

Section 1: The Utter Defeat of the Clans Combined, Prophesied

Surah Sad – Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

ص وَالْقُرْآنِ ذِي الذِّكْرِ

بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي عِزَّةٍ وَشِقَاقٍ

كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ فَنَادَوْا وَلا تَحِينَ مَنَاصٍ

1. “*Sad (s). By the Qur'an, full of admonition,*”
2. “*Nay, those who disbelieve are in false pride and opposition.*”
3. “*How many a generation We destroyed before them, then they cried, but time was none to escape.*”

The Occasion of Revelation

There are some similar occasions of revelation for the beginning verses of this Surah recorded in the commentary and tradition books. Here we refer to one of them which is more detailed and more inclusive than others. It is the tradition that the Late Kulayni has narrated from Imam Baqir (as).

Once Abujahl and a group of the members of Quraysh came to Abutalib, the Prophet's uncle (S) and said:

"Your brother's son has annoyed us and has made our gods inconvenient, too. Call him up and tell him to abandon our gods so that we may not abuse his God."

Abutalib sent a person to the Prophet (S) to come.

At the time when the Prophet (S) entered his uncle's house and looked around the room, he saw that there was nobody beside Abutalib save the polytheists; then he said:

'And peace will be upon him who follows the guidance!',¹

and then he sat down. Abutalib reiterated their words for the Prophet (S).

In answer to him, the Prophet (S) said:

"Do they agree with me in a sentence and by it they precede all Arabs and they will govern?"

Abujahl said:

"Yes, we agree. What is that sentence?"

The Prophet (S) said:

"You may say: 'There is no god but Allah', (and send away these idols which are the source of your misery and disgrace)."

When the audience heard this sentence, they terrified so much that they put their fingers in their ears and quickly went out of the room while they were saying:

"We have not heard such a thing yet. This is a lie."

It was here that the beginning verses of Surah Sad were revealed.²

In the first verse of this Surah again we encounter one of the abbreviated letters of the Qur'an, Sad (s), and so the former discussions about the commentary of these letters come forth that whether they point to the greatness of the Qur'an meaning that the Qur'an has been made up of some simple things such as alphabetical letters, or it contains something which changes the world of humanity.

And this is the great wonderful might of Allah that by those simple things He has provided such a surprising combination.

Or it points to the secrets which had been between Allah and His Prophet and is a message from the side of a familiar One toward a familiar one. Or it is a hint to the Names of Allah, because many of the Names of Allah begin with the letter 'Sad', like: Sadiq (truthful), Samad, and Sani'; or it points to the holy sentence: /sadaqallah/ (Allah is truthful) which has been abridged in one letter, Sad.

Some more detailed explanation about the commentary of the abbreviated letters can be studied at the beginning of Suras Al-Baqarah, 'Al-i-'Imran, and Al-'A'raf.

The first verse indicates that by the Qur'an, which contains the admonition, you are on the truth and this Book is the miracle of Allah.

It says:

"Sad (s). By the Qur'an, full of admonition,"

The Qur'an is both itself remembrance and contains remembrance. The Qur'anic term /**ikr**/ means: 'a reminder' and 'to remove the rust of negligence from the face of the heart'. The remembrance of Allah is the remembrance of His bounties, the remembrance of the Great Court in Hereafter, and the remembrance of the aim of the creation of man.

Yes, the important and main factor of Man's misery is his forgetfulness and negligence, and the Holy Qur'an wipes it out.

Concerning the hypocrites, the Qur'an says:

"...They have forsaken Allah, so He has forsaken them, (too)..."³

And in this very Surah, Sad, verse 26 talks about those who go astray:

"...(as for) those who go astray from the path of Allah, they shall surely have a severe punishment, because they forgot the Day of Reckoning."

Yes, the great pest of the aberrant people and sinners is that very forgetfulness, so much so that they forget the value of their own selves, and the Qur'an is a means for breaking these curtains of forgetfulness, and it is a light for removing the darkness of negligence.

Its verses cause man to remember Allah and Resurrection, and its sentences make man acquainted with the values of his own self.

The next holy verse implies that if you see that they do not surrender to the awakening verses of the Qur'an, it is not for the sake that there has been fallen a curtain over the words of truth, but the

disbelievers have a kind of pride which hinders them from accepting the truth, and their enmity and disobedience prevent them to accept the invitation of the Prophet (S).

The verse says:

“Nay, those who disbelieve are in false pride and opposition.”

As Raqib says in Mufradat, the Arabic term */‘izzat/* is a state which hinders man to defeat, and originally it is derived from */‘izaz/* in the sense of a solid, firm, and impenetrable land.

