



Surah Al-Asr

Introduction

This is 103 Surah of the Holy Quran which revealed in Makkah. This Surah is among of the most comprehensive Surah's of the Quran because it states the minimum criteria required for the divine success for the human. Imam Asha'fi said if Allah (SWT) would have revealed only this surah instead of whole Quran, this surah would have been enough for the guidance of the humanity.

Its translation is as given:

“By the Time, Verily Man is in loss, except those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth and recommend one another to the patience.”

The Explanation of Swear of Time

In general, we swear to fortify our viewpoint. Ibnu Qayyum says whenever Allah (SWT) swears of something, He doesn't only mean to make something honored (Moazzam) but also a means of a reply. When you swear, you have to answer or reply to what you swear by.

In this verse, Allah (SWT) swears by Time. Allah (SWT) swears sometimes to strengthen His verses. He sometimes uses the names of His creatures when He pledges to indicate the importance and value of these creatures to mankind. Moreover, we see in the Quran:

I swear by the city (Makkah); [Al-Balad 90:1]

and

By the fig, and the olive, [At-Tin: 95:1]

So here in this verse, Allah (SWT) has revealed the importance of Time to make us understand that every moment of time is significant for us to attain success.

Asr means “declining day” or “fleeting away”. The word “Aseer” refers to all types of juices. At that very time of the day when it is going to an end, it looks like it squeezes itself, as just after these moments a new day gets its start with the call of Maghrib (adhan –e-Maghrib). So this portion of time has its own importance because before the day is finished, few moments are left, and Allah (SWT) swears that all mankind is in the loss, not only in this world but also in the Hereafter. This surah not only refers to the people who have wasted their time and passed their lives in ignorance but also to the people who valued time, but the salvation for all humanity comes only when they will have strong faith in Allah (SWT) and do righteous

deeds and invite others to join in with us in righteous deeds and also towards the ultimate truth (Haq) and patience.

Hazrat Abu Huraira (RA) reported: I heard Allah (SWT) 's Messenger (PBUH) as saying: Allah (SWT), the Exalted and Glorious, said: The son of Adam abuses Dahr (the time), whereas I am Dahr since in My hand are the day and the night. (Muslim #5580)

In the last verse, some exceptions are mentioned about the people who are safe. Allah (SWT) indicated the conditions upon which our success and failure depend.

“Except those who believe and do good works, and enjoin one another to truth and patience.”

[Al-Asr 103:3]

The first important condition is the Belief. Faith in Allah (SWT) and His Attributes as a single entity, without any other condition. The Articles of Faith that every Muslim must uphold and apply whatever they entail. These articles comprise in general the elements of the Beliefs (Aqeedah).

The Levels of the Deen

Hazrat Umar bin al-Khattab (RA) said: While we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), one day, a man appeared in very white clothes with very black hair. He did not seem to be a transient, yet none of us recognized him. He came in and sat facing the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), with his knees touching the Prophet's Mohammad (PBUH), knees, and placed his hands on the thighs of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), and said, 'O, Mohammad (PBUH)! Tell me, what is Islam?' The Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), answered, 'Islam is to testify that there is no true god except Allah (SWT), and Mohammad (PBUH) is the Messenger of Allah (SWT), perform the Salah, give the Zakat, observe Fasting of Ramadhan, and perform the Hajj if you can afford it.' The man said, 'You have told the truth.' Hazrat Umar (RA) said, we were amazed; he asked him and yet he approved his answer.'

The man further asked, 'Tell me what is Eman (Faith)?' The Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), said, 'Eeman is to believe in Allah (SWT), and to believe in His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and to believe in the Final Day, and in the al-Qadar and in its good & bad consequences.' 'You have told the truth,' he said.

Then he asked, 'Tell me, what is Ihsan?' Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said, 'It is to worship Allah (SWT) as though you see Him. Although you do not see Him, yet He sees you.'

He said, 'Tell me, when is the Final Hour?' The Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), said, 'The one who is asked has no more knowledge about its timing than the one who is asking.'.... Then the man left. The Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), was thinking for a while, and then he asked Hazrat Umar (RA), 'Do you know who the questioner was?' Hazrat Umar (RA) said 'Allah (SWT) and His Messenger know best,' Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said. 'That was Jibreel (AS). He came to teach you your Deen.,'

According to the hadith there are three levels in the Deen: Islam, Eeman and Ihsan.

Islam

The first level is known as Islam, which is based on five pillars, they are, The Testimony of Faith (there is no true God except Allah (SWT) and Mohammad (PBUH) is the Messenger of Allah (SWT) that man must announce to enter Islam, performing Salah, giving Zakat, observing Ramadhan and performing Hajj once in a lifetime for those who can afford it.

Emaan

Emaan is the second level, which consists of six articles. A Muslim must believe in

- 1-Allah (SWT)
- 2- His Angels
- 3- His Scriptures
- 4- His Messengers
- 5- The Last Day
- 6- The Divine Decree (Taqdeer).

Ihsan

Ihsan means worshipping Allah (SWT), as though one sees Him; that is, a Muslim must be conscious of Allah (SWT) and should know that He sees him wherever he may be. This is the best and highest level a Muslim can reach. It can be said that not every Muslim is Mu'min (a believer) and not every believer is a Muhsin (who has reached the level of Ihsan). The second condition is to perform righteous deeds.

Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said: Righteousness is good behavior, and sin is what fluctuates in your chest, and you would hate that the people discovered it about you. (Jami at-Tirmidhi, Vol 4, Book 10, Hadith 2389)

It is a divine warning to Muslims, to support their belief with devotion and acts of worship. The Righteous deeds indicate the depth of someone's faith. In the Quran, Allah (SWT) informs us about the various kinds of righteous deeds. To talk about Islam and get a better understanding of the Quran, being kind and dutiful to parents, solving every kind of personal and social problem of others are all considered as the important righteous deeds.

The most important condition for a deed to be righteous is sincerity that is to expect only Allah's pleasure. The intention should be pure and it should not be to seek material benefits or to gain appreciation for the human. It should be kept in mind that Allah (SWT) is absolutely independent of us, whereas we are dependent on Allah (SWT).

The third important condition is to encourage one another to assist and flock towards ultimate truth and patience. We should promote a society where people help each other and look after the interest of others. The righteous deeds and their relationship with the belief lead you and other members of the society in general towards Allah (SWT) and this will lead the humanity towards the ultimate goals of humanity. This is why the Prophet Mohammad(PBUH) has re-enforced this several times: "The best among you are those who are morally sound from others."