

Sūrah 22: al-Hajj

Period of Revelation

As this Sūrah contains the characteristics of both the Makki and the Madani Sūrahs the commentators have differed as to its period of revelation but in the light of its style and themes we are of the opinion that a part of it (v. 1-24) was sent down in the last stage of the Makki life of the Prophet a little before migration and the rest (v. 25-78) during the first stage of his Madani life. That is why this Sūrah combines the characteristics of both the Makki and the Madani Sūrahs.

According to Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah and other great commentators, v. 39 is the first verse that grants the Muslims permission to wage war. Collections of hadith and books on the life of the Prophet confirm that after this permission actual preparations for war were started and the first expedition was sent to the coast of the Red Sea in Safar 2 A.H. which is known as the Expedition of Waddan or Al-Abwa.

Subject Matter and Theme

This Sūrah is addressed to:

1. The polytheists of Makkah
2. the wavering Muslims and
3. the True Believers.

The polytheists have been warned in a forceful manner to this effect: “You have obdurately and impudently persisted in your ideas of ignorance and trusted in your deities instead of God though they possess no power at all and you have repudiated the Divine Messenger. Now you will meet the same end as has been the doom of those like you before. You have only harmed yourselves by rejecting Our Prophet and by persecuting the best element of your own community; now your false deities shall not be able to save you from the wrath of God.” At the same time they have been admonished time and again for their creed of Shirk (polytheism) and sound arguments have been given in favour of Tawhid and the Hereafter. The wavering Muslims who had embraced Islām but were not prepared to endure any hardship in its way have been admonished to this effect: “What is this faith of yours? On the one hand you are ready to believe in God and become His servants provided you are given peace and prosperity but on the other if you meet with afflictions and hardships in His Way you discard your God and cease to remain His servant. You should bear in mind that this wavering attitude of yours cannot avert those misfortunes and losses which God has ordained for you.”

As regards the true Believers they have been addressed in two ways:

1. in a general way so as to include the common people of Arabia also and
2. in an exclusive way.

The Believers have been told that the polytheists of Makkah had no right to debar them from visiting the Holy Mosque. They had no right to prevent anyone from performing Hajj because the Holy Mosque was not their private property. This objection was not only justified but it also acted as an effective political weapon against the Quraysh. For it posed this question to the other clans of Arabia: Were the Quraysh mere attendants of the Holy Mosque or its owners? It implied that if they succeeded in debarring the Muslims from Hajj without any protest from others, they would feel encouraged in future to debar from Hajj and Umrah the people of any other clan, who happened to have strained relations with the Quraysh. In order to emphasize this point, the history of the construction of the Holy Mosque has been cited to show that it was built by Prophet Abraham by the Command of God and he had invited all the peoples to perform Hajj there. That is why those coming from outside had enjoyed equal rights by the local people from the very beginning. It has

also been made clear that that House had not been built for the rituals of shirk but for the worship of One God. Thus it was sheer tyranny that the worship of God was being forbidden there while the worship of idols enjoyed full licence

In order to counteract the tyranny of the Quraysh, the Muslims were allowed to fight with them. They were also given instructions to adopt the right and just attitude as and when they acquired power to rule in the land. Moreover, the Believers have been officially given the name of “Muslims” saying, “You are the real heirs to Abraham and you have been chosen to become witnesses of the Truth before mankind. Therefore you should establish salat and pay the zakāt dues in order to become the best models of righteous life and perform Jihād for propagating the Word of God (v. 41,77, 78.) It will be worth while to keep in view the introductions to Sūrahs 2 (al-Baqarah) and 8 (al Anfāl).

