2] *Faṭḥ Al-Bārī* 13:360.

[3] Muslim 1:557, and An-Nasā’ī in *Al-Kubrā* 6:177.

They used to consider him to be of the best of them to lead them in prayer and they did not want anyone else to lead them other than him. So, when the Prophet ﷺ came they informed him of this information and he said,

«يَا فَلَانُ، مَا يَمْنَعُكَ أَنْ تَفْعَلَ مَا يَأْمُرُكَ بِهِ أَصْحَابُكَ، وَمَا حَمَلَكَ عَلَى لُزُومِ هَذِهِ السُّورَةِ فِي كُلِّ رَكْعَةٍ؟»

«O so-and-so! What prevents you from doing what your companions are commanding you to do, and what makes you adhere to the recitation of this Sūrah in every Rak'ah?»

The man said, 'Verily, I love it.' The Prophet ﷺ replied,

«حُبُّكَ إِيَّاهَا أَدْخَلَكَ الْجَنَّةَ»

«Your love of it will cause you to enter Paradise.»

This was recorded by Al-Bukhāri, with a disconnected chain, but in a manner indicating his approval.^[1]

A Ḥadīth that mentions this Sūrah is equivalent to a Third of the Qur'ān

Al-Bukhāri recorded from Abu Sa'īd that a man heard another man reciting

﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ﴾

«Say: "He is Allāh, One."» and he was repeating over and over. So when morning came, the man went to the Prophet ﷺ and mentioned that to him, and it was as though he was belittling it. The Prophet ﷺ said,

«وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ إِنَّهَا لَتَنْغِدُلُ ثَلَاثُ الْقُرْآنِ»

«By He in Whose Hand is my soul, verily it is equivalent to a third of the Qur'ān.»^[2] Abu Dāwud and An-Nasā'ī also recorded it.^[3]

Another Ḥadīth

Al-Bukhāri recorded from Abu Sa'īd, may Allāh be pleased

[1] *Fath Al-Bārī* 2:298.

[2] *Fath Al-Bārī* 8:676.

[3] Abu Dāwud 2:152, and An-Nasā'ī in *Al-Kubrā* 5:16.

with him, that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said to his Companions,

«أَيُّكُمْ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَقْرَأَ ثُلُثَ الْقُرْآنِ فِي لَيْلَةٍ؟»

«Is one of you not able to recite a third of the Qur'ān in a single night?»

This was something that was difficult for them and they said, "Which of us is able to do that, O Messenger of Allāh?" So he ﷺ replied,

«اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الصَّمَدُ ثُلُثُ الْقُرْآنِ»

«"Allāh is the One, Aṣ-Ṣamad" is a third of the Qur'ān.»^[1]

Al-Bukhārī was alone in recording this Ḥadīth.

Another Ḥadīth that its Recitation necessitates Admission into Paradise

Imām Mālik bin Anas recorded from 'Ubayd bin Ḥunayn that he heard Abu Hurayrah saying, "I went out with the Prophet ﷺ and he heard a man reciting 'Say: He is Allāh, the One.' So the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«وَجِبَتْ»

«It is obligatory.» I asked, 'What is obligatory?' He replied,

«الْجَنَّةُ»

«Paradise.»^[2]

At-Tirmidhi and An-Nasā'ī also recorded it by way of Mālik, and At-Tirmidhi said, "*Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ Gharīb*. We do not know of it except as a narration of Mālik."^[3]

The Ḥadīth in which the Prophet ﷺ said,

«حُبُّكَ إِيَّاهَا أَدْخَلَكَ الْجَنَّةَ»

«Your love of it will cause you to enter Paradise.»

has already been mentioned.^[4]

[1] *Faḥ Al-Bārī* 8 :676.

[2] *Muwatta'a* 1 :208.

[3] *Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhī* 8 :209, and An-Nasā'ī in *Al-Kubrā* 6 :177.

[4] *Faḥ Al-Bārī* 2 :298.

A Ḥadīth about repeating this Sūrah

‘Abdullāh bin Imām Aḥmad recorded from Mu‘ādh bin ‘Abdullāh bin Khubayb, who reported that his father said, “We became thirsty and it had become dark while we were waiting for the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ to lead us in prayer. Then, when he came out he took me by my hand and said,

«قُلْ»

«Say.» Then he was silent. Then he said again,

«قُلْ»

«Say.» So I said, ‘What should I say?’ He said,

«قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ وَالْمَعْرُودَتَيْنِ حِينَ تُنْسِي وَحِينَ تُضِيحُ ثَلَاثًا، تَكْفِيكَ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ مَرَّتَيْنِ»

«Say: “He is Allāh, One,” and the two Sūrahs of Refuge (Al-Falaq and An-Nās) when you enter upon the evening and the morning three times (each). They will be sufficient for you two times every day.»^[1]

