# The Tafsīr of Sūrat Al-Layl (Chapter - 92)

#### Which was revealed in Makkah

### The Recitation of Sūrat Al-Layl in the 'Ishā' Prayer

The statement of the Prophet 🕸 to Mu'adh has already preceded, where he said,

«Why did you not pray with (the recitation of) (Glorify the Name of your Lord the Most High) (87), and (By the sun and Duḥāhā) (91), and (By the night as it envelops?) (92)»[1]

## بنسب أنَّو النَّانِ النَّهَا النَّهَا إِ

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

- All the night as it envelops.
- (2. By the day as it appears.)

<u>ښ</u>

- **♦3.** By Him Who created male and female.**▶**
- 44. Certainly, your efforts and deeds are diverse.
- ♦5. As for him who gives and has Taqwā,
- 46. And believes in Al-Ḥusnā.
- 47. We will make smooth for him the path of ease.
- 48. But he who is greedy and thinks himself self-sufficient,
- 49. And denies Al-Ḥusnā.
- 410. We will make smooth for him the path to evil.

<sup>[1]</sup> Fath Al-Bari 2:234, and Muslim 1:340.

411. And what will his wealth avail him when he goes down (in destruction)?

# Swearing by the Diversity of Mankind in Their Efforts and informing of the Different Results of that

Allah swears by saying:

(By the night as it envelops.) meaning, when it covers the creation with its darkness.

(By the day as it appears.) meaning, with its light and its radiance.

♦By Him Who created male and female. ▶ This is similar to Allāh's saying,

And We have created you in pairs. (78:8)

It is also similar to His saying,

♦And of everything We have created pairs. ▶ (51:49)

And just as these things that are being sworn by are opposites, likewise that which this swearing is about are opposing things. This is why Allāh says,

(Certainly, your efforts and deeds are diverse.)

meaning, the actions of the servants that they have performed are also opposites and diverse. Therefore, there are those who do good and there are those who do evil. Allāh then says,

♦As for him who gives and has Taqwā.

meaning, he gives what he has been commanded to give and he fears Allāh in his affairs.

♦ And believes in Al-Ḥusnā. meaning, in the compensation for that. This was said by Qatādah. Khuṣayf said, "In the reward."

Then Allah says,

We will make smooth for him the path of ease. Ibn 'Abbās said, "Meaning for goodness." Thus, Allāh says,

(But he who is greedy) meaning, with that which he has.

\*and thinks himself self-sufficient, \* 'Ikrimah reported that Ibn 'Abbās said, "This means he is stingy with his wealth and considers himself to be in no need of his Lord, the Mighty and Majestic." This was recorded by Ibn Abi Ḥātim.

♦ And denies Al-Ḥusnā. ▶ meaning, the recompense in the abode of the Hereafter.

♦We will make smooth for him the path to evil.

meaning, the path of evil. This is as Alläh says,

♦And We shall turn their hearts and their eyes away, as they refused to believe therein for the first time, and We shall leave them in their trespass to wander blindly. ▶ (6:110)

And there are many  $\bar{A}y\bar{a}t$  with this meaning, proving that Allāh rewards those who intend good with success, while

<sup>[1]</sup> Aț-Țabari 24:470.

<sup>[2]</sup> Ad-Durr Al-Manthür 8:535.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>[3]</sup> Aṭ-Ṭabari 24:472.

whoever intends evil is abandoned, and all of this is in accordance with a preordained decree. There are also many *Ḥadīths* that prove this.

#### The Narration of Abu Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq

Imām Aḥmad recorded from Abu Bakr that he said to the Messenger of Allāh 囊, "O Messenger of Allāh! Do we act according to what has already been decided, or is the matter just beginning (i.e., still undecided)?" He replied,

Indeed it is according to what has already been decided.

