

Sūrah 45: al-Jāthiyah

Period of Revelation

The period of the revelation of this Sūrah also has not been mentioned in any authentic hadith, but its subject matter clearly shows that it was revealed consecutively after Sūrah ad-Dukhān. The close resemblance between the contents of the two Sūrahs makes them look like the twin Sūrahs.

Subject Matter and Topics

It answers the doubts and objections of the disbelievers of Makkah about Tawhid (Oneness of God) and the Hereafter and warns them for their attitude that they had adopted against the message of the Qur'ān.

The discourse begins with the arguments for Tawhid (Oneness of God). In this connection, reference has been made to the countless Signs that are found in the world, from man's own body to the earth and heavens, and it is pointed out that everywhere around him man finds things which testify to Tawhid which he refuses to acknowledge. If man sees carefully the variety of animals, the day and night, the rainfall and the vegetation thereby, the winds and his own creation, and ponders over them intelligently, without prejudice, he will find these Signs sufficiently convincing of the truth that this universe is not Godless, nor under the control of many gods, but it has been created by One God, and He alone is its Controller and Ruler. However, the case of the person who is determined not to acknowledge and wants to remain involved in doubts and suspicions is different. He cannot be blessed with the faith and conviction from anywhere in the world.

A little below, in the beginning of the second section, it has been reiterated that the things man is exploiting in the world, and the countless forces and agencies that are serving his interests in the universe, did not come into being just accidentally, nor have they been provided by the gods and goddesses, but it is One God alone, Who has supplied and subjected these to him from Himself. If only a person uses his mind properly and rightly, his own intellect will proclaim that God alone is man's real Benefactor and He alone deserves that man should pay obeisance to Him.

After this, the disbelievers of Makkah have been taken to task and reproved for their stubbornness, arrogance, mockery and insistence on disbelief with which they were resisting the invitation of the Qur'ān; they have been warned that this Qur'ān has brought the same blessing which had been granted to the children of Israel before, by virtue of which they became distinguished above all the people of the world. Then, when they failed to recognize the true worth of this blessing and disputed their religion and lost it, this blessing now has been sent to them. This is such a code of guidance which shows the clear highway of Religion to man. The people who would turn it down by their own folly, would only prepare for their own doom, and only such people would become worthy of God's succor and mercy who would adopt obedience to it and lead a life of piety and righteousness.

In this connection, the followers of the Prophet have been instructed that they should forbear and pardon the absurd and foolish behavior towards them of the people fearless of God, for if they showed patience God Himself would deal with their opponents and would reward them for their fortitude.

Then, there is a criticism of the erroneous ideas that the disbelievers hold about the Hereafter. They said that life was only this worldly life and there was no life hereafter. Man dies in the course of time just as a watch stops functioning suddenly. The body is not survived by any soul, which might be seized and then breathed again into the human body some time in the future. In this regard, they challenged the Prophet, saying: "If you lay a claim to this, then raise our dead forefathers back to life." In answer to this, God has given the following arguments:

1. “You do not say this on the basis of any knowledge but are uttering this grave thing on the basis of conjecture. Do you really have the knowledge that there is no other life after death, and the souls are not seized but are annihilated?”
2. “Your claim rests mainly on this: that you have not seen any dead person rising back to life and returning to the world. Is this basis strong enough for a person to make a claim that the dead people will never rise to life? When you do not experience and observe a thing, does it mean that you have the knowledge that it does not exist at all?”
3. It is utterly against reason and justice that the good and the bad, the obedient and the disobedient, the oppressor and the oppressed, should be made equal ultimately. Neither a good act should bear a good result nor an evil act an evil result; neither the grievances of the oppressed be redressed nor the oppressor be punished, but everyone should meet with the same fate ultimately. Whoever has formed this view about the universe of God, has formed a patently wrong view. The unjust and wicked people adopt this view because they do not want to face the evil results of their deeds, but this world of God is not a lawless kingdom; it is rather a system based on the Truth, in which there can be no question of the injustice of regarding the good and the bad as equal.
4. That the creed of the denial of the Hereafter is highly destructive of morals. This is adopted only by such people as are the slaves of their lusts, and for the reason that they should have full freedom to serve their lusts. Then, when they have adopted this creed, it goes on making them more and more perverse till at last their moral sense becomes dead and all avenues of guidance are closed against them.

After giving these arguments God says most emphatically: “Just as you did not become living of your own accord, but became living by Our power, so you do not die of your own accord, but die when We send death on you. And a time is certainly coming when you will all be gathered together. If you do not believe in this because of your ignorance and folly today, you may not; when the time arrives, you will see for yourself that you are present before your God and your whole book of conduct is ready accurately, which bears evidence against each of your misdeeds. Then you will come to know how dearly has your denial of the Hereafter and your mockery of it cost you.”

