



CVIII

AL-KAUTHAR

الكوثر

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been so designated after the word *al-kauthar* occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Ibn Mardūyah has cited Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin az-Zubair and Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah as saying that this Sūrah is Makki. Kalbī and Muqātil also regard it as Makki, and the same is the view held by the majority of commentators, but Ḥaḍrat Ḥaṣan Baṣrī, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid and Qatādah regard it as Madani. Imām Suyūṭī in *Al-Itqān* has confirmed this same view, and Imām Nawawī in his commentary of the *Saḥīḥ* of Muslim has also preferred the same. The reason for this assumption is the tradition which traditionists of the rank of Imām Ahmad, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Ibn al-

Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Baihaqī and others have related from Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālīk, saying: "The Holy Prophet was among us. In the meantime he dozed; then he raised his head, smiling—according to some traditions, the people asked what for he was smiling, according to others, he himself told them that a Sūrah had just been revealed to him. Then, with *Bismillāh ir-Rahmān ir-Rahīm*, he recited Sūrah Al-Kauthar; then, he asked the people whether they knew what Kauthar was. When they said that Allah and his Messenger had the best knowledge, he said; It is a river which my Lord has granted me in Paradise." (The details follow under "*Kauthar*"). The basis of the reasoning from this tradition for this Sūrah's being Madanī is that Ḥaḍrat Anas belonged to Madīnah, and his saying that this Sūrah was revealed in his presence is a proof that it was Madanī.

But, in the first place, from this same Ḥaḍrat Anas, Imām Ahmaḍ, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī and Ibn Jarīr have related the traditions which say that this river of Paradise (*Al-Kauthar*) had been shown to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) on the occasion of the *mi'rāj*, (ascention) and everyone knows that *mi'rāj* had taken place at Makkah before the *hijrah*. Secondly, when during the *mi'raj* the Holy Prophet had not only been informed of this gift of Allah Almighty but also shown it, there was no reason why Sūrah Al-Kauthar should have be revealed at Madīnah to give him the good news of it. Thirdly, if in an assembly of the Companions the Holy Prophet himself had given the news of the revelation of Sūrah Al-Kauthar which Ḥaḍrat Anas has mentioned in his tradition, and it meant that that Sūrah had been revealed for the first time then, it was not possible that well-informed Companions like Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair should have declared this Sūrah to be a Makkī revelation and most of the commentators also should have regarded it as Makkī. If the matter is considered carefully, there appears to be a flaw in the tradition from Ḥaḍrat Anas in that it does not say what was the subject under discussion in the assembly in which the Holy Prophet gave the news about Sūrah Al-Kauthar. It is possible that at that time the Holy Prophet was explaining something. In the meantime he was informed by revelation that that point was further explained by Sūrah Al-Kauthar, and he mentioned the same thing, saying that that Sūrah was revealed to him just then. Such incidents did take place on several occasions, on the basis of which the commentators have opined

about certain verses that they were revealed twice. This second revelation, in fact, meant that the verse had been revealed earlier, but on some later occasion the Holy Prophet's attention was invited to it by revelation for the second time. In such traditions, the mention of the revelation of a certain verse is not enough to decide whether it was revealed at Madinah or Makkah, and when precisely it was revealed.

Had this tradition of Hadrat Anas not been there to cause doubt, the whole content of the Sūrah Al-Kauthar by itself bears evidence that it was revealed at Makkah., and in the period when the Holy Prophet was passing through extremely discouraging conditions.

Historical Background

Before this in Sūrahs Ad-Duhā and Alam Nashrah we have seen that when in the earliest phase of Prophethood the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was passing through the most trying conditions — when the whole nation had turned hostile, there was resistance and opposition on every side, and the Holy Prophet and a handful of his Companions did not see any remote chance of success—Allah in order to console and encourage him at that time had sent down several verses. In Sūrah Ad-Duhā it was said; “And surely the later period (*i.e.* every later period) is better for you than the former period, and soon your Lord shall give you so much that you shall be well pleased, and in Sūrah Alam Nashrah: “And We exalted your renown for you.” That is, “Though the enemies are trying to defame you throughout the country, We, on the contrary, have arranged to exalt your name and fame.” And; “The fact is that along with every hardship there is also ease. Indeed, with every hardship there is also ease.” That is, “You should not be disheartened by the severity of conditions at this time; this period of hardships will soon pass, and the period of success and victory will follow.”