Then Abu Bakr said, "Then what (good) are deeds, O Messenger of Allāh?" He replied,

Everyone will find it easy to do such deeds that will lead him to what he was created for. [1]

#### The Narration of 'Ali

Al-Bukhāri recorded from 'Ali bin Abi Ṭālib that they (the Companions) were with the Messenger of Allāh 鑑 at the cemetery of Baqī' Al-Gharqad for a funeral, when the Prophet 恕 said,

"There is none among you except that his place has already been written, a seat in Paradise and a seat in the Hellfire."

They said, "O Messenger of Alläh! Should we depend on this?" He replied,

«Perform deeds for everyone will have the deeds of what he was created for (Paradise or Hell) made easy for him.» Then he recited the Ayah

<sup>[1]</sup> Aḥm ad 1:5. Similar with Muslim, no. 17 in the Book of Faith.

As for him who gives and has Taqwā, and believes in Al-Husnā. We will make smooth for him the path of ease.



#### (the path to evil)

He (Imām Al-Bukhāri) also recorded another similar narration from 'Ali bin Abi Ṭālib in which he said, "We were at a funeral in the cemetery of Baqī' Al-Gharqad when the Messenger of Allāh as came and sat down. So we came and sat around him and he had a stick with him. Then he bowed his head and he began to scratch the ground with his stick. He then said,

"There is not anyone among you – or is not a single soul (that has been created) – except that his place has been written in Paradise or in the Fire, and it has been written that he will be miserable or happy."

A man said, "O Messenger of Alläh! Should we just depend on what has been written for us and give up performing deeds? For whoever of us is of the people of happiness then he will be of the people of happiness, and whoever among us is of the people of misery then he will be of the people of misery." The Prophet ## replied,

"Those people who are the people of happiness, they will have the deeds of the people of happiness made easy for them. And those people who are the people of misery, they will have the deeds of the people of misery made easy for them." Then he recited the Ayah:

<sup>[1]</sup> Fath Al-Bāri 8:578, 579.

As for him who gives and has Taqwā, and believes in Al-Ḥusnā. We will make smooth for him the path of ease (goodness). But he who is greedy and thinks himself self-sufficient, and belies Al-Ḥusnā. We will make smooth for him the path to evil.

The other compilers of the Group have also recorded this  $Had\bar{u}th$ . [2]

#### The Narration of 'Abdullah bin 'Umar

Imam Ahmad recorded from Ibn 'Umar that 'Umar said, "O Messenger of Allah! Do you think that the deeds that we do are a matter that is already predetermined or are they something just beginning or new?" The Prophet 's replied,

"It is something that has already been predetermined. Therefore, work deeds, O son of Al-Khaṭṭāb! For verily, each person will have things made easy for him. So whoever is from the people of happiness, then he will work deeds for happiness, and whoever is from the people of misery, then he will work deeds for misery."

This Ḥadīth has been recorded by At-Tirmidhi in the Book of Al-Qadar and he said "Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ." [4]

#### Another Hadith Narrated by Jäbir

Ibn Jarır recorded from Jābir bin 'Abdullāh that he said, "O Messenger of Allāh! Are we performing deeds for something that has already been predetermined or is the matter based upon what we are just doing (now)?" The Prophet streplied,

<sup>[1]</sup> Fath Al-Bāri 8:579.

<sup>[2]</sup> Muslim no. 2039, 2040, Abu Dāwud 5:68, Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhi 6:340, and 9:270, An-Nasā'i in Al-Kubrā 6:516, 517, and Ibn Mājah 1:30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>[3]</sup> Ahmad 2:52.

<sup>[4]</sup> Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhi 6:933.

alt is a matter that has been predetermined.

Then Surāqah said, "Then what is the purpose of deeds?" The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ then said,

\*Everyone who does deeds will have his deeds made easy for him." [1]

Muslim also recorded this Hadīth.[2]

Ibn Jarīr recorded from 'Āmir bin 'Abdullāh bin Az-Zubayr that he said, "Abu Bakr used to free servants upon their acceptance of Islām in Makkah. He used to free the elderly and the women when they accepted Islām. So his father said to him, 'O my son! I see that you are freeing people who are weak. But if you freed strong men they could stand with you, defend you and protect you.' Abu Bakr replied, 'O my father! I only want – and I think he said – what is with Allāh.' Some people of my family have told me this Āyah was revealed about him:

As for him who gives and has Taqwā, and believes in Al-Ḥusnā. We will make smooth for him the path of ease.