This Ḥadīth was also recorded by Abu Dāwud, At-Tirmidhi and An-Nasā’ī. At-Tirmidhi said, “*Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ Gharīb*.”^[2] An-Nasā’ī also recorded through another chain of narrators with the wording,

«يَكْفِيكَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ»

«They will suffice you against everything.»^[3]

Another Ḥadīth about supplicating with it by Allāh’s Names

In his Book of *Tafsīr*, An-Nasā’ī recorded from ‘Abdullāh bin Buraydah, who reported from his father that he entered the *Masjid* with the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, and there was a man praying and supplicating saying, “O Allāh! Verily, I ask you by

[1] Aḥmad 5:312.

[2] Abu Dāwud 5:320, *Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhī* 10:28, and An-Nasā’ī 8:250.

[3] An-Nasā’ī 8:251.

my testifying that there is no God worthy of worship except You. You are the One, the Self-Sufficient Sustainer of all, Who does not give birth, nor were You born, and there is none comparable to Him." The Prophet ﷺ said,

«وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَقَدْ سَأَلَهُ بِأَسْمِهِ الْأَعْظَمِ، الَّذِي إِذَا سُئِلَ بِهِ أُعْطِيَ، وَإِذَا دُعِيَ بِهِ أَجَابَ»

«By He in Whose Hand is my soul, verily he has asked Him by His Greatest Name. It is His Name that if He is asked by it He will give, and if He is called upon by it He will answer.»^[1]

The other Sunan compilers have also recorded this Ḥadīth.^[2] At-Tirmidhi said, "Ḥasan Gharīb."

A Ḥadīth about seeking a Cure by these Sūrahs

Al-Bukhārī recorded from 'Ā'ishah that whenever the Prophet ﷺ would go to bed every night, he would put his palms together and blow into them. Then he would recite into them (his palms), 'Say: He is Allāh, One', 'Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of *Al-Falaq*', and 'Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind.' Then he would wipe whatever he was able to of his body with them (his palms). He would begin wiping his head and face with them and the front part of his body. He would do this (wiping his body) three times.^[3] The Sunan compilers also recorded this same Ḥadīth.^[4]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾

﴿1. Say: "He is Allāh, One."﴾

﴿2. "Allāh Aṣ-Ṣamad."﴾

[1] An-Nasā'ī in *Al-Kubrā*, *Tuhfat Al-Ashraf* 2:90.

[2] Abu Dāwud no. 1493, At-Tirmidhi no. 3475, and Ibn Mājah no. 3857.

[3] *Fath Al-Bāri* 8:679.

[4] Abu Dāwud 5:303, *Tuhfat Al-Aḥwadhi* 9:347, An-Nasā'ī in *Al-Kubrā* 6:197, and Ibn Mājah 2:1275.

﴿3. "He begets not, nor was He begotten."﴾

﴿4. "And there is none comparable to Him."﴾

The reason for the revelation of this Sūrah has already been mentioned. Ikrimah said, "When the Jews said, 'We worship 'Uzayr, the son of Allāh,' and the Christians said, 'We worship the Messiah (ʿĪsā), the son of Allāh,' and the Zoroastrians said, 'We worship the sun and the moon,' and the idolators said, 'We worship idols,' Allāh revealed to His Messenger ﷺ,

﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ﴾

﴿Say: "He is Allāh, One."﴾^[1]

meaning, He is the One, the Singular, Who has no peer, no assistant, no rival, no equal and none comparable to Him. This word (*Al-Aḥad*) cannot be used for anyone in affirmation except Allāh the Mighty and Majestic, because He is perfect in all of His attributes and actions. Concerning His saying,

﴿اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ﴾

﴿Allāh Aṣ-Ṣamad.﴾ Ikrimah reported that Ibn 'Abbās said, "This means the One Who all of the creation depends upon for their needs and their requests." 'Alī bin Abī Ṭalḥah reported from Ibn 'Abbās, "He is the Master Who is perfect in His sovereignty, the Most Noble Who is perfect in His nobility, the Most Magnificent Who is perfect in His magnificence, the Most Forbearing Who is perfect in His forbearance, the All-Knowing Who is perfect in His knowledge, and the Most Wise Who is perfect in His wisdom. He is the One Who is perfect in all aspects of nobility and authority. He is Allāh, glory be unto Him. These attributes are not befitting anyone other than Him. He has no coequal and nothing is like Him. Glory be to Allāh, the One, the Irresistible."^[2] Al-A'mash reported from Shaqīq, who said that Abu Wā'il said,

﴿أَكْبَرُ﴾

﴿Aṣ-Ṣamad.﴾ is the Master Whose control is complete."^[3]

[1] If this is an actual quote, we are not aware of where it came from.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabarī 24:692.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabarī 24:692.