It is of two kinds: sometimes it is the acceptable and worthy honour like when we attribute the pure Essence of Allah with the word ‘Aziz (Mighty); and sometimes it is the blameworthy honour, and it is the impenetrable state against the Truth and being proud to accept the realities, and this honour is, in fact, an abasement.

The Arabic word */šiqaq/* from the point of etymology is derived from */šiq/* and originally means: ‘To cleave’, then it has also been used in the sense of ‘difference’, because difference causes that every group to be separated into a section.

Here the Qur’an has counted the subject of impenetrability, pride, and paving the path of separation dispersion, and disunity as the factor of unhappiness of the pagans. Yes, these are some ugly and evil qualities which cast a curtain over the man’s eyes, ears, and understanding and take the sense of recognition from him.

How painful is that the eye and the ear of man are valid, yet he is blind and deaf.

Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 206 says:

“And when it is said to him: ‘Hear Allah’, pride drives him toward sin. So Hell shall be sufficient for him and it is an evil abode in deed.”

Then, in order to awaken these proud and negligent people, the Qur’an takes them to the past history of man and shows them the evil end of the proud, haughty and obstinate nations, perhaps they take a lesson.

It says:

“How many a generation We destroyed before them, then they cried, but time was none to escape.”

The day when the Divine prophets and the saints advised them and warned them of the evil end of their deeds, they not only did not hearken, but also mocked and hurt the believers and even they killed them.

They lost their opportunities and all their future possibilities. So, at the time when the doors of

repentance and returning were all shut for them the worldly sudden punishment came over them to destroy them and their shouts of asking for help remained useless.

The Arabic word ***/lat/*** is used for negation and originally it has been /la/ as a negative sign in Arabic, and the letter /t/ is for emphasis added to it.

The Arabic term ***/manas/*** is derived from /nawasa/ in the sense of ‘shelter’ and ‘a reliever’. It is said that when a harsh and very horrible event had happened, specially in battles, it was customary that Arabs repeated this word and said / manas/. This word means: ‘where is shelters’. And since this word is accompanied with ‘escape’, it has also been used in the sense of ‘the place of escape’.⁴

However, when these proud negligent people had respite to refuge to the graceful mercy of Allah they did not use it, and later, when they lost their opportunities, and the worldly sudden punishment came to them, their shouts of asking help and their struggle for finding a shelter and a way of escape did not assist them.

This Allah’s way of treatment had worked in all former nations and it will continue in future, too, because there is no change in Allah’s way of treatment.

There is a pity that a great deal of people are not ready to use the experiences of others, and they want to try on the bitter experiences of others themselves. They are the experiences that sometimes happen only once in the whole lifetime of a person and there will not be a turn for the second time.

Surah Sad – Verse 4

وَعَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنْذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ وَقَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ

4. “And they did wonder that a Warner from among themselves came to them, and the disbelievers said: ‘This is a lying sorcerer’.”

The Occasion of Revelation

There has been cited an occasion of revelation for these verses similar to what was stated upon the previous verses, but since this one contains some new matters, we narrate it from the commentary written by Ali-ibn-’Ibrahim, as follows:

When the Messenger of Allah (S) announced his invitation openly, the chiefs of Quraysh came to Abutalib and said:

“O Abutalib! Your brother’s son calls us feeble-minded, and abuses our gods. He has made our youths

corruptible and has dispersed our community. If this action is because of financial deficiency, we will gather so much money for him that he can be the wealthiest man among Quraysh, and we are even ready to choose him as a chief.”

Abutalib conveyed this message to the Messenger of Allah (S).

The Prophet (S) said:

“If they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand, I would not intend it; but (instead of these promises) they may agree with me in one sentence so that by which they govern over Arab and also non-Arab come into their religion, and they will be kings in Paradise.”

Abutalib sent this message to them, and they said they were ready to accept ten sentences instead of one sentence.

The Prophet (S) told them:

“You may testify that there is no god but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah.”

They terrified very much (from this statement) and said:

“Do we leave three hundred and sixty gods and go to only one God? What a surprising thing is this? (That God Who can never be seen).”

It was here that the following verse was revealed, saying:

“And they did wonder that a Warner from among themselves came to them, and the disbelievers said: ‘This is a lying sorcerer’.”⁵

This very meaning, with a slight difference, has been narrated in Majma‘-ul-Bayan, and at the end of it there has been added:

“While tears were flowing from the Prophets eyes, he said:

‘O’ my uncle! If they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand in order that I abandon this statement, I would never do so; except that I cause this word to penetrate in the society, or that I would be killed in its path.”

