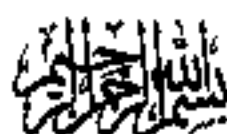




CIV

AL-HUMAZAH

الهُمَزَةُ



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INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *humazah* occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

All commentators are agreed that it is a Makki Sūrah; a study of its subject-matter and style shows that this too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-Matter

In it some of the evils prevalent among the materialistic hoarders of wealth in the pre-Islamic days have been condemned. Every Arab knew that they actually existed in their society: they regarded them as

evils and nobody thought they were good. After calling attention to this kind of ugly character, the ultimate end in the Hereafter of the people having this kind of character has been stated. Both these things (*i.e.* the character and his fate in the Hereafter) have been depicted in a way which makes the listener automatically reach the conclusion that such a man fitly deserves to meet such an end. And since in the world, people of such character do not suffer any punishment, but seem to be thriving instead, the occurrence of the Hereafter becomes absolutely inevitable.

If this Sūrah is read in the sequence of the Sūrahs beginning with Az-Zilzāl, one can fully well understand how the fundamental beliefs of Islam and its teachings were impressed on the peoples' minds in the earliest stage in Makkah. In Sūrah Az-Zilzāl, it was said that in the Hereafter man's full record will be placed before him and not an atom's weight of good or evil done by him in the world will have been left unrecorded. In Sūrah Al-'Adiyāt, attention was drawn to the plunder and loot, blood-shed and vandalism, prevailing in Arabia before Islam; then making the people realize that the way the powers given by God were being abused, was indeed an expression of sheer ingratitude to Him, they were told that the matter would not end up in the world, but in the second life after death not only their deeds but their intentions and motives too would be examined, and their Lord fully well knows which of them deserves what reward or punishment. In Sūrah Al-Qāri'ah after depicting Resurrection the people were warned that in the Hereafter a man's good or evil end will be dependent on whether the scale of his good deeds was heavier, or the scale of his evil deeds was heavier. In Sūrah At-Takāthur the people were taken to task for the materialistic mentality because of which they remained occupied in seeking increase in worldly benefits, pleasures, comforts and position, and in vying with one another for abundance of everything until death overtook them. Then, warning them of the evil consequences of their heedlessness, they were told that the world was not an open table of food for them to pick and choose whatever they pleased, but for every single blessing that they were enjoying in the world, they would have to render an account to their Lord and Sustainer as to how they obtained it and how they used it. In Sūrah Al-'Asr it was declared that each member, each group and each

community of mankind, even the entire world of humanity, was in manifest loss, if its members were devoid of Faith and righteous deeds and of the practice of exhorting others to truth and patience. Immediately after this comes Sūrah Al-Humazah in which after presenting a specimen of leadership of the pre-Islamic age of ignorance, the people have been asked the question: "What should such a character deserve if not loss and perdition?"



وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّهُمَزَةٍ ۝۱ الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ ۝۲ يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ
 أَخْلَدَهُ ۝۳ كَلَّا لَيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ ۝۴ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحُطَمَةُ ۝۵ نَارُ
 اللَّهِ الْمَوْجِدَةُ ۝۶ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ ۝۷ إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّوْصَدَةٌ ۝۸
 فِي عَمَدٍ مُّمَدَّدَةٍ ۝۹



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Verses: 9

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Doomed (to ruin) is every such person who slanders others (in 1-9
 their face) and backbites them habitually¹, who gathers wealth and
 counts it over and over again.² He thinks that his wealth will remain
 with him for ever.³ Nay, never! He will be cast⁴ into the crushing
 place.⁵ And what do you know what the crushing place is? It is the Fire
 of Allah,⁶ kindled brightly, which shall rise up to the hearts.⁷ It will be
 covered down on them⁸ (in a way that) they shall be (enclosed) by tall
 columns.⁹

1. The words used in the original are *humazat il-humazah*. In Arabic *hamz* and *lamz* are so close in meaning that they are sometimes used as synonyms and sometimes with a little difference in the shade of meaning. But this difference is

not definite and clear, for the meaning given to *lanz* by some Arabic speaking people themselves is given to *lanz* by other Arabic speaking people. On the contrary, the meaning given to *hanz* by some people is given to *hanz* by others. Here, since both the words appear together and the words *humazat il-humazat* have been used, they give the meaning that it has become a practice with the slanderer that he insults and holds others in contempt habitually. He raises his finger and winks at one man, finds fault with the lineage and person of another, taunts one in the face and backbites another; creates differences between friends and stirs up divisions between brothers; calls the people names and satirizes and defames them.

2. This second sentence after the first sentence by itself gives the meaning that he slanders others because of his pride of wealth. The words *jama'a mālan* for collecting money suggest the abundance of wealth; then the words "counting it over and over again" depict the person's miserliness and his selfish hoarding of wealth.

3. Another meaning also can be: "He thinks that his wealth will make him immortal." That is, he is so engrossed in amassing wealth and counting it over and over again that he has forgotten death and he never bothers to consider that a time will come when he will have to depart from the world empty-handed, leaving everything behind.

4. The word in the original is *la-yunbādhanna*. *Nabdh* in Arabic is used for throwing away a thing regarding it as worthless and mean. This by itself indicates that because of his wealth he thinks that he is a great man but on the Day Of Resurrection he will be hurled into Hell as a mean and contemptible object.

5. The word *ḥutamah* in the original is from *ḥatm*, which means to smash, crush and break into pieces. Hell has been described by this epithet because it will crush and break to pieces whatever is thrown into it because of its depth and its fire.

6. Nowhere else in the Qur'ān has the fire of Hell been called the fire of Allah. Here, its ascription to Allah not only expresses its dreadfulness but it also shows how the wrath and contempt of Allah envelops those who become proud and arrogant with the worldly wealth. That is why Allah has described that fire as His own Fire into which they will be hurled:

7. *Tattali'u* is from *ittala'a*, which means to climb and mount to the top, and also to be aware and informed. *Af'idah* is plural of *fuwād*, which means the heart. But this word is not used for the organ which throbs in the breast, but for the seat of man's understanding and consciousness, his feelings and desires, beliefs and thoughts, motives and intentions. Thus, one meaning of the rising of the fire to the hearts is that this fire will reach the place which is the centre of man's evil

thoughts, false beliefs, impure desires and feelings, and wicked motives and intentions. The second meaning is that the Fire of Allah will not be blind like the fire of the world, which burns up the deserving and the non-deserving alike, but it will reach the heart of every culprit and discover the nature of his crime and then punish him according to his guilt.

8. That is, after the culprits have been thrown into it, Hell will be closed in upon them without leaving any slit or opening anywhere, in order to choke and suffocate them.

9. *Fi 'amad-ih-mumaddadah* can have several meanings (1) That the gates of Hell will be closed and tall columns will be erected on them; (2) that the culprits will be tied to the tall columns; (3) according to Ibn 'Abbas, the flames of the fire shall be rising high like tall columns.