

## The Tafsīr of Sūrah Tabbat<sup>[1]</sup> (Chapter - 111)

**Which was revealed in Makkah**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

﴿تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ﴿١﴾ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ ﴿٢﴾ سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ ﴿٣﴾ لَهَبٍ ﴿٤﴾ وَامْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ﴿٥﴾ فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ ﴿٦﴾﴾

- ﴿1. Perish the two hands of Abū Lahab and perish he!﴾
- ﴿2. His wealth and his children will not benefit him!﴾
- ﴿3. He will enter a Fire full of flames!﴾
- ﴿4. And his wife too, who carries wood.﴾
- ﴿5. In her neck is a twisted rope of Masad.﴾

**The Reason for the Revelation of this Sūrah and the Arrogance of Abu Lahab toward the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ**

Al-Bukhārī recorded from Ibn ‘Abbās that the Prophet ﷺ went out to the valley of Al-Baṭḥa and he ascended the mountain. Then he cried out,

«يَا صَبَاحَا»

«O people, come at once!»

So the Quraysh gathered around him. Then he said,

«أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنِ حَدَّثْتُكُمْ أَنَّ الْعَدُوَّ مُضِبُّكُمْ، أَوْ مُمَسِّبُكُمْ أَتَيْتُمْ تُصَدِّقُونِي؟»

«If I told you all that the enemy was going to attack you in the morning, or in the evening, would you all believe me?»

They replied, “Yes.” Then he said,

[1] This is known also as Sūrat Al-Masad.

﴿فَإِنِّي نَذِيرٌ لَّكُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ﴾

«Verily, I am a warner (sent) to you all before the coming of a severe torment.»

Then Abu Lahab said, "Have you gathered us for this? May you perish!" Thus, Allāh revealed,

﴿تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ﴾

«Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab and perish he!»

to the end of the Sūrah.<sup>[1]</sup>

In another narration it states that he stood up dusting of his hands and said, "Perish you for the rest of this day! Have you gathered us for this?" Then Allāh revealed,

﴿تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ﴾

«Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab and perish he!»

The first part is a supplication against him and the second is information about him. This man Abu Lahab was one of the uncles of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. His name was 'Abdul-'Uzzā bin Abdul-Muṭṭalib. His surname was Abu 'Utaybah and he was only called Abu Lahab because of the brightness of his face. He used to often cause harm to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. He hated and scorned him and his religion.

Imām Aḥmad recorded from Abu Az-Zinād that a man called Rabī'ah bin 'Abbād from the tribe of Bani Ad-Dīl, who was a man of pre-Islāmic ignorance who accepted Islām, said to him, "I saw the Prophet ﷺ in the time of pre-Islāmic ignorance in the market of Dhul-Majāz and he was saying,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، قُولُوا: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ تَفْلَحُوا﴾

«O people! Say there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh and you will be successful.»

The people were gathered around him and behind him there was a man with a bright face, squint (or cross) eyes and two braids in his hair. He was saying, "Verily, he is an apostate (from our religion) and a liar!" This man was following him (the Prophet ﷺ) around wherever he went. So, I asked who was he and

[1] Fath Al-Bāri 8 :609.

they (the people) said, "This is his uncle, Abu Lahab."<sup>[1]</sup>

Aḥmad also recorded this narration from Surayj, who reported it from Ibn Abu Az-Zinād, who reported it from his father (Abu Zinād) who mentioned this same narration. However in this report, Abu Zinād said, "I said to Rabi'ah, 'Were you a child at that time?' He replied, 'No. By Allāh, that day I was most intelligent, and I was the strongest blower of the flute (for music).'"<sup>[2]</sup> Aḥmad was alone in recording this *Ḥadīth*.

Concerning Allāh's statement,

﴿مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَلَا وَلَدُهُ﴾

﴿His wealth and his children (Kasab) will not benefit him!﴾

Ibn 'Abbās and others have said,

﴿وَمَا كَسَبَ﴾

﴿and his children (Kasab) will not benefit him!﴾

"Kasab means his children."<sup>[3]</sup> A similar statement has been reported from 'Ā'ishah, Mujāhid, 'Aṭā', Al-Ḥasan and Ibn Sīrīn.<sup>[4]</sup>

It has been mentioned from Ibn Mas'ūd that when the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ called his people to faith, Abu Lahab said, "Even if what my nephew says is true, I will ransom myself (i.e., save myself) from the painful torment on the Day of Judgement with my wealth and my children." Thus, Allāh revealed,

﴿مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَلَا وَلَدُهُ﴾

﴿His wealth and his children will not benefit him!﴾

Then Allāh says,

﴿سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ﴾

﴿He will enter a Fire full of flames!﴾ meaning, it has flames, evil and severe burning.