And what will his wealth avail him when he goes down? Mujāhid said, "This means when he dies." Abu Ṣāliḥ and Mālik said – narrating from Zayd bin Aslam, "When he goes down into the Fire."

<sup>[1]</sup> At-Tabari 24:475.

<sup>[2]</sup> Muslim 4:2041.

<sup>[3]</sup> Aț-Țabari 24:473. There are some deficiencies in these narrations.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>[4]</sup> Aţ-Ţabari 24:476.

<sup>(5)</sup> Aṭ-Ṭabari 24:476, and Al-Qurṭubi 20:85.

- €12. Truly, on Us is (to give) guidance.
- €13. And truly, unto Us (belong) the last (Hereafter) and the first (this world). ▶
- €14. Therefore I have warned you of a Fire Talazzā.
- €15. None shall enter it save the most wretched. ▶
- €16. Who denies and turns away.
- 417. And those with Taqwā will be far removed from it.
- €18. He who gives of his wealth for self-purification.
- . 419. And who has (in mind) no favor from anyone to be paid back.
  - €20. Except to seek the Face of his Lord, the Most High.
  - €21. He, surely, will be pleased.

# The Matter of Guidance and other than it is in the Hand of Allāh, and Allāh's Warning about the Hellfire Qatādah said.

⟨Truly, on Us is (to give) guidance.⟩

"This means, We will explain what is lawful and what is prohibited." Others have said that it means, "Whoever traverses upon the path of guidance, then he will reach Allāh (i.e., in the Hereafter)." They consider this  $\bar{A}yah$  like Allāh's saying,

And upon Allāh is the responsibility to explain the Straight path. (16:9)

This has been mentioned by Ibn Jarīr.<sup>[2]</sup> Allāh said;

♦And truly, unto Us (belong) the last (Hereafter) and the first (this world).▶

<sup>[1]</sup> Aţ-Ţabari 24:477.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>[2]</sup> At-Tabari 24:477.

This means, 'they both belong to Us and I (Allāh) am in complete control of them.' Then Allāh says,

«Therefore I have warned you of a Fire Talazzā.»

Mujāhid said, "Blazing." Imām Aḥmad recorded from Simāk bin Ḥarb that he heard An-Nu'mān bin Bashīr giving a sermon, in which he said, "I heard the Messenger of Allāh giving a sermon, in which he said:

#### "I have warned you of the Fire."

And he said it in such a voice that if a man was in the marketplace he could hear it from where I am standing now. And he said it (with such force) that the garment that was on his shoulder fell down to his feet." [2]

Imām Aḥmad recorded from Abu Isḥāq that he heard An-Nu'mān bin Bashīr giving a sermon, in which he said, "I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ saying,

\*Verily, the person to be punished lightest of the people of the Fire on the Day of Judgement will be a man who will have placed on the soles of his feet two coals that will cause his brain to boil." Imam Al-Bukhāri also recorded this narration. [4]

Muslim recorded that Abu Ishāq narrated from An-Nu'mān bin Bashīr that the Messenger of Allāh & said,

aVerily, the lightest punishment received by the people of the

<sup>[1]</sup> Aț-Țabari 24:477.

<sup>[2]</sup> Ahmad 4:272.

<sup>[3]</sup> Aḥmad 4:274.

<sup>[4]</sup> Fath Al-Bāri 11:424.

Hellfire will be a man who will have two sandals whose straps will be made of fire that will cause his brain to boil just as a cauldron boils. Yet he will not think that anyone is receiving a torment more severe than him, even though he will be receiving the lightest punishment of them. [1]

Allāh says,

(None shall enter it save the most wretched.) meaning, none will enter surrounded by it on all sides except the most wretched. Then Allah explains who this (the most wretched) is by His saying,

(Who denies) meaning, in his heart.