Such were the conditions in which Allah by sending down Sūrah Al-Kauthar consoled the Holy Prophet as well as foretold the destruction of his opponents. The disbelieving Quraish said: “Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is cut off from his community and reduced to a powerless and helpless individual. According to 'Ikrimah when the Holy Prophet was appointed a Prophet, and he began to call the people to Islam, the Quraish said: “Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is cut off from his people as a tree is cut off from its root,

which might fall to the ground any moment." (Ibn Jarir). Muḥammad bin Ishāq says: "Whenever the Prophet (upon whom be peace) was mentioned before 'Āṣ bin Wā'il as-Sehmi, the chief of Makkah, he used to say: Let him alone for he is only a childless man (*abtar*) with no male offspring. When he dies, there will be no one to remember him." Shamir bin 'Atiyyah says that 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'aiṭ also used to say similar things about the Holy Prophet, (Ibn Jarir). According to Ibn 'Abbās, once Ka'b bin Ashraf (the Jewish chief of Madīnah) came to Makkah and the Quraish chiefs said to him: "Just see this boy, who is cut off from his people; he thinks he is superior to us, whereas we manage the Hajj, look after the Ka'bah and water the pilgrims." (Bazzār). Concerning this very incident 'Ikrimah reports that the Quraish had used the words *aṣ-ṣunbūr al-sunbatir min qaumi-hī* (a weak, helpless and childless man who is cut off from his people) for the Holy Prophet. (Ibn Jarir) Ibn Sa'd and Ibn 'Asākir have related that Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās said; "The eldest son of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) was Qāsim; next to him was Zainab, next to her Ḥadrat 'Abdullah and next to him three daughters viz. Umm Kulthūm, Fātimah and Ruqayyah. Of them first Ḥadrat Qāsim died and then Ḥadrat 'Abdullah. Thereupon 'Āṣ bin Wā'il said: "His line has come to an end: now he is *abtar* (i.e. cut off from root)." Some traditions add that 'Āṣ said; "Muḥammad is *abtar*, he has no son to succeed him. When he dies, his memory will perish and you will be rid of him. The tradition from Ibn 'Abbās, which 'Abd bin Ḥumaid has related, shows that Abū Jahl also had said similar words on the death of the Holy Prophet's son, Abdullah. Ibn Abī Ḥātim has related on the authority of Shamir bin 'Ariyyah that the same kind of meanness was shown by 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'aiṭ by rejoicing at this bereavement of the Holy Prophet. 'Aṭā' says that when the second son of the Holy Prophet died, his own uncle, Abū Lahab (whose house was next to his) hastened to the pagans and gave them the "good news" *Batira Muḥammad-un al-lail* "Muḥammad has become childless this night, or he is cut off from root."

Such were the disturbing conditions under which Sūrah Al-Kauthar was sent down. The Quraish were angry with him because he worshipped and served only Allah and repudiated their idolatry publicly. For this very reason he was deprived of the rank, esteem and honour that he enjoyed among his people before Prophethood and was now as cut off from his community. The handful of his Companions also were

helpless, poor people who were being persecuted and tyrannized. Furthermore, he was bereaved by the death of two sons, one after the other whereat the near relatives and the people of the clan, brotherhood and neighbourhood were rejoicing and uttering such words as were disheartening and disturbing for a noble person who had treated even his enemies most kindly. At this Allah just in one sentence of this brief Sūrah gave him the good news, better news than which has never been given to any man in the world, besides the decision that it will be his opponents who will be cut off from their root and not he.



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Verses : 3

Revealed at Makkah

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

(O Prophet,) We have granted you the *Kauthar*¹. So pray only 1-3
for your Lord and sacrifice.² Indeed, your enemy³ alone is cut off from
the root.⁴