Sūrah 22: al-Hajj⁸⁵⁰

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate,
the Most Merciful

1. O mankind, fear your Lord. Indeed, the convulsion of the [final] Hour is a terrible thing.
2. On the Day you see it every nursing mother will be distracted from that [child] she was nursing, and every pregnant woman will abort her pregnancy, and you will see the people [appearing] intoxicated while they are not intoxicated; but the punishment of God is severe.
3. And of the people is he who disputes about God without knowledge and follows every rebellious devil.
4. It has been decreed for him [i.e., every devil] that whoever turns to him – he will misguide him and will lead him to the punishment of the Blaze.
5. O People, if you should be in doubt about the Resurrection, then [consider that] indeed, We created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot, and then from a lump of flesh, formed and unformed⁸⁵¹ – that We may show you.⁸⁵² And We settle in the wombs whom We will for a specified term, then We bring you out as a child, and then [We develop you] that you may reach your [time of] maturity. And among you is he who is taken in [early] death, and among you is he who is returned to the most decrepit [old] age so that he knows, after [once hav-
- ing] knowledge, nothing. And you see the earth barren, but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers and swells and grows [something] of every beautiful kind.
6. That is because God is the Truth and because He gives life to the dead and because He is over all things competent
7. And [that they may know] that the Hour is coming – no doubt about it – and that God will resurrect those in the graves.
8. And of the people is he who disputes about God without knowledge or guidance or an enlightening book [from Him],
9. Twisting his neck [in arrogance] to mislead [people] from the way of God. For him in the world is disgrace, and We will make him taste on the Day of Resurrection the punishment of the Burning Fire [while it is said],
10. “That is for what your hands have put forth and because God is not ever unjust to [His] servants.”
11. And of the people is he who worships God on an edge.⁸⁵³ If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to the other direction]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.
12. He invokes instead of God that which neither harms him nor benefits him. That is what is the extreme error.

⁸⁵⁰ *Al-Hajj*: The pilgrimage.

⁸⁵¹ That which is incomplete. This may include what is aborted at that stage.

⁸⁵² Our power and creative ability.

⁸⁵³ At the edge of his religion, so to speak, i.e., with uncertainty, hypocrisy or heedlessness.

13. He invokes one whose harm is closer than his benefit – how wretched the protector and how wretched the associate.
14. Indeed, God will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds to gardens beneath which rivers flow. Indeed, God does what He intends.
15. Whoever should think that God will not support him [i.e., Prophet Muhammad] in this world and the Hereafter – let him extend a rope to the ceiling, then cut off [his breath],⁸⁵⁴ and let him see: will his effort remove that which enrages [him]?
16. And thus have We sent it [i.e., the Qur’ān] down as verses of clear evidence and because God guides whom He intends.
17. Indeed, those who have believed and those who were Jews and the Sabians and the Christians and the Magians and those who associated with God – God will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed God is, over all things, Witness.
18. Do you not see [i.e., know] that to God prostrates whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth and the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, the moving creatures and many of the people? But upon many the punishment has been justified.⁸⁵⁵ And he whom God humiliates – for him there is no bestower of honour. Indeed, God does what He wills.
19. These⁸⁵⁶ are two adversaries who have disputed over their Lord. But those who disbelieved will have cut out for them garments of fire. Poured upon their heads will be scalding water
20. By which is melted that within their bellies and [their] skins.
21. And for [striking] them are maces of iron.
22. Every time they want to get out of it [i.e., Hellfire] from anguish, they will be returned to it, and [it will be said], “Taste the punishment of the Burning Fire!”
23. Indeed, God will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds to gardens beneath which rivers flow. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and pearl, and their garments therein will be silk.
24. And they had been guided [in worldly life] to good speech, and they were guided to the path of the Praiseworthy.
25. Indeed, those who have disbelieved and avert [people] from the way of God and [from] al-Masjid al-Harām, which We made for the people – equal are the resident therein and one from outside - and [also] whoever intends [a deed] therein⁸⁵⁷ of deviation [in religion] or wrongdoing – We will make him taste of a painful punishment.
26. And [mention, O Muhammad], when We designated for Abraham the site of

⁸⁵⁴ i.e., strangle himself.

⁸⁵⁵ And therefore decreed.

⁸⁵⁶ i.e., the believers and the disbelievers.

⁸⁵⁷ Whether inside its boundaries or intending from afar to do evil therein. The Haram is unique in that the mere intention of sin therein (whether or not it is actually carried out) is sufficient to bring punishment from God.

