



النَّصْر An-Nasr

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from the word *nasr* occurring in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

Abdullah bin Abbas states that this is the last Surah of the Quran to be revealed, i.e. no complete Surah was sent down to the Prophet after it. (Muslim, Nasai, Tabarani, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Ibn Marduyah).

According to Abdullah bin Umar, this Surah was sent down on the occasion of the farewell pilgrimage in the middle of the *tashriq* days at Mina, and after it the Prophet (peace be upon him) rode his she camel and gave his well known sermon. (Tirmidhi, Bazzar, Baihaqi, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Abd bin Humaid, Abu Yala, Ibn Marduyah). Baihaqi in *Kitab al-Hajj* has related from the tradition of Sarra bint-Nabhan the sermon which the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave on this occasion. She says:

At the farewell pilgrimage I heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say: O people, do you know what day is it. They said: Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) have the best knowledge. He said: This is the middle day of the

Tashriq days. Then he said: Do you know what place is it. They said: Allah and His Messenger have the best knowledge. He said: This is *Masharil-Haram*. Then he said: I do not know, I might not meet you here again. Beware, your bloods and your honors are forbidden, until you appear before your Lord, and He questions you about your deeds. Listen: let the one who is near convey it to him who is far away. Listen: have I conveyed the message to you? Then, when we returned to Al-Madinah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away not many days after that.

If both these traditions are read together, it appears that there was an interval of three months and some days between the revelation of Surah An-Nasr and the Prophet's (peace be upon him) death, for historically the same was the interval between the farewell pilgrimage and the passing away of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Ibn Abbas says that when this Surah was revealed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that he had been informed of his death and his time had approached. (Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah). In the other traditions related from Abdullah bin Abbas, it has been stated that at the revelation of this Surah the Prophet understood (peace be upon him) that he had been informed of his departure from the world. (Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir, Tabarani, Nasai, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Marduyah).

Mother of the believers, Umm Habibah, says that when this Surah was revealed the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that he would leave the world that year. Hearing this

Fatimah wept. Thereat he said: From among my family you will be the first to join me. Hearing this she laughed. (Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Marduyah). A tradition containing almost the same theme has been related by Baihaqi from Ibn Abbas.

Ibn Abbas says: Umar used to invite me to sit in his assembly along with some of the important elderly companions who had fought at Badr. This was not liked by some of them. They complained that they also had sons who were like the boy. Why then was he in particular invited to sit in the assembly. (Imam Bukhari and Ibn Jarir have pointed out that such a thing was said by Abdur Rahman bin Auf). Umar said that the boy enjoyed the position and distinction because of his knowledge. Then one day he invited the companions of Badr and also called me to sit with them. I understood that he had invited me to the assembly to prove his contention. During the conversation Umar asked the companions of Badr: What do you say about *Idha jaa nasrullahi wal-fath*. Some said: In it we have been enjoined to praise Allah and ask for His forgiveness when His succor comes and we attain victory. Some others said that it implied the conquest of cities and forts. Some kept quiet. Then Umar said: Ibn Abbas, do you also say the same. I said no. He asked: What then is your view. I submitted that it implied the last hour of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him); in it he was informed that when Allah's succor came and victory was attained, it would be a sign that his hour had come; therefore, he should praise Allah and ask for His forgiveness. Thereat Umar said: I

know naught but what you have said.

In another tradition there is the addition that, Umar said to the companions: How can you blame me when you yourselves have seen why I invite this boy to join the assembly. (Bukhari, Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Marduyah, Baghawi, Baihaqi, Ibn al-Mundhir).

Theme and Subject Matter

As is shown by the above traditions, Allah in this Surah had informed His Messenger (peace be upon him) that when Islam attained complete victory in Arabia and the people started entering Allah's religion in great numbers, it would mean that the mission for which he had been sent to the world, had been fulfilled. Then, he was enjoined to busy himself in praising and glorifying Allah by Whose bounty he had been able to accomplish such a great task, and should implore Him to forgive whatever failings and frailties he might have shown in the performance of the service. Here, by a little consideration one can easily see the great difference that there is between a Prophet and a common worldly leader. If a worldly leader in his own lifetime is able to bring about a revolution, which has the aim and objective of his struggle, this would be an occasion for exultation for him. But here we witness quite another phenomenon. The Messenger of Allah in a brief space of 23 years revolutionized an entire nation as regards to its beliefs, thoughts, customs, morals, civilization, ways of living, economy, politics and fighting ability, and raising it from ignorance and barbarism enabled it to conquer the world and become leader of nations; yet when he had

accomplished this unique task, he was not enjoined to celebrate it but to glorify and praise Allah and to pray for His forgiveness, and he busied himself humbly in the implementation of that command.

Aishah says: The Messenger (peace be upon him) often used to recite *Subhanak-Allahumma wa bi-hamdika astaghfiruka wa atubu ilaika* (according to some other traditions, *Subhan Allahi wa bi hamdi-hi as-taghfirullahi wa atubu ilaihi*) before his death. I asked: O Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah, what are these words that you have started reciting now. He replied: A sign has been appointed for me so that when I see it, I should recite these words, and it is: *Idha jaa nasrullahi wal-fathu.*" (Musnad Ahmad, Muslim, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Marduyah).

In some other traditions on the same subject Aishah has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) often recited the following words in his *ruku* and *sajdah*: *Subhanak-Allahumma wa-bi hamdika, Allahumma-aghfirli*. This was the interpretation of the Quran (i.e. of Surah An-Nasr) that he had made. (Bukhari, Muslim Abu Daud, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Ibn Jarir).

