

Ramadan Immersion



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Introduction

- Surah al-Qalam is the 68th Surah in the Qur'an, and the second Surah in the 29th juz.
- It was one of the first Surahs revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ).
- The order of revelation:
 - According to the majority scholars of tafsir, Surah al-Qalam was the second Surah revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ), followed by Surah Al-Muddaththir and Surah Al-Muzzammil.
 - There is a difference in opinion as there are scholars that say Surah al-Qalam was revealed after Surah Al-Muddaththir and Surah Al-Muzzammil.
- We will mainly reference the Tafsir of Imam al-Qurtubi, Tafsir of Imam al-Alusi and Tafsir of Imam Fakhruddin Ar-Razi.
- We have to reflect upon why we are learning the Qur'an. There is no limit for it to nourish a person, if our hearts are pure.
 - Sufyan reported: Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, said,

عُثْمَانُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ لَوْ أَنَّ قُلُوبَنَا طَهَّرْتَ مَا شَبِعَتْ مِنْ كَلَامِ اللَّهِ

"If our hearts were pure, we would never be tired of the speech of Allah." (Hilyat al-Awliyā')

- The phrase أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ:
 - This is called Ta'awwudh. In the Arabic language, it comprises all three types of words – ism (nouns), fi'l (verbs) and harf (particles).

- We are seeking refuge in Allah from every single avenue that Shaytan possesses to try and deceive us. Thus, it is emphasized in a phrase which contains all three types of words.
- According to Imam Ar-Razi, based on this phrase, Allah has accursed Shaytan and made him very distant – in regards to consideration. Meaning, He has not given Shaytan any importance.
- In contrast to Shaytan, we are connected to Allah through our du'a; the calls we make to Him. However, Shaytan is accursed from the beginning until the end.
- Imam Ar-Razi said we have an enemy that is absent (Shaytan). However, we also have a Creator who is able to overtake anything or anyone. If we feel this enemy has gotten a grip over us, then rush toward the everlasting, beloved Lord who will always overcome the enemy.
- Allah alone conquers and overtakes all, and He is the greatest safe haven and sanctuary for the believers and their hearts.
- Imam Ar-Razi alludes from this phrase, we can derive 10,000 different matters pertaining to this phrase.
- The phrase بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ:
 - Imam al-Qurtubi says that the Qur'an has many secrets – and they are to be discovered.
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) had encouraged us to start with the Basmala before many of the actions we perform. Not saying the Basmala has many implications.
 - Abu Hurairah reported: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

كُلُّ أَمْرٍ ذِي بَالٍ لَا يُبْدَأُ فِيهِ بِبِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ فَهُوَ أَقْطَعُ

"Every important matter that does not start with praise of Allah, is devoid (of blessings)." (Sunan Ibn Majah)
 - The term 'Bismillah' was similarly used by the previous prophets before the Prophet (ﷺ).
 - Lessons on saying 'Bismillah':
 - Example #1: The Incident of Musa AS

- In the Tafsir of Imam Ar-Razi (and others), it is mentioned that Musa AS was traveling in a desert and he fell sick. He called upon Allah, "In the name of Allah, I ask you to grant me shifa." Allah commands him to go to a plant and eat from it to cure his stomach ailment. Upon his recovery, he thanks Allah.
- As time passed, Musa AS experienced the same stomach pain. This time instead of asking Allah, he went straight to the plant he was first commanded to go to, but he did not feel better. Instead, the pain became more severe. Thus, he made du'a asking Allah.
- Allah tells him, "O Musa, the first time you experienced the pain, you called upon me first, and I guided you toward that plant. The second time you experienced it, you never even mentioned Me. You bypassed Me and went directly to that plant. And for that reason, I did not grant you any shifa."
- In this lesson we learn that even in the things that we know can aid or assist us, they are merely means for cure. But the one who gives the cure is Allah; He is Shafi'. Hence, before we eat our medicine etc., we should never forget to say 'Bismillah'. There will be further khair in our actions when we instill the Basmala into our routine.
- Example #2: The Incident of Isa AS
 - In the Tafsir of Imam Ar-Razi (and others), it is mentioned that one of the many miracles Allah had bestowed upon Isa AS is that he was able to look into a grave and see what was transpiring within that grave; they were either punished or rewarded.

- One day, he passed by a grave and witnessed the angels of punishment, punishing the individual in the grave. He doesn't make much of it and keeps walking. On his return, he again walks by the same grave. This time around however, the angels of mercy were in this grave. Isa AS asked Allah, "What is the wisdom behind this?"
- Allah responds, "O Isa, this man used to disobey me. And thus, he was punished. Nevertheless, upon his death, he also left behind a child who was very young. When the child grew up, he was able to recognize Me. He learned My name and would begin doing things with My name, saying 'Bismillah'. Because of this, I shifted the condition of his father's grave."
- This lesson teaches us the benefits of sadaqah jariyah (perpetual charity). One of the things that we are able to benefit from in our graves, is the supplication and righteous actions of our family members. The actions of a child who simply says 'Bismillah' could be rewarding. Thus, we should not be shy about beginning every action with Allah's name.
- The difference between Ar-Rahman and Ar-Raheem
 - Both these names are derived from the same root letters ر , ح م . They denote Allah's rahmah (mercy).
 - In the Qur'an, Allah has made a distinction himself between these two names.
 - The scholars of Tafsir elucidate that Allah has two types of mercy:
 - Ar-Rahman (الرحمان): It is a mercy that befalls all of His creations (i.e. trees, animals, Muslims and non-Muslims etc.); it will be experienced in the world
 - Ar-Raheem (الرحيم): It is a mercy that is only for His believers; it will be experienced in the world and in the Hereafter
 - He said:

Ayah 1

- Allah begins with ت. These types of letters found in the Qur'an are known as Huruf Al-Muqatta'at; they are severed letters (i.e. اَلَمْ, كِهَيْعَص etc.) – it is pronounced separately as it is severed from the next letter.
- Opinion #1:
 - The scholars say that these are from the secrets of the secrets of Allah and the meaning of it is unknown.
 - According to Imam al-Qurtubi, these are from the secrets of Allah and no one knows about it. Thus, we should not dive deep into it. However, we will believe it and recite it just like how it came.
 - This was the position of Abu Bakr RA, Umar RA and other companions as well.
- Opinion #2:
 - There are many scholars that say these letters have meanings and there is a purpose behind them. Thus, we have to dive deep and seek the benefits within its meaning. There is a reason why Allah uses them.
 - Abdullah ibn Abbas said, "These are the names of Allah."
 - Imam Suyuti highlights another statement from Abdullah ibn Abbas. He said:
 - اَلَمْ (AnAllahu A'lam) – Meaning, I am Allah and I am more knowing.
 - اَلْمَص (AnAllahu Mufasssil) – Meaning, I am Allah and I will distinguish on that Final Day.
 - اَلر (AnAllahu Ra'a) – Meaning, I am Allah and I see everything.
 - Opinion #3:
 - Some scholars say these letters are the names of the Qur'an. The Qur'an has many different names.

- Opinion #4:
 - Some scholars say these letters are the names of the Surah themselves.
- Opinion #5:
 - Other scholars say that Allah brings these letters in the beginning of these Surahs to challenge the Arabs at that time.
 - The universal challenge Allah makes is “Bring one verse similar to the Qur’an”. However, no one is able to do so.
 - Allah is showing the Arabs, it is in the same language they speak and the letters they use. But even then, they will never be able to imitate it or bring a single verse like the Qur’an.
- What is ن؟
 - Opinion #1:
 - Most scholars say only Allah knows its meaning and thus, they kept it that way. This is the safest opinion.
 - Opinion #2:
 - Some scholars say it refers to a very great whale; a massive sea mammal.
 - When Allah speaks about Yunus AS being swallowed by a whale in Surah al-Anbiya (verse 87), He referred to him as “وَدَا النُّونِ” (And when the Man of the Whale)”.
 - Nun refers to the whale. However, the scholars say it refers to another whale and not the same whale mentioned in the story of Yunus AS.
 - Ibn Jarir, At-Tabari and other scholars say it is a whale that swims in the vast ocean surrounding the earth. Meaning, it is a creature or massive animal that floats around in space, but Allah knows best.
 - This is mentioned in the Tafsir of Imam al-Qurtubi from Abdullah ibn Abbas, who is known as the greatest mufasssir and teacher of the Qur’an from the companions.

- He said: “The first thing Allah created was the pen and He commanded the pen to write. The pen asked, ‘O Allah, what shall I write?’ Allah commanded the pen, ‘Write the decree of everything that will occur from this moment until the Day of Judgment.’ Then, Allah created Nun and raised the steam from the water from which the heavens were formed. Then He spread out the earth upon the back of Nun, but when Nun trembled, He anchored the land with many different mountains upon the back of Nun.”
- Meaning, this refers to land mass; it speaks about the entire universe and not just the earth. The universe is massive.
 - Other narrations similarly state that Allah first created the pen and commanded it to write. After it, Allah created Nun above the water and placed every land mass over it.
 - Imam Mujahid, a student of Abdullah ibn Abbas mentioned, “Nun refers to a great whale beneath the seventh earth.”
- Other opinions:
 - Other scholars say it refers to a vast sea, a tablet (the one the pen wrote upon) that’s made of light, the ink pod that Allah uses for the pen. Nevertheless, Allah knows best.
 - Imam al-Qurtubi states, “Alif Lam Ra is three letters of Rahman and Ha Mim contains two letters in Rahman. Nun is the last letter of the word Rahman.” Hence, Al-Rahman comprises three different verses of Huruf Al-Muqatta'at. Thus, the scholars say this is from Allah’s secrets of mentioning His names in these Surahs.
- وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ — Allah takes an oath by the pen and what everyone writes.
- The pen refers to:
 - Opinion #1:
 - Every general pen that has written in the past, is currently writing or will be writing in the future.

- Everything that is written by ink on paper.
- The angels on our shoulders that are writing down our good and bad deeds.
- Every single creation that has used a pen to write with.
- Opinion #2:
 - The first pen Allah created and commanded to write the decree of everything from the beginning until the end of time.
- Opinion #3:
 - What people do after writing down their actions and thoughts.
- Allah makes this oath to show us the importance of writing. It has been done even before we were created. He wrote our decree with the sacred pen.
- When Allah takes an oath by something, it is by something important and has great significance (i.e. by time, Day of Judgment etc.). Meaning, it carries great weight.

Ayah 2

- This Surah was given by Allah to console the Prophet (ﷺ). Allah consoles him in this verse because it was the time when the mushrikun were doing a lot of grave things to him and his companions.
- Allah swore by something important that the Prophet (ﷺ) has not lost his mind. He is not majnun (a madman) as they had claimed.