- the House, [saying], “Do not associate anything with Me and purify My House for those who perform tawāf⁸⁵⁸ and those who stand [in prayer] and those who bow and prostrate.
27. And proclaim to the people the hajj [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass –
28. That they may witness [i.e., attend] benefits for themselves and mention the name of God on known [i.e., specific] days over what He has provided for them of [sacrificial] animals.⁸⁵⁹ So eat of them and feed the miserable and poor.
29. Then let them end their untidiness and fulfill their vows and perform tawāf around the ancient House.”
30. That [has been commanded], and whoever honours the sacred ordinances of God – it is best for him in the sight of his Lord. And permitted to you are the grazing livestock, except what is recited to you.⁸⁶⁰ So avoid the uncleanness of idols and avoid false statement,
31. Inclining [only] to God, not associating [anything] with Him. And he who associates with God – it is as though he had fallen from the sky and was snatched by the birds or the wind carried him down into a remote place.
32. That [is so]. And whoever honours the symbols [i.e., rites] of God – indeed, it is from the piety of hearts.
33. For you therein [i.e., the animals marked for sacrifice] are benefits for a specified term;⁸⁶¹ then their place of sacrifice is at the ancient House.⁸⁶²
34. And for all religion We have appointed a rite [of sacrifice]⁸⁶³ that they may mention the name of God over what He has provided for them of [sacrificial] animals. For your god is one God, so to Him submit. And, [O Muhammad], give good tidings to the humble [before their Lord]
35. Who, when God is mentioned, their hearts are fearful, and [to] the patient over what has afflicted them, and the establishers of prayer and those who spend from what We have provided them.
36. And the camels and cattle We have appointed for you as among the symbols [i.e., rites] of God; for you therein is good. So mention the name of God upon them when lined up [for sacrifice]; and when they are [lifeless] on their sides, then eat from them and feed the needy [who does not seek aid] and the beggar. Thus have We subjected them to you that you may be grateful.
37. Their meat will not reach God, nor will their blood, but what reaches Him is piety from you. Thus have We subjected them to you that you may glorify God for that [to] which He has guided you; and give good tidings to the doers of good.

⁸⁵⁸ See footnote to 2:125.

⁸⁵⁹ *Al-An‘ām*: camels, cattle, sheep and goats.

⁸⁶⁰ See 5:3.

⁸⁶¹ i.e., they may be milked or ridden (in the case of camels) before the time of slaughter.

⁸⁶² i.e., within the boundaries of the Haram, which includes Minā.

⁸⁶³ i.e., the right to sacrifice has always been a part of God’s revealed religion.

38. Indeed, God defends those who have believed. Indeed, God does not like everyone treacherous and ungrateful.
39. Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought,⁸⁶⁴ because they were wronged. And indeed, God is competent to give them victory.
40. [They are] those who have been evicted from their homes without right – only because they say, “Our Lord is God.” And were it not that God checks the people, some by means of others, there would have been demolished monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of God is much mentioned [i.e., praised]. And God will surely support those who support Him [i.e., His cause]. Indeed, God is Powerful and Exalted in Might.
41. [And they are] those who, if We give them authority in the land, establish prayer and give zakāh and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. And to God belongs the outcome of [all] matters.
42. And if they deny you, [O Muhammad] - so, before them, did the people of Noah and ‘Aad and Thamūd deny [their prophets],
43. And the people of Abraham and the people of Lot
44. And the inhabitants of Madyan. And Moses was denied, so I prolonged enjoyment for the disbelievers; then I seized them, and how [terrible] was My reproach.
45. And how many a city did We destroy while it was committing wrong – so it
- is [now] fallen into ruin⁸⁶⁵ – and [how many] an abandoned well and [how many] a lofty palace.⁸⁶⁶
46. So have they not traveled through the earth and have hearts by which to reason and ears by which to hear? For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts.
47. And they urge you to hasten the punishment. But God will never fail in His promise. And indeed, a day with your Lord is like a thousand years of those which you count.
48. And for how many a city did I prolong enjoyment while it was committing wrong. Then I seized it, and to Me is the [final] destination.
49. Say, “O people, I am only to you a clear warner.”
50. And those who have believed and done righteous deeds – for them is forgiveness and noble provision.
51. But the ones who strove against Our verses, [seeking] to cause failure⁸⁶⁷ – those are the companions of Hellfire.
52. And We did not send before you any messenger or prophet except that when he spoke [or recited], Satan threw into it [some misunderstanding]. But God abolishes that which Satan throws in;

⁸⁶⁴ Referring here to the Prophet’s companions.

⁸⁶⁵ Literally, “fallen in upon its roofs,” i.e., after the roofs of its buildings had caved in, the walls collapsed over them.

⁸⁶⁶ i.e., How many wells have been left inoperative, and how many palaces have been emptied of their occupants in the past.

⁸⁶⁷ i.e., trying to undermine their credibility and thereby defeat the Prophet.