Umm Salamah says that the Prophet (peace be upon him), during his last days, very often recited the following words sitting and standing, going out of the house and coming back to it: *Subhan Allahi wa-bi hamdi-hi*. One day I asked: Why do you recite these words so often, O Messenger of Allah. He replied: I have been enjoined to do so. Then he recited this Surah. (Ibn Jarir).

According to Abdullah bin Masud, when this Surah was revealed, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) frequently began to recite the words *Subhanak-Allahumma wa bi-hamdika, Allahumm-aghfirli, subhanaka Rabbana wa bi-hamdika, Allahumm-aghfirli, innaka anta at-Tawwab al-Ghafur*. (Ibn Jarir, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Abi Hatim).

Ibn Abbas has stated that after the revelation of this Surah the Messenger (peace be upon him) began to labor hard so intensively and devotedly for the Hereafter as he had never done before. (Nasai, Tabarani, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Marduyah).

1. When Allah's help comes and victory (is attained).^{*1}

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ

^{*1} Victory here does not imply victory in any one particular campaign but the decisive victory after which there remained no power in the land to resist and oppose Islam, and it became evident that Islam alone would hold sway in Arabia. Some commentators have taken this to imply the conquest of Makkah. But the conquest of Makkah took place in A.H. 8, and this Surah was revealed towards the end of A.H. 10, as is shown by the traditions related on the authority of Abdullah bin Umar and Sarra bint Nabhan, which we have cited in the Introduction. Besides, the statement of Abdullah bin Abbas that this is the last Surah of the Quran to be revealed also goes against this commentary. For if the victory implied the conquest of Makkah, the whole of Surah at-Taubah was revealed after it then it could not be the last Surah. There is no doubt that the conquest of Makkah was decisive in that it broke the

power of the Arabian pagans, yet even after this, they showed clear signs of resistance. The battles of Taaif and Hunain were fought after it, and it took Islam about two years to attain complete control over Arabia

2. And you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes. *2

وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي
دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا

*2 “And you see... in multitudes”: When the time for the people to enter Islam in ones and twos comes to an end, and when whole tribes and people belonging to large tracts start entering it in crowds of their own free will and without offering battle or resistance. This happened from the beginning of A.H. 9, because of which that year has been described as the year of deputations. Deputations from every part of Arabia started coming before the Messenger (peace be upon him), entering Islam and taking the oath of allegiance to him, until when he went for the farewell pilgrimage to Makkah, in A.H. 10, the whole of Arabia had become Muslim, and not a single polytheist remained anywhere in the country.

3. Then glorify your Lord with His praise, *3 and pray for His forgiveness. *4 Indeed, He is ever inclined to accept repentance.

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْهُ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا

*3 *Hamd* implies praising and hallowing Allah Almighty as well as thanking and paying obeisance to Him; *tasbih* means to regard Allah as pure and free from every blemish

and weakness. The Holy Prophet was enjoined to do *hamd* and *tasbih* of Allah when he witnessed this manifestation of His power. Here, *hamd* means that in respect of his great success he should never entertain even a tinge of the idea that it was the result of any excellence of his own, but he should attribute it to Allah's favor and mercy, thank Him alone for it, and acknowledge with the heart and tongue that praise and gratitude for the victory and success belonged to Him alone. And *tasbih* means that he should regard Allah as pure and free from the limitation that exaltation of His word stood in need of his effort and endeavor, or was dependent on it. On the contrary, his heart should be filled with the faith that the success of his effort and struggle was dependent upon Allah's support and succor. He could take this service from any of His servants He pleased. And this was His favor that He had taken this service from him, and made His religion meet success through him. Besides, there is an aspect of wonder also in pronouncing the *tasbih*, i.e. *Subhan Allah*. When a wonderful incident takes place, one exclaims *subhan Allah*, thereby implying that only by Allah's power such a wonderful thing had happened; otherwise no power of the world could have caused it to happen.

*4 "Pray for His forgiveness": Pray to your Lord to overlook; and pardon whatever error or weakness you might have shown inadvertently in the performance of the service that He had entrusted to you. This is the etiquette that Islam has taught to man. A man might have performed the highest possible service to Allah's religion, might have

offered countless sacrifices in its cause, and might have exerted himself extremely hard in carrying out the rites of His worship, yet he should never entertain the thought that he has fulfilled the right his Lord had on him wholly. Rather he should always think that he has not been able to fulfill what was required of him, and he should implore Allah, saying: Lord, overlook and forgive whatever weakness I might have shown in rendering Your right, and accept the little service that I have been able to perform. When such an etiquette was taught to the Messenger (peace be upon him), none in the world conceivably has toiled and struggled so hard in the cause of Allah as he did, how can another person regard his work as superb and be involved in the misunderstanding that he has fulfilled the right Allah had imposed on him. Allah's right, in fact, is so supreme that no creature can ever fulfill and render it truly and fully. Allah in this command has taught Muslims an eternal lesson: Do not regard any of your worship, devotion or religious service as something superb; even if you have spent your entire life in the cause of Allah, you should always think that you could not do all that was required of you by your Lord. Likewise, when you attain some victory, you should not regard it as a result of some excellence in yourselves but as a result of only Allah's bounty and favor. Then bowing humbly before your Lord, you should praise and glorify Him, and should repent and beg for His forgiveness instead of boasting and bragging of your success and victory.

