

## Sūrah 32: as-Sajdah

### Period of Revelation

From the style of the Sūrah it appears that it was sent down during the middle Makkah period, more particularly in its initial stage for one does not find in its background that severity of the persecution and tyranny which one finds in the Sūrahs sent down in the later stages.

### Themes and Topics

The main theme of the Sūrah is to remove the doubts of the people concerning Tawhid (Oneness of God), the Hereafter, the Prophethood and to invite them to all these three realities. The disbelievers of Makkah when they talked of the Prophet in private said to one another 'This person is forging strange things, sometimes he gives news of what will happen after death. He says: 'When you have become dust you will be called to render your accounts and there will be Hell and Heaven.' Sometimes he says: 'These gods and goddesses and saints are nonentities: One God alone is the Deity.' And sometimes he says: 'The discourses which I recite are not my own but God's Word. All these are strange things which he presents.' The answer to these doubts and misgivings forms the theme and subject matter of this Sūrah.

In this connection the disbelievers have been told: "Most certainly it is God's Word which has been sent down in order to arouse a people who are sunk in heedlessness being deprived of the bounties and blessings of Prophethood. How can you call it a fabrication when its having been sent down from God is manifest and self-evident?" Then they have been asked - Use your common sense and judge for yourselves which of the things presented by the Qur'ān is strange and novel? Look at the administration of the heavens and the earth: consider your own creation and structure. Don't these things testify to the teaching which this Prophet is presenting before you in the Qur'ān? Does the system of the universe point to Tawhid (Oneness of God) or to Shirk (polytheism)?

Then a scene of the Hereafter has been depicted, the fruits of belief and the evil consequences of disbelief have been mentioned and the people exhorted to give up disbelief even before they meet their doom and accept the teaching of the Qur'ān which will be to their own advantage in the Hereafter. Then they have been told: It is God's supreme Mercy that He does not seize man immediately for his errors, to punish him finally and decisively but warns him beforehand by afflicting him with small troubles, hardships, calamities, losses and strokes of misfortune so that he may wake up and take admonition. Then it is said: "This is not the first and novel event of its kind that a Book has been sent down upon a man from God. Before this the Book had been sent upon Moses also which you all know. There is nothing strange in this at which you should marvel. Be assured that this Book has come down from God and note it well that the same will happen now as has already happened in the time of Moses. Leadership now will be bestowed only on those who will accept this Divine Book. Those who reject it shall be doomed to failure. Will you like to meet the same doom yourself? Do not be deluded by the apparent and superficial. Today you see that no one is listening to Muhammad except a few young men, some slaves and poor men and he is being made the target of curses and ugly remarks from every side. From this you have formed the wrong impression that his mission will fail. But this is only a deception of your eyes. Don't you see the phenomenon in your daily life that a land previously lying absolutely barren starts swelling with vegetation and plant life everywhere, just by a single shower of the rain though before this no one could ever imagine that under the layers of its soil there lay hidden such treasures of greenery and herbage?" In conclusion, the Prophet has been addressed to the effect: "These people mock at what you say and ask as to when you will attain this decisive victory. Tell them: when the time comes for the final judgment regarding you and us, believing then will not profit you at all. If you have to believe, believe now. But if you intend to await the final judgment, then await it as you please."

**Sūrah 32: as-Sajdah**<sup>1092</sup>

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

1. Alif, Lām, Meem.<sup>1093</sup>
2. [This is] the revelation of the Book about which there is no doubt from the Lord of the worlds.
3. Or do they say, "He invented it"? Rather, it is the truth from your Lord, [O Muhammad], that you may warn a people to whom no warner has come before you [so] perhaps they will be guided.
4. It is God who created the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them in six days; then He established Himself above the Throne.<sup>1094</sup> You have not besides Him any protector or any intercessor; so will you not be reminded?
5. He arranges [each] matter from the heaven to the earth; then it will ascend to Him in a Day, the extent of which is a thousand years of those which you count.
6. That is the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, the Exalted in Might, the Merciful,
7. Who perfected everything which He created and began the creation of man from clay.
8. Then He made his posterity out of the extract of a liquid disdained.
9. Then He proportioned him and breathed into him from His [created] soul<sup>1095</sup> and made for you hearing and vision and hearts [i.e., intellect]; little are you grateful.
10. And they say, "When we are lost [i.e., disintegrated] within the earth, will we indeed be [recreated] in a new creation?" Rather, they are, in [the matter of] the meeting with their Lord, disbelievers.
11. Say, "The angel of death will take you who has been entrusted with you. Then to your Lord you will be returned."
12. If you could but see when the criminals are hanging their heads before their Lord, [saying], "Our Lord, we have seen and heard, so return us [to the world]; we will work righteousness. Indeed, we are [now] certain."
13. And if We had willed, We could have given every soul its guidance, but the word<sup>1096</sup> from Me will come into effect [that] "I will surely fill Hell with jinn and people all together.
14. So taste [punishment] because you forgot the meeting of this, your Day; indeed, We have [accordingly] forgotten you. And taste the punishment of eternity for what you used to do."
15. Only those believe in Our verses who, when they are reminded by them, fall down in prostration and exalt [God] with praise of their Lord, and they are not arrogant.
16. Their sides part [i.e., they arise] from [their] beds; they supplicate their Lord

<sup>1092</sup> *As-Sajdah*: Prostration.

<sup>1093</sup> See footnote to 2:1.

<sup>1094</sup> See footnote to 2:19.

<sup>1095</sup> i.e., element of life. See footnote to 15:29.

<sup>1096</sup> Deserved by the evildoers.

- in fear and aspiration, and from what We have provided them, they spend.<sup>1097</sup>
17. And no soul knows what has been hidden for them of comfort for eyes [i.e., satisfaction] as reward for what they used to do.
18. Then is one who was a believer like one who was defiantly disobedient? They are not equal.
19. As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, for them will be the Gardens of Refuge as accommodation for what they used to do.
20. But as for those who defiantly disobeyed, their refuge is the Fire. Every time they wish to emerge from it, they will be returned to it while it is said to them, "Taste the punishment of the Fire which you used to deny."
21. And We will surely let them taste the nearer punishment<sup>1098</sup> short of the greater punishment that perhaps they will return [i.e., repent].
22. And who is more unjust than one who is reminded of the verses of his Lord; then he turns away from them? Indeed We, from the criminals, will take retribution.
23. And We certainly gave Moses the Scripture, so do not be in doubt over his meeting.<sup>1099</sup> And We made it [i.e., the Torah] guidance for the Children of Israel.
24. And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were patient and [when] they were certain of Our signs.
25. Indeed, your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that over which they used to differ.
26. Has it not become clear to them how many generations We destroyed before them, [as] they walk among their dwellings? Indeed in that are signs; then do they not hear?
27. Have they not seen that We drive the water [in clouds] to barren land and bring forth thereby crops from which their livestock eat and [they] themselves? Then do they not see?
28. And they say, "When will be this conquest,<sup>1100</sup> if you should be truthful?"
29. Say, [O Muhammad], "On the Day of Conquest the belief of those who had disbelieved will not benefit them, nor will they be reprieved."
30. So turn away from them and wait. Indeed, they are waiting.

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<sup>1097</sup> In the cause of God.

<sup>1098</sup> i.e., the disasters and calamities of this world.

<sup>1099</sup> i.e., Muhammad's meeting Moses on the night of *al-Mi'rāj* (ascent).

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<sup>1100</sup> Or "decision," i.e., judgement.