1. The full meaning of the word *kauthar*, as used here, cannot perhaps be expressed in one word in any language of the world. This is an intensive form of the noun *kathrat* which literally means abundance, but the context in which it has been used does not give the meaning of mere abundance but abundance of good, of spiritual benefits and blessings, and of such abundance which is unbounded and limitless, and it does not imply any one good or benefit or blessing but abundance

of countless benefits and blessings. Have a look again at the background of this Sūrah given in the Introduction. The enemies thought that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) had been completely ruined: he was cut off from the community and had become utterly helpless and powerless; his trade was ruined; his male children who could perpetuate his name were dead; the message that he presented was such that except for a handful of the people no one in entire Arabia, not to speak of Makkah, was prepared to listen to it; therefore, failure and disappointment would be his lot as long as he lived and there would be no one in posterity to remember him when he died. Under such conditions when Allah said: "We have granted you the *Kauthar*," it by itself gave the meaning: Your foolish opponents think that you are ruined and deprived of the good things that you enjoyed before Prophethood, but the fact is that We have favoured you with unbounded good and countless blessings." This included the matchless moral qualities which the Holy Prophet was blessed with; this included the great blessings of Prophethood and the Qur'ān, the knowledge and wisdom that were granted to him; this included the blessing of *Tauhid* and also of such a system of life, whose simple and intelligible, rational and natural, and comprehensive principles had the potential to spread throughout the world and of continuing to spread for ever afterwards. This also included the blessing of the exaltation of renown because of which the holy Prophet's blessed name continues to be exalted throughout the world since 1400 years and will continue to be so exalted till Resurrection. This also included the blessing that by his preaching eventually such a world-wide community came into being, which became the standard-bearer of Truth in the world for ever, which can claim to have produced the greatest number of the pious, virtuous and noble charactered men in any one nation, and which even when corrupted and deprived has the highest good in it as against every other nation of the world. This also included the blessing that the Holy Prophet during his very lifetime witnessed his invitation and message attaining to the highest success and the preparation of a community which had the power to dominate the world. This also included the blessing that although on his being deprived of the male offspring the enemies thought he would be lost to posterity, yet Allah not only blessed him with the spiritual offspring in the form of Muslims, who will continue to exalt his name in the world till Resurrection but also granted him from his one daughter, Ḥadrat Fāṭimah, the natural progeny, who have spread throughout world and whose only mark of distinction and pride is that they trace their descent from him.

These are the blessings which the people have seen and witnessed as to how abundantly Allah has blessed His Holy prophet within the world. In addition, *Kauthar* also implies two other great blessings which Allah will bestow on him in the Hereafter. We had no means of knowing these; therefore the Holy Prophet

(upon whom be peace) himself gave us news of them, and told us that *Kauthar* also implied them. First, the Fountain of *Kauthar*, which he will be granted on the Resurrection Day in the Plain of Assembly; second, the River *Kauthar*, which he will be granted in Paradise. About both such a large number of the *Aḥādīth* have been reported from him through such a large number of the reporters that there remains no doubt about their authenticity.

What the Holy Prophet said about the fountain of *Kauthar* is as follows:

(1) This Fountain will be granted to him on the Resurrection Day when there will be the cry of *al-'ataṣh*, *al-'ataṣh* (thirst, thirst!) on every side. The Holy Prophet's community will gather together before him at it and will be watered thereby. He himself will be the first to arrive at it and will be occupying the central position. He has said: "This is a Fountain at which my *Ummah* will assemble on the Resurrection Day." (Muslim: *Kitāb aṣ-Ṣalāt*; Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb as-Sunnah*). "I shall have arrived at the Fountain before you." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb ar-Riqāq* and *Kitāb al-Fitan*; Muslim: *Kitāb al-Fidā* and *Kitāb at-Tahārah*; Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Manāsik* and *Kitāb az-Zuhd*; Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyyāt 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās*, Abū Hurairah. "I shall be there before you and shall bear witness on you, and by God, I am seeing my Fountain even at this time." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Janā'iz*, *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, *Kitāb ar-Riqāq*). Addressing an assembly of the Anṣār, the Holy Prophet once said: "After me you will meet with selfishness and nepotism, endure it patiently until you meet me at the Fountain." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb Manaqib al-Anṣār* and *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*; Muslim: *Kitāb al-Imān*; Tirmidhi: *Kitāb al-Fitan*). "I shall be near the middle of the Fountain on the Resurrection Day." Muslim: *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il*). Ḥadrat Abū Barzah Aslamī was asked: "Have you heard something about the Fountain from the Holy Prophet? He replied: Not once, or twice, or thrice, or four or five times, but over and over again. May Allah deprive of its water the one who belies it." (Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb as-Sunnah*). "Ubaidullah bin Ziyād thought that the traditions about the Fountain were false; so much so that he belied all the traditions reported by Ḥadrat Abū Barzah Aslamī, Barā' bin 'Āzib and 'Ā'idh bin 'Amr. At last, Abū Sabrah brought out a writing which he had written down after hearing it from Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ and it contained this saying of the Holy Prophet: "Beware! your place of meeting me will be my Fountain." (Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyyāt 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Āṣ*).