When Abutalib heard this statement, he said:

*“You may follow your program. By Allah! I will never leave helping you.”*⁶

The most important duty of the Divine prophets is to warn people, but the proud and self-loving ones are both impenetrable and absolutist. They do not formally assume anything save what they have perceived by their own limited and deficient thoughts and they take the same things as the criterion of the values.

That was why when the holy Prophet of Islam (S) announced Islam in Mecca and stood against the small and big idols, the number of which was around 360 idols, sometimes they wondered why the Divine prophet, the Warner, had appeared from among them, and their surprise was because of this that Muhammad (S) was one person from themselves.

The verse says:

“And they did wonder that a Warner from among themselves came to them...”

They used to say why there had not been sent an angel from the heaven. They imagined this great point of strength as a point of weakness.

The one who had come out from among the mass of people, who was aware of their needs and pains, and was acquainted with their difficulties and the problems of their lives, could be an example in all things for them.

They considered this great privilege as a dark point in the invitation of the Prophet (S) and wondered upon it. And sometimes they went beyond this stage, too.

The verse continues saying:

“...and the disbelievers said: ‘This is a lying sorcerer’.”

We have repeatedly said that attributing sorcery to the Prophet (S) was for observing the undeniable miracles and his extraordinary penetration in the people’s thoughts; and attributing falsehood to him was for the sake that he stood against the superstitious customs and deviated ideas which were counted as the certain things of that environment, and he spoke against them in his claim as a prophet from the side of Allah.

Surah Sad – Verses 5-7

أَجْعَلِ الْأَلْهَةَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجَابٌ

وَانْطَلَقَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ امْشُوا وَاصْبِرُوا عَلَىٰ آلِهَتِكُمْ إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ يُرَادُ

مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي الْمِلَّةِ الْأَخْرَىٰ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا اخْتِلَاقٌ

5. “Has he made gods (all) into One God? This is indeed a strange thing!”

6. “And the chiefs from them departed, (saying:) ‘Go! and be steadfast to your gods; this is a thing to be desired.’”

7. “We never heard (the like) of this in the former creed; this is nothing but a made up tale.”

The first action of the prophet is the negation of the false objects of worship and proving the One God.

When the Prophet (S) openly revealed his theistic invitation, the disbelievers looked and said to others to come and hear the things they had not heard ever before.

They said:

“Has he made gods (all) into One God? This is indeed a strange thing!”

Yes, sometimes pride, self-loving, absolutism, and the aberration of the environment change the man’s insight and judgment so violently that he wonders from the clear facts while he is seriously bond to some superstitions and vain conjectures.

The Arabic term *’ujabl*, in this verse, denotes to an exaggerative meaning and is used for some very strange affairs.

These empty-minded persons used to think the more their objects of worship could be, the more power and influence of credit they would have, and that was why Allah, the One, seemed a little thing to them, while we know that, from the point of philosophy, the numerous things are always limited, and the unlimited Essence is not more than One.

That is why all the studies in theology end to the line of monotheism.

In the second verse, the Qur’an indicates: when the leaders of them become hopeless from Abutalib and his mediation, they came out from his place and said that they should walk away and remain constant to their gods since Muhammad (S) wanted to destroy their society and to cease the bounties of the gods from them by turning away from their idols and he himself would govern over them.

The verse says:

“And the chiefs from them departed, (saying:) ‘Go! and be steadfast to your gods; this is a thing to be desired.’”

The Arabic term *’intalaqa* is derived from *’intilaq* in the sense of: ‘going out quickly together with leaving the former affairs’. Here it means: ‘Leaving Abutalib’s meeting angrily’.

The Qur’anic term *’imala’* refers to the nobles and well known members of Quraysh who came to Abutalib, and after coming out from that meeting they told each other, or their followers, not to leave their idols and to be steadfast to their gods.

The Qur'anic phrase *//iṣay'in yurad/* means: 'this issue is something desired', and since it is an ambiguous sentence, commentators have delivered many commentaries upon it.

Among them is that some of them have said: it refers to the invitation of the Prophet of Islam (S) and its purpose is that this invitation is a plot the aim of which is we people. It has an appearance which is invitation to Allah, and it has an innate purpose which is to govern over us and to be a chief upon Arabs and all of these are pretexts for this matter.

So you people go away and be steadfast to your belief, and let us, the leaders, analyse about this plot.

This is the thing that the leaders of falsehood always refer to in order to make quiet the sound of the followers of the path of truth and call it 'plot', a plot that only politicians must analyse carefully and arrange a program to struggle against it, but the common people must pass by it heedlessly, and be careful of what they have in their hands.