[1] Aḥmad 4:341.

[2] Aḥmad 4:341.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 24:677.

[4] Aṭ-Ṭabari 24:677.

**The Destiny of Umm Jamīl, the Wife of Abu Lahab**

﴿وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ﴾

﴿And his wife too, who carries wood.﴾ His wife was among the leading women of the Quraysh and she was known as Umm Jamīl. Her name was 'Arwah bint Harb bin Umayyah and she was the sister of Abu Sufyān. She was supportive of her husband in his disbelief, rejection and obstinacy. Therefore, she will be helping to administer his punishment in the fire of Hell on the Day of Judgement. Thus, Allāh says,

﴿حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ﴾ فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ﴿

﴿Who carries wood. In her neck is a twisted rope of Masad.﴾

meaning, she will carry the firewood and throw it upon her husband to increase that which he is in (of torment), and she will be ready and prepared to do so.

﴿فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ﴾

﴿In her neck is a twisted rope of Masad.﴾

Mujāhid and 'Urwah both said, "From the palm fiber of the Fire."<sup>[1]</sup>

Al-'Awfi narrated from Ibn 'Abbās, 'Āṭiyah Al-Jadali, Aḍ-Ḍahḥāk and Ibn Zayd that she used to place thorns in the path of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. Al-Jawhari said, "Al-Masad refers to fibers, it is also a rope made from fibers or palm leaves. It is also made from the skins of camels or their furs. It is said (in Arabic) *Masadtul-Ḥabla* and *Amsaduhu Masadan*, when you tightly fasten its twine."

Mujāhid said,

﴿فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ﴾

﴿In her neck is a twisted rope of Masad.﴾ "This means a collar of iron."<sup>[2]</sup> Don't you see that the Arabs call a pulley cable a *Masad*?

<sup>[1]</sup> *Ad-Durr Al-Manthur* 8:667.

<sup>[2]</sup> *Aṭ-Ṭabari* 24:681.

### A Story of Abu Lahab's Wife harming the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ

Ibn Abi Ḥatīm said that his father and Abu Zur'ah both said that 'Abdullāh bin Az-Zubayr Al-Ḥumaydi told them that Sufyān informed them that Al-Walīd bin Kathīr related from Ibn Tadrus who reported that Asmā' bint Abi Bakr said, "When

﴿تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ﴾

﴿Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab and perish he!﴾

was revealed, the one-eyed Umm Jamīl bint Ḥarb came out wailing, and she had a stone in her hand. She was saying, 'He criticizes our father, and his religion is our scorn, and his command is to disobey us.' The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was sitting in the *Masjid* (of the *Ka'bah*) and Abu Bakr was with him. When Abu Bakr saw her he said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! She is coming and I fear that she will see you.' The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ replied,

﴿إِنَّهَا لَنْ تَرَانِي﴾

«Verily, she will not see me.»

Then he recited some of the Qur'ān as a protection for himself. This is as Allāh says,

﴿وَلَا تَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ حِمْلًا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَسْتُورًا﴾

«And when you recite the Qur'ān, We put between you and those who believe not in the Hereafter, an invisible veil.»

(17:45)

So she advanced until she was standing in front of Abu Bakr and she did not see the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. She then said, 'O Abu Bakr! Verily, I have been informed that your friend is making defamatory poetry about me.' Abu Bakr replied, 'Nay! By the Lord of this House (the *Ka'bah*) he is not defaming you.' So she turned away saying, 'Indeed the Quraysh know that I am the daughter of their leader.' "

Al-Walīd or another person said in a different version of this *Ḥadīth*, "So Umm Jamīl stumbled over her waist gown while she was making circuits (*Tawāf*) around the House (the *Ka'bah*) and she said, 'Cursed be the reviler.' Then Umm

Ḥakīm bint ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib said, ‘I am a chaste woman so I will not speak abusively and I am refined so I do not know. Both of us are children of the same uncle. And after all the Quraysh know best.’<sup>[1]</sup>

This is the end of the *Tafsīr* of this *Sūrah*, and all praise and blessings are due to Allāh.

---

<sup>[1]</sup> *Fath Al-Bārī* 8 :610.