(2) Different dimensions of the Fountain have been given in different traditions, but according to a large number of the traditions it will extend from Aylah (the present Israeli seaport of Ilāt) to Sana'ā of Yaman, or from Aylah to 'Adan, or from 'Ammān to 'Adan in length, and from Aylah to Juhfah (a place between Jeddah and Rābiḡh) in breadth. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb ar-Riqāq*; Abū Da'ūd aṭ-

Ṭayālīsī: Ḥadīth No. 995; Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyyāt* Abū Bakr Siddīq and 'Abdullah bin 'Umar; Muslim: *Katāb al-Ṭahārah* and *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il*; Tirmidhi: *Abwāb Ṣifāt al-Qiyāmah*; Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb az-Zuhd*). From this it appears that on the Resurrection Day the present Red Sea itself will be turned into the Fountain of *Kauthar*. And the correct knowledge is only with Allah!

(3) About this Fountain the Holy Prophet has told us that water will be supplied to it from the River *Kauthar* of Paradise (which is being mentioned below). "Two channels from Paradise will flow into it and supply water to it." (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il*). According to another tradition: "A canal from the River *Kauthar* of Paradise will be opened towards this Fountain." (Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyyāt* 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd).

(4) According to the description of it given by the Holy Prophet its water will be whiter than milk (according to other traditions whiter than silver, and according to still others, whiter than snow), cooler than snow, sweeter than honey; the earth of its bed will be more fragrant than musk; the water jugs set at it will be as numerous as the stars in the sky; the one who drinks from it would never thirst; and the one who is deprived of it will never have his thirst satisfied. These things with a little variation in wording have been reported in numerous *Aḥadīth*. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb ar-Riḡāq*; Muslim: *Kitāb al-Ṭahārah* and *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il*; Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyyāt* Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin al-'Ās; Tirmidhi: *Abwāb Ṣifāt al-Qiyāmah*; Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb az-Zuhd*; Abū Da'ūd: Ṭayālīsī, *Aḥadīth* No. 995, 2135).

(5) Concerning it the Holy Prophet warned the people of his time again and again, saying: "after me those from among you who would effect changes in my Way, will be removed from the Fountain and will be disallowed to approach it. I shall say: they are my companions, but it will be said: "Don't you know what they did after you? Then I too shall discard them and tell them to keep away." This subject too has been expressed in many traditions. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb ar-Riḡāq*, *Kitāb al-Fitan*; Muslim: *Kitāb al-Ṭahārah* and *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il*; Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyyāt* Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Hurairah; Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Manāsik*. The *Ḥadīth* which Ibn Mājah has related in this connection contains very pathetic words. The Holy Prophet said: "Beware! I shall have arrived at the Fountain before you and shall pride myself by your means upon the greater numbers of my *Ummah* as against other *ummahs*. Do not at that time cause my face to be blackened. Beware: I shall have some people released, and some people shall be separated from me. I shall say: O my Lord, they are my companions. He will reply: Don't you know what innovations they introduced after you?" According to Ibn Majah, these words were said by the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) in his Sermon at 'Arafāt.

(6) Likewise, the Holy Prophet has also warned the Muslims coming after him till Resurrection, saying: "Whoever from among you will swerve from my Way and effect changes in it, will be removed from the Fountain. I shall say: O Lord, they belong to me, they are the people of my *Ummah*. In response it will be said: Don't you know what changes they effected after you and then turned back on their heels? Then I too shall turn them away and shall not allow them to approach the Fountain." Many traditions on this subject are found in the *Hadith*. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Musāqāt*, *Kitāb ar-Riqāq*, *Kitāb al-Fitan*; Muslim: *Kitāb at-Taharāt*, *Katāb aṣ-Ṣalāt*, *Kitāb al-Fadā'il*; Ibn Majah: *Kitāb az-Zuhd*; Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyyāt Ibn 'Abbas*).