In the third verse, the Qur'an implies that for deceiving people, or for satisfying themselves, they said:

"We never heard (the like) of this in the former creed; this is nothing but a made up tale."

If the claim of Unity and negation of idols were really true, our ancestors, with that greatness and personality should perceive it and we would hear it from them, but this is only a false and baseless statement.

The application of the Qur'anic phrase: *//il-millat-il-'axirah/* may be a hint to the group of their fathers who were the last people with respect to them, as we said in the above.

And it may be a hint to the People of the Book, specially the Christians who were counted as the last nation and had the last religion before the advent of the Prophet of Islam (S).

This sentence means that there is nothing about the words of Muhammad (S) in the Book of the Christians, because they believe in trinity (three gods) and the monotheism of Muhammad (S) is a new matter.

But as the tone of the Qur'an in other different verses shows, the Arab of the Age of Ignorance did not rely on the Books of the Jews and Christians. All their reliance was on the custom and religion of their ancestors, and this is a good reference for the first commentary.

The Qur'anic word *//ixtilaq/* is derived from */xalaqa/* which originally means the creation of something with no trace. Afterward, this word has been used for 'falsehood', too, because, in many cases, falsehood refers to some matters that have no trace.

Therefore, the objective meaning of the word *//ixtilaq/* mentioned in the verse under discussion is that the claim of Unity which Muhammad (S) refers to, is a new claim with no former trace, and it had been

completely unknown to the former nations, and this itself is a proof for its falseness.

Surah Sad – Verses 8-11

أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا بَلْ هُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِنْ ذِكْرِي بَلْ لَمَّا يَذُوقُوا عَذَابِ

أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّكَ الْعَزِيزِ الْوَهَّابِ

أَمْ لَهُمْ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَلْيَرْتَقُوا فِي الْأَسْبَابِ

جُنُودًا مَّا هُنَالِكَ مَهْزُومٌ مِنَ الْأَحْزَابِ

8. “Has the Reminder been sent down (only) on him out of us all? Nay, they are in doubt about My Reminder, nay, they have not yet tasted My chastisement.”

9. “Or have they the treasures of the Mercy of your Lord, the Mighty, the Greater Bestower?”

10. “Or is theirs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is between them? Then let them ascend by any means.”

11. “A defeated host are the factions that are there.”

The doubt of some of pagans in the prophecy of the Prophet of Islam (S) originates from the doubt in the principle of the possibility of revelation. Alike them are some of those who have pretext on the ordinances of the religion. They, in deed, do not accept the religion itself.

The verse says:

“Has the Reminder been sent down (only) on him out of us all?...”

When the pagans of Mecca saw that their own unlawful benefits were in danger, the fire of enmity and jealousy was lightened in their hearts, so in order to deceive people and also to satisfy themselves, as for opposition against the Prophet of Islam (S), they resorted to various logics, including with surprise and denial they said:

“Has the Reminder been sent down (only) on him out of us all?...”

Was not anybody else among these many old men and the wealthy ones, the well known ones, except Muhammad, the poor and the orphan, that Allah sent His Qur'an to him?

This logic was not allocated only to that time, but every time, and even in our age, too, when an important responsibility is given to someone, the mood of jealousy appears, the eyes become astonished, the ears become sharp to hear, and some grumbles, murmurs and seeking pretexts begin, and some persons say that was not there a proper man among people that this job was given to so and so who is from an unknown and poor family?

Yes, mammonism from one side, and jealousy from other side caused that the People of the Book (the Jews and the Christians), who were in common against the Muslims, to get distance with Islam and the Qur'an and to go to the idol worshippers and tell them that their way was better than the way of Muslims, as Surah An-Nisa', No. 4, verse 51 says:

"Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the Book? They believe in Jibt (idol) and Taqut (false deities) and they say about the infidels: 'These are better guided on the way than those who have believed (in Islam)'. "

It is evident that these wonders and denials which, besides jealousy and mammonism had another source, that is mistake in 'recognizing the values', could never be a logical criterion for judgment. Is the personality of man found in name, wealth, rank, and his age? Has the mercy of Allah been divided among people according to these criterions?

So, in the continuation of the verse, the Qur'an says:

"...Nay, they are in doubt about My Reminder..."

The objection to Muhammad (S) personally was not more than a pretext, and this doubt of theirs in the matter was not for the sake of the existence of ambiguity in the Holy Qur'an, but its origin was mainly their low desires, mammonism and jealousies.

And, finally, the Qur'an threatens them by this sentence, saying:

"...nay, they have not yet tasted My chastisement."

They have not tasted the chastisement of Allah that they have stood so boldly against the messenger of Allah, and by these vain words they go to fight against the revelation of Allah.