Sūrah 45: al-Jāthiyah¹³⁶⁴

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

1. Hā, Meem.¹³⁶⁵
2. The revelation of the Book is from God, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.
3. Indeed, within the heavens and earth are signs for the believers.
4. And in the creation of yourselves and what He disperses of moving creatures are signs for people who are certain [in faith].
5. And [in] the alternation of night and day and [in] what God sends down from the sky of provision [i.e., rain] and gives life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and [in His] directing of the winds are signs for a people who reason.
6. These are the verses of God which We recite to you in truth. Then in what statement after God and His verses will they believe?
7. Woe to every sinful liar
8. Who hears the verses of God recited to him, then persists arrogantly as if he had not heard them. So give him tidings of a painful punishment.
9. And when he knows anything of Our verses, he takes them in ridicule. Those will have a humiliating punishment.
10. Before them¹³⁶⁶ is Hell, and what they had earned will not avail them at all nor what they had taken besides God as allies. And they will have a great punishment.
11. This [Qur'ān] is guidance. And those who have disbelieved in the verses of their Lord will have a painful punishment of foul nature.
12. It is God who subjected to you the sea so that ships may sail upon it by His command and that you may seek of His bounty; and perhaps you will be grateful.
13. And He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth - all from Him. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.
14. Say, [O Muhammad], to those who have believed that they [should] forgive those who expect not the days of God [i.e., of His retribution] so that He may recompense a people¹³⁶⁷ for what they used to earn.
15. Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against it [i.e., the self or soul]. Then to your Lord you will be returned.
16. And We did certainly give the Children of Israel the Scripture and judgement¹³⁶⁸ and prophethood, and We provided them with good things and preferred them over the worlds.

¹³⁶⁴ *Al-Jāthiyah*: Kneeling (in dread of the Judgement).

¹³⁶⁵ See footnote to 2:1.

¹³⁶⁶ See footnote to 14:16.

¹³⁶⁷ In the Hereafter, where those who forgive will be rewarded and those who earned evil will be punished. This was at the outset of *da'wah* (invitation to God) before permission for *jihad*.

¹³⁶⁸ Understanding of the law.

17. And We gave them clear proofs of the matter [of religion]. And they did not differ except after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves. Indeed, your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that over which they used to differ.
18. Then We put you, [O Muhammad], on an ordained way concerning the matter [of religion]; so follow it and do not follow the inclinations of those who do not know.
19. Indeed, they will never avail you against God at all. And indeed, the wrongdoers are allies of one another; but God is the protector of the righteous.
20. This [Qur'ān] is enlightenment for mankind and guidance and mercy for a people who are certain [in faith].
21. Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death?¹³⁶⁹ Evil is that which they judge [i.e., assume].
22. And God created the heavens and earth in truth and so that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.
23. Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and God has sent him astray due to knowledge¹³⁷⁰ and has set a seal upon his hearing and his heart and put over his vision a veil? So who will guide him after God? Then will you not be reminded?
24. And they say, "There is not but our worldly life; we die and live,¹³⁷¹ and nothing destroys us except time." And they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming.
25. And when Our verses are recited to them as clear evidences, their argument is only that they say, "Bring [back] our forefathers, if you should be truthful."
26. Say, "God causes you to live, then causes you to die; then He will assemble you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt, but most of the people do not know."
27. And to God belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. And the Day the Hour appears - that Day the falsifiers will lose.
28. And you will see every nation kneeling [from fear]. Every nation will be called to its record [and told], "Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do."
29. This, Our record, speaks about you in truth. Indeed, We were having transcribed¹³⁷² whatever you used to do."
30. So as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them into His mercy. That is what is the clear attainment.
31. But as for those who disbelieved, [it will be said], "Were not Our verses re-

¹³⁶⁹ Another meaning is "...[the evildoers being] equal in their life and their death," i.e., unresponsive to guidance.

¹³⁷⁰ This can refer to God's knowledge of that person and of his preference for his own inclinations or to that person's knowledge of the truth while he refuses it.

¹³⁷¹ i.e., some people die and others live, replacing them.

¹³⁷² By recording angels.

cited to you, but you were arrogant and became a people of criminals?

32. And when it was said, 'Indeed, the promise of God is truth and the Hour [is coming] - no doubt about it,' you said, 'We know not what is the Hour. We assume only assumption, and we are not convinced.'"
33. And the evil consequences of what they did will appear to them, and they will be enveloped by what they used to ridicule.
34. And it will be said, "Today We will forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours, and your refuge is the Fire, and for you there are no helpers.
35. That is because you took the verses of God in ridicule, and worldly life deluded you." So that Day they will not be removed from it, nor will they be asked to appease [God].
36. Then, to God belongs [all] praise - Lord of the heavens and Lord of the earth, Lord of the worlds.
37. And to Him belongs [all] grandeur within the heavens and the earth, and He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.