Traditions about this Fountain have been related by more than 50 companions, and the earliest scholars generally have taken it to mean the Fountain of *Kauthar*. Imām Bukhārī has named the last chapter of his *Kitāb ar-Riqāq* as *Bābun fil hawḍ wa quā' Allāhu innā a'taināk al-Kauthar*, and in a tradition from Ḥaḍrat Anas there is the explanation that the Holy Prophet said about *Kauthar*: "It is a Fountain at which my *Ummah* shall alight."

The River *Kauthar* which the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) shall be granted in Paradise, also has been mentioned in a large number of the traditions of *Hadith*. Many traditions have been related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas in which he says (and in some he explains that he is reporting the exact words of the Holy Prophet himself) that on the occasion of *mi'rāj*, the Holy Prophet was taken round Paradise and shown a river on the banks of which there were vaults of pearls or precious stones carved from within; the earth of its bed was of the strong scented musk. He asked Gabriel, or the angel who took him round, what it was. He replied that it was the River *Kauthar*, which Allah had granted him. (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Abū Da'ūd Tāyālisī, Ibn Jarīr) Again, according to Ḥaḍrat Anas, the Holy Prophet was asked (or a person asked him): "What is the *Kauthar*?" He replied; "It is a River which Allah has granted me in Paradise. Its earth is musk; its water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey." (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr; according to another tradition of Musnad Ahmad, describing the merits of the River *Kauthar* the Holy Prophet said that at its bottom there are pearls instead of pebbles. Ibn 'Umar says that the Holy Prophet said: "The *Kauthar* is a river in Paradise the banks of which are golden; it flows on pearls and diamonds (*i.e.* its bed has diamonds instead of pebbles); its earth smells sweeter than musk; its water is whiter than milk (or snow), cooler than snow and sweeter than honey." (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Dārimī, Abū Da'ūd Tāyālisī, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardūyah, Ibn Abī Shaibah). Usāmah bin Zaid says that the Holy Prophet once went to visit Ḥaḍrat Usāmah; he was not at home; his wife entertained him and during the conversation said "My husband has told me that you have been granted a river in Paradise,

which is called the *Kauthar*." The Holy Prophet replied "Yes, and its bed is of rubies and corals and emeralds and pearls" (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Mardūyah. Though the *sanad* of this tradition is weak, the presence of a large number of traditions dealing with this subject strengthens it). Besides these *marfū'* traditions, a great many sayings of the Companions and their successors have been related in the Hadīth to the effect that the *Kauthar* implies a river in Paradise. These traditions describe its qualities as have been mentioned above. For instance, the sayings of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Mujāhid and Abul 'Āliyah are found in Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Tirmidhi, Nasā'ī; and the books of Ibn Mardūyah, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah and other traditionists.

2. Different commentaries of it have been reported from different scholars. Some of them take the Prayer to mean the five times obligatory Prayer (*ṣalāt*); some take it to imply the Prayer of 'Īd al-Adḥā, and some say that it implies the Prayer itself. Likewise, the meaning of *wanḥar* and sacrifice according to some illustrious scholars, is to place the right hand over the left hand and to fold them on the chest in the Prayer; some say that it implies raising both hands with *Allahu Akbar* at the commencement of the Prayer; some say that it implies raising both hands at the commencement of the Prayer, at bowing for *Rukū'* and after rising from *Rukū'*; and some say that it means performing the 'Īd al-Adḥā Prayer and then offering the animal sacrifice. But if the context in which this command has been enjoined, is considered, its meaning clearly seems to be: "O Prophet, when your Lord has granted you so many and so splendid blessing, then you should perform the Prayer only for His sake and offer sacrifice only for His sake." This Command was given in the environment when not only the pagans of Quraish but the pagans of entire Arabia and the world worshipped their self-made gods and offered sacrifices at their shrines. Therefore, the intention of the Command is: "Contrary to the polytheistic practice, you should remain steadfast to your creed: your Prayer is only for Allah and your sacrifice also is for Him alone, as it has been said at another place: 'Declare, O Prophet, my *ṣalāt* and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah, Lord of the universe, Who has no partner with Him. This is what I have been enjoined, and I am the first to surrender to Him.'" (Al-An'ām:162-163). This same meaning has been explained of it by Ibn 'Abbās, 'Aṭā', Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Qatādah, Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Kurzī, Ḍaḥḥāk, Rabi' bin Anas, 'Aṭā' al-Khurasānī and many other major commentators (may Allah bless them all) (Ibn Jarīr). However, this by itself is correct that when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) enforced by Allah's Command the practice of the 'Īd al-Adḥā Prayer and the offering of animal sacrifice at Madīnah, he himself gave the first place to the Prayer (*ṣalāt*) and the second to the sacrifice, as commanded in the verses: *Inna ṣalāti wa nusukī* and *fa-ṣalli li-Rabbika wanḥar*,