Allāh is Above having Children and procreating

Then Allāh says,

﴿لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾

﴿He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none comparable to Him.﴾

meaning, He does not have any child, parent or spouse. Mujāhid said,

﴿لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾

﴿And there is none comparable to Him.﴾ "This means He does not have a spouse." This is as Allāh says,

﴿بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَيْ يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَوْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةٌ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ﴾

﴿He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How can He have children when He has no wife? He created all things.﴾
(6:101)

meaning, He owns everything and He created everything. So how can He have a peer among His creatures who can be equal to Him, or a relative who can resemble Him? Glorified, Exalted and far removed is Allāh from such a thing.

Allāh says,

﴿وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا ۚ لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِثًّا ۚ تَكَادُ السَّمَوَاتُ يَنْفَطَرْنَ بِهِ ۚ وَتَشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ رَجْرًا ۚ لَهُذَا ۚ أَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدًا ۚ وَمَا يُبَيِّنُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا ۚ إِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتَى الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا ۚ لَقَدْ أَحْصَاهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا ۚ وَكُلُّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ يَوْمَ الْفَيْصَةِ فَذَرًّا ۚ﴾

﴿And they say: Ar-Rahmān has begotten a son. Indeed you have brought forth (said) a terrible evil thing. Whereby the heavens are almost torn, and the earth is split asunder, and the mountains fall in ruins, that they ascribe a son to Ar-Rahmān. But it is not suitable for Ar-Rahmān that He should beget a son. There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes unto Ar-Rahmān as a slave. Verily, He knows each one of them, and has counted them a full counting. And all of them will come to Him alone on the Day of Resurrection.﴾ (19:88-95)

And Allāh says,

﴿وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا مَبْهُوتٌ بِهِ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ لَا يَسِفُونَ بِالْقَوْلِ وَمَنْ يَأْمُرُهُ بِمَلُوكٍ ﴿٢٧﴾﴾

﴿And they say: "Ar-Rahmān has begotten a son. Glory to Him! They are but honored servants. They speak not until He has spoken, and they act on His command.﴾ (21:26-27)

Allāh also says,

﴿وَجَعَلُوا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْجَنَّةِ نِجًا وَلَقَدْ عَلِمَ الْجِنَّةُ إِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ سُبْحَنَ أَنفِ عَنَّا بِصُورٍ ﴿٣٨﴾﴾

﴿And they have invented a kinship between Him and the Jinn, but the Jinn know well that they have indeed to appear before Him. Glorified is Allāh! (He is free) from what they attribute unto Him!﴾ (37:158-159)

In *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, it is recorded (that the Prophet ﷺ said),

«لَا أَحَدٌ أَضْيَرُ عَلَى آذَى سَمِعَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ، يَجْعَلُونَ لَهُ وَلَدًا، وَهُوَ يَرْزُقُهُمْ وَيُعَافِيهِمْ»

«There is no one more patient with something harmful that he hears than Allāh. They attribute a son to Him, while it is He Who gives them sustenance and cures them.»^[1]

Al-Bukhārī also recorded from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet ﷺ said,

«قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: كَذَّبَنِي ابْنُ آدَمَ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ ذَلِكَ، وَشَتَمَنِي وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ ذَلِكَ، فَأَمَّا تَكْذِيبُهُ إِيَّايَ فَقَوْلُهُ: لَنْ يُعِيدَنِي كَمَا بَدَأَنِي، وَلَيْسَ أَوَّلُ الْخَلْقِ بِأَهْوَنَ عَلَيَّ مِنْ إِعَادَتِهِ، وَأَمَّا شَتْمُهُ إِيَّايَ فَقَوْلُهُ: اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا، وَأَنَا الْأَحَدُ الصَّمَدُ، لَمْ أَلِدْ وَلَمْ أُولَدْ، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لِي كُفْوًا أَحَدٌ»

«Allāh the Mighty and Majestic says, "The Son of Ādam denies Me and he has no right to do so, and he abuses Me and he has no right to do so. In reference to his denial of Me, it is his saying: 'He (Allāh) will never re-create me like He created me before.' But the re-creation of him is easier than his original creation. As for his cursing Me, it is his saying: 'Allāh has taken a son.' But I am the One, the Self-Sufficient Master. I do

[1] *Fath Al-Bārī* 13:372.

not give birth, nor was I born, and there is none comparable to Me."^[1]

This is the end of the *Tafsīr* of *Sūrat Al-Ikhlās*, and all praise and blessings are due to Allāh.

^[1] *Fath Al-Bārī* 8:611, 612.