(and turns away.) meaning, from acting with his limbs and performing deeds according to their pillars.

Imām Aḥmad recorded from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«All of my followers will enter Paradise on the Day of Judgement except for whoever refuses.»

They (the Companions) said, "Who would refuse, O Messenger of Allāh?" He replied,

aWhoever obeys me, he will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me, then he has refused. Al-Bukhāri also recorded this Hadīth. [3]

Allah then says,

<sup>[1]</sup> Muslim 1:196.

<sup>[2]</sup> Ahmad 2:361.

<sup>[3]</sup> Fath Al-Bāri 13:263.

♦ And those with Taqwā will be far removed from it. > meaning, the righteous, pure, most pious person will be saved from the Fire. Then He explains who he is by His saying,

♦He who gives of his wealth for self-purification.

meaning, he spends his wealth in obedience of his Lord in order to purify himself, his wealth and whatever Allāh has bestowed upon him of religion and worldly things.

And who has (in mind) no favor from anyone to be paid back.

meaning, giving his wealth is not done so that he may gain some favor from someone wherein they return some good to him, and therefore he gives to get something in return. He only spends his wealth

(to seek the Face of his Lord, the Most High)

meaning, hoping to attain the blessing of seeing Him in the final abode in the Gardens of Paradise. Allāh then says,

(He, surely, will be pleased.) meaning, indeed those with these characteristics will be pleased.

### The Cause of this Revelation and the Virtue of Abu Bakr

Many of the scholars of Tafsir have mentioned that these  $\bar{A}y\bar{a}t$  were revealed about Abu Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq. Some of them even mentioned that there is a consensus among the Qur'ānic commentators concerning this. There is no doubt that he is included in the meaning of these  $\bar{A}y\bar{a}t$ , and that he is the most deserving of the Ummah to be described with these characteristics in general, for indeed, the wording of these  $\bar{A}y\bar{a}t$  is general. As in Allāh's saying,

And those with Taqwā will be far removed from it. He who

gives of his wealth for self-purification. And who has (in mind) no favor from anyone to be paid back.

However, he (Abu Bakr) was the first and foremost of this Ummah to have all of these characteristics and other praiseworthy characteristics as well. For verily, he was truthful, pious, generous, charitable, and he always spent his wealth in obedience of His Master (Allah) and in aiding the Messenger of Allah &. How many Dirhams and Dinars did he spend seeking the Face of His Most Noble Lord. And did not consider any of the people as owning him some favor that he needed to get compensation for. Rather, his virtue and kindness was even shown towards leaders and chiefs from all the other tribes as well. This is why Urwah bin Mas'ūd, who was the chief of the Thaqif tribe, said to him on the day of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, "By Allāh, if I did not owe you a debt, which I have not paid you back for, I would have responded to you (i.e., your call to Islām)." Abu Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq became angry with him for saying such a thing (i.e., I owe you something). So if this was his position with the chiefs of the Arabs and the heads of the tribes, then what about those other than them. Thus, Allah says,

⟨And who has (in mind) no favor from anyone to be paid back.

Except to seek the Face of his Lord, the Most High. He, surely,

will be pleased.⟩

And in the Two Ṣaḥīḥs it is recorded that the Messenger of Allāh as said,

«Whoever equipped two riding animals in the way of Allāh, the Gatekeepers of Paradise will call to him saying, "O servant of Allāh! This is good."

So Abu Bakr said, "O Messenger of Allāh! The one who is called from them will not have any need. Will there be anyone who will be called from all of them?" The Prophet 2 replied,

«Yes, and I hope that you will be one of them.»[1]

This is the end of the Tafsīr of Sūrat Al-Layl, and praise and thanks are due to Allāh.

<sup>[1]</sup> Fath Al-Bāri 7:23, and Muslim 2:712.