and enjoined on the Muslims also to do the same, *i.e.* they should first perform the Prayer and then offer the sacrifice. This is neither the explanation of this verse nor the occasion of its revelation but a deduction made by the Holy Prophet from these verses and his deduction of injunctions also is a kind of Divine inspiration.

3. The word *shāni'* as used in the original is derived from *sha'n*, which means the hatred and spite because of which a person may start ill-treating another. At another place in the Qur'an it has been said: "(And O Muslims,) the enmity of any people should not so provoke you as to turn you away from justice." (Al-Mā'idah: 8). Thus, *shāni'aka* implies every such person who blinded by his enmity of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) should bring false accusations against him, slander and defame him and vent his personal spite against him by taunting and scoffing at him in every possible way.

4. *Huwa'l abtar*: "He himself is *abtar*", *i.e.* though he calls you *abtar* he in fact himself is *abtar*. Some explanations of *abtar* have already been given in the Introduction to the Sūrah. It is derived from *batar* which means to cut off, but idiomatically it is used in a comprehensive meaning. In the *Hadīth*, the *rak'ah* of the Prayer which is not coupled with another *rak'ah* is called *butaira'*, *i.e.* the lonely *rak'ah*. According to another *Hadīth* "Every piece of work, which is in any way important, is *abtar* if it is started without the glorification and praise of Allah", implying that it is cut off from the root, It has no stability, and it is doomed to failure. A man who fails to achieve his object is *abtar* as also the one who is deprived of all means and resources. A person who is left with no hope of any good and success in life is also *abtar*. A person who has been cut off from his family, brotherhood, associates and helpers is also *abtar*. The word *abtar* is also used for the man who has no male child, or whose male child or children have died, for after him there remains no one to remember him, and he is lost to posterity after death. In almost all these meanings the disbelieving Quraish called the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) *abtar*. At this, Allah said: "O Prophet, not you but your enemies are *abtar*." This was not merely a "reprisal", but a prophecy out of the most important prophecies of the Qur'an, which literally proved true. When it was made, the people regarded the Holy Prophet as *abtar*, and no one could imagine how the big chiefs of the Quraish would become *abtar*, who were famous not only in Makkah but throughout Arabia, who were successful in life, rich in worldly wealth and children, who had their associates and helpers everywhere in the country, who enjoyed intimate relations with all the Arabian tribes, being monopolists in trade and managers of Hajj. But not long afterwards the conditions altogether changed. There was a time when on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench (A.H. 5) the Quraish had invaded Madīnah with the help of many Arabian and Jewish tribes, and the Holy Prophet being besieged had to resist the enemy by digging a trench around the city. After only three years, in A.H. 8,

when he attacked Makkah, the Quraish had no helper and they had to surrender helplessly. After this within a year or so the whole Arabia came under his control, deputations of tribes from all over the country began to visit him to take the oaths of allegiance and his enemies were left utterly helpless and resourceless. Then they were so lost to posterity that even if their children survived, none of them today knows that he is a descendent of Abū Jahl, Abū Lahab, 'Ās bin Wā'il, or 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'ait, the enemies of Islam, and even if he knows it, he is not prepared to claim that his ancestors were those people. On the contrary, blessings are being invoked on the children of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) throughout the world; millions and millions of Muslims take pride in bearing relationship to him; hundreds of thousands of people regard it as a mark of honour and prestige to have descended not only from him but from his family and even the families of his Companions. Thus, some one is a Sayyid, another an 'Alavī, and 'Abbāsī, a Hāshmi, a Siddīqī, a Fāruqī, an 'Uthmānī, a Zubairī, or an Ansārī, but no one is an Abū Jahli or Abū Lahabī. History has proved that not the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) but his enemies were, and are, *abtar*.