- then God makes precise His verses.⁸⁶⁸
And God is Knowing and Wise.
53. [That is] so He may make what Satan throws in [i.e., asserts] a trial for those within whose hearts is disease⁸⁶⁹ and those hard of heart. And indeed, the wrongdoers are in extreme dissension.
54. And so those who were given knowledge may know that it is the truth from your Lord and [therefore] believe in it, and their hearts humbly submit to it. And indeed is God the Guide of those who have believed to a straight path.
55. But those who disbelieve will not cease to be in doubt of it until the Hour comes upon them unexpectedly or there comes to them the punishment of a barren Day.⁸⁷⁰
56. [All] sovereignty that Day is for God;⁸⁷¹ He will judge between them. So they who believed and did righteous deeds will be in the Gardens of Pleasure.
57. And they who disbelieved and denied Our signs – for those there will be a humiliating punishment.
58. And those who emigrated for the cause of God and then were killed or died – God will surely provide for them a good provision. And indeed, it is God who is the best of providers.
59. He will surely cause them to enter an entrance with which they will be pleased, and indeed, God is Knowing and Forbearing.
60. That [is so]. And whoever responds [to injustice] with the equivalent of that with which he was harmed and then is tyrannized – God will surely aid him. Indeed, God is Pardoning and Forgiving.⁸⁷²
61. That⁸⁷³ is because God causes the night to enter the day and causes the day to enter the night and because God is Hearing and Seeing.
62. That is because God is the Truth, and that which they call upon other than Him is falsehood, and because God is the Most High, the Grand.
63. Do you not see that God has sent down rain from the sky and the earth becomes green? Indeed, God is Subtle and Acquainted.⁸⁷⁴
64. To Him belongs what is in the heavens and what is on the earth. And indeed, God is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy.
65. Do you not see that God has subjected to you whatever is on the earth and the ships which run through the sea by His command? And He restrains the sky from falling upon the earth, unless by His permission. Indeed God, to the people, is Kind and Merciful.

⁸⁶⁸ Clarifying those issues which were misunderstood to remove any doubt.

⁸⁶⁹ See footnote to 2:10.

⁸⁷⁰ One which will not be followed by night and therefore will not give birth to a new day, referring to the Day of Resurrection.

⁸⁷¹ None will compete with Him for authority at that time.

⁸⁷² In spite of His ability to take vengeance. The statement contains a suggestion that the believers pardon as well.

⁸⁷³ i.e., God's capability to give assistance or victory to the oppressed.

⁸⁷⁴ With His creation and with the needs of His creatures.

66. And He is the one who gave you life; then He causes you to die and then will [again] give you life. Indeed, mankind is ungrateful.
67. For every religion We have appointed rites which they perform. So, [O Muhammad], let them [i.e., the disbelievers] not contend with you over the matter but invite them to your Lord. Indeed, you are upon straight guidance.
68. And if they dispute with you, then say, "God is most knowing of what you do.
69. God will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection concerning that over which you used to differ."
70. Do you not know that God knows what is in the heaven and earth? Indeed, that is in a Record.⁸⁷⁵ Indeed that, for God, is easy.
71. And they worship besides God that for which He has not sent down authority and that of which they have no knowledge. And there will not be for the wrongdoers any helper.
72. And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, you recognize in the faces of those who disbelieve disapproval. They are almost on the verge of assaulting those who recite to them Our verses. Say, "Then shall I inform you of [what is] worse than that?⁸⁷⁶ [It is] the Fire which God has promised those who disbelieve, and wretched is the destination."
73. O people, an example is presented, so listen to it. Indeed, those you invoke besides God will never create [as much as] a fly, even if they gathered together for it [i.e., that purpose]. And if the fly should steal from them a [tiny] thing, they could not recover it from him. Weak are the pursuer and pursued.⁸⁷⁷
74. They have not appraised God with true appraisal.⁸⁷⁸ Indeed, God is Powerful and Exalted in Might.
75. God chooses from the angels messengers and from the people. Indeed, God is Hearing and Seeing.
76. He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them.⁸⁷⁹ And to God will be returned [all] matters.
77. O you who have believed, bow and prostrate and worship your Lord and do good – that you may succeed.
78. And strive for God with the striving due to Him. He has chosen you and has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty. [It is] the religion of your father, Abraham. He [i.e., God] named you "Muslims" before [in former scriptures] and in this [revelation] that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people. So establish prayer and give zakāh and hold fast to God. He is your protector; and excellent is the protector, and excellent is the helper.

⁸⁷⁵ The Preserved Slate (*al-Lawh al-Mahfūḥ*), which is with God.

⁸⁷⁶ i.e., worse than the rage you feel against those who recite God's verses or worse than your threats against them.

⁸⁷⁷ A comparison is made here to the worshipper of a false deity and that which he worships.

⁸⁷⁸ They have not assessed Him with the assessment due to Him, meaning that they did not take into account His perfect attributes.

⁸⁷⁹ See footnote to 2:255.