Yes, there are always some persons whose ears do not hearken logical and proper statements and nothing dissuade them from pride save the lashes of punishment. They must be punished because their remedy is only Divine punishment.

In answer to them, through the next verse the Holy Qur'an implicitly inquires whether the treasures of the

mercy of your Lord, the Mighty, the Beneficent are with them so that whomever they desire appoint to be a prophet and whomever they do not like can deprive of it.

The verse says:

“Or have they the treasures of the Mercy of your Lord, the Mighty, the Greater Bestower?”

For the case that Allah is the Lord (and is the Owner and Cherisher of the world of existence and the whole humanity) will choose the one for His messengership that can train and lead people alongside the path of development; and for the case that He is Mighty, he does not overcome to the desire of anyone so that He gives the rank of Messengership to an ineligible and incompetent person.

And, principally, the rank of prophethood is a rank so great that only Allah is able to give it to someone, and the case of His being the Bestower, He gives whatever He wants and to whomever He intends.

It is noteworthy that the Qur’anic term ***/wahhab/*** in Arabic is an amplification form and means the All-giving.

This points to the fact that prophethood is not only a mere merit, but it is a combination of numerous merits that come together so that a person can undertake that position, including the merits of knowledge, piety, infallibility, bravery, and manliness.

Similar to this Qur’anic statement is also recited in Surah Az-Zukhruf, No. 43, verses 31–32, saying:

“... ‘Why was not this Qur’an revealed to a man of importance...”

“Will they distribute the mercy of your Lord?... ”

By the way, it is understood from the application of the word ‘mercy’ that prophecy is a mercy of Allah upon the world of mankind, and it is verily so, because if there were not prophets, human beings would lose both the way of hereafter and spirituality, and the path of this world; and those who are far of the school of Divine prophets have lost both of them.

The third verse pursues the same meaning, where it says:

“Or is theirs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and what is between them? Then let them ascend by any means.”

This statement, in fact, is a complement to the former discussion. In that occurrence it implicitly said that the treasures of the mercy of Allah are not in your hands to give them to anyone who is harmonious to your desires.

Now it implies: now that these treasures are not in your hands and they are only in the power of Allah, the only way that you can choose is that you ascend to the heaven and hinder the revelation to come down to him; and you yourself also know that you can never do it.

Thus, neither ‘expedient’ is in your authority, nor you are able to create ‘a barrier’. Then what can you do? You may die because of jealousy and do whatever you are able to do.

Therefore, as some commentators have said, these two verses do not reiterate a single matter, but each of them refers to one of the dimensions of the subject.

The fourth verse, which is the last verse of this discussion, as a state of despising these proud feeble-minded persons, says:

“A defeated host are the factions that are there.”

The Arabic term */hunalikal/* in the sense of ‘there’ is used for pointing to a distanced thing. That is why some of the commentators consider it as a hint to the defeat of the pagans in the Battle of Badr which happened in a rather far point from Mecca.

The application of the Qur’anic word */’ahzabl/* in the verse apparently points to all the groups who worked against the Divine prophets and Allah destroyed them. These pagans are a small group out of those groups who will have the same fate as theirs.

(The evidence for this statement is the coming verses which have mentioned this matter.)

We should not forget that this Surah is one of the Meccan Suras, and the Qur’an stated this statement at the time when Muslims were in such a hard minority that pagans might destroy them easily.

“...and were fearful that people would snatch you away...”⁷

That day there was not any sign of victory seen for the Muslims. On that day the great victories of the Battles of Badr, Ahzab, and Hunayn had not happened, but the Holy Qur’an decisively said that these violent enemies were a small army that would be defeated.

Today, too, the Qur’an gives the same glad tiding to the Muslims of the world who are surrounded from every side by the powers of the cruel oppressors, saying that if they, like the early Muslims, stand firm on the covenant of Allah, He will also fulfil His Own promise concerning the defeat of the army of the disbelieving parties.

Therefore, in Surah ’Al-i-’Imran the Qur’an says:

“...but if you are patient and be pious, their plotting will not harm you in any way...”⁸

and the Qur’an has depended the help of Allah on patience, perseverance and piety.

1. Surah Ta-Ha, No, 20, verse 47

2. Usul-i-Kafi, according to Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 441

3. Surah At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 67
4. Mufradat by Raqib, Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi, Rauh-ul-Ma'ani.
5. The commentary by Ali-ibn-'Ebrahim, according to the commentary of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 4, P. 442
6. Majma'ul-Bayan, Vol. 8, P. 65
7. 1Sura Al-'Anfal, No. 8, verse 26
8. Surah 'Al-i-'Imran, No. 3, verse 120

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