

Sūrah 64: at-Taghābun

Period of Revelation

Muqatil and Kalbi say that it was partly revealed at Makkah and partly at Madinah. Abdullah bin Abbas and Ata bin Yasar say that v. 1-13 were revealed at Makkah and v. 14-18 at Madinah. But the majority of commentators regard the whole of the Sūrah as a Madinan Revelation. Although there is no internal evidence to help determine its exact period of revelation, yet a study of its subject matter shows that it might probably have been sent down at an early stage at Madinah. That is why it partly resembles the Makkah Sūrahs and partly the Madinan Sūrahs.

Theme and Subject Matter

The theme of this Sūrah is invitation to the Faith and obedience (to God) and the teaching of good morals. The sequence followed is that the first four verses are addressed to all men; verses 5-10 to those men who do not believe in the invitation of the Qur'ān; and verses 11-18 to those who accept and believe in this invitation. In the verses addressed to all men, they have been made aware in a few brief sentences of the four fundamental truths:

First, that the universe in which they live is not Godless, but its Creator, Master and Ruler is an All Powerful God, and everything in it testifies to His being most Perfect and absolutely faultless.

Second, that the universe is not without purpose and wisdom, but its Creator has created it with truth; no one should be under the delusion that it is a mock show, which began without a purpose and will come to an end without a purpose.

Third, that the excellent form that God has created you with and the choice that He has given you to choose between belief and unbelief is not a useless and meaningless activity so that it may be of no consequence whether you choose belief or unbelief. In fact, God is watching as to how you exercise your choice.

Fourth, that you have not been created irresponsible and unanswerable. You have to return ultimately to your Creator, and have to meet the Being who is aware of everything in the universe, from Whom nothing is hidden, to Whom even the innermost thoughts of the minds are known.

After stating these four fundamental truths about the Universe and Man, the address turns to the people who adopted the way of unbelief, and their attention is drawn to a phenomenon which has persisted throughout human history, namely that nation after nation has arisen and ultimately gone to its doom. Man by his intellect and reason has been explaining this phenomenon in a thousand ways, but God tells the real truth and declares that the fundamental causes of the destruction of the nations were only two.

First, that they refused to believe in the Messengers whom He sent for their guidance, with the result that God too left them to themselves, and they invented their own philosophies of life and went on groping their way from one error to another.

Second, that they also rejected the doctrine of Hereafter, and thought this worldly life to be an end in itself, and that there was no life hereafter when they would have to render an account of their deeds before God. This corrupted their whole attitude towards life, and their impure morals and character so polluted the world that eventually the scourge of God itself had to descend and eliminate them from the scene.

After stating these two instructive truths of human history, the deniers of the message of Truth have been admonished to wake up and believe in God, His Messenger and the Light of Guidance that God has sent

in the form of the Qur'ān if they want to avoid the fate met by the former peoples. Besides, they have been warned that the Day shall eventually come when all the former and the latter generations will be collected at one place and the fraud and embezzlement committed by each will be exposed before all mankind. Then the fate of each man will be decided finally on the basis as to who had adopted the path of the Faith and righteousness and who had followed the way of disbelief and denial of the Truth. The first group shall deserve eternal Paradise and the second shall be doomed to everlasting Hell. Then, addressing those who adopt the way of the Faith, a few important instructions have been given:

First, that whatever affliction befalls a person in the world, it befalls him by God's leave. Whoever in this state of affliction remains steadfast to the Faith, God blesses his heart with guidance; otherwise although the affliction of the one who in confusion or bewilderment turns away from the path of the Faith, cannot be averted except by God's leave, yet he becomes involved in another, the greatest affliction of all, namely that his heart is deprived of the guidance of God.

Secondly, that the believer is not required to affirm the faith with the tongue only, but after the affirmation of the Faith he should practically obey God and His Messenger. If he turns away from obedience he would himself be responsible for his loss, for the Messenger of God has become absolved from the responsibility after having delivered the message of Truth.

Thirdly, that the believer should place his trust in God alone and not in his own power or some other power of the world.

Fourthly, that the worldly goods and children are a great trial and temptation for the believer, for it is their love which generally distracts man from the path of faith and obedience. Therefore, the believers have to beware some of their children, and wives lest they become robbers for them on the Way of God directly or indirectly; and they should spend their wealth for the sake of God so that their self remains safe against the temptations of Satan.

Fifthly, that every man is responsible only to the extent of his power and ability. God does not demand that man should exert himself beyond his power and ability. However, the believer should try his best to live in fear of God as far as possible, and should see that he does not transgress the bounds set by God in his speech, conduct and dealings through his own negligence.

Sūrah 64: at-Taghābun¹⁵⁶⁷

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

1. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is exalting God.¹⁵⁶⁸ To Him belongs dominion, and to Him belongs [all] praise, and He is over all things competent.
2. It is He who created you, and among you is the disbeliever, and among you is the believer. And God, of what you do, is Seeing.
3. He created the heavens and earth in truth and formed you and perfected your forms; and to Him is the [final] destination.
4. He knows what is within the heavens and earth and knows what you conceal and what you declare. And God is Knowing of that within the breasts.
5. Has there not come to you the news of those who disbelieved before? So they tasted the bad consequence of their affair, and they will have a painful punishment.
6. That is because their messengers used to come to them with clear evidences, but they said, "Shall human beings guide us?" and disbelieved and turned away. And God dispensed [with them]; and God is Free of need and Praiseworthy.
7. Those who disbelieve have claimed that they will never be resurrected. Say, "Yes, by my Lord, you will surely be resurrected; then you will surely be informed of what you did. And that, for God, is easy."
8. So believe in God and His Messenger and the light [i.e., the Qur'ān] which We have sent down. And God is Acquainted with what you do.
9. The Day He will assemble you for the Day of Assembly - that is the Day of Deprivation.¹⁵⁶⁹ And whoever believes in God and does righteousness - He will remove from him his misdeeds and admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.
10. But the ones who disbelieved and denied Our verses - those are the companions of the Fire, abiding eternally therein; and wretched is the destination.
11. No disaster strikes except by permission of God. And whoever believes in God - He will guide his heart. And God is Knowing of all things.
12. And obey God and obey the Messenger; but if you turn away - then upon Our Messenger is only [the duty of] clear notification.
13. God - there is no deity except Him. And upon God let the believers rely.
14. O you who have believed, indeed, among your wives and your children are enemies to you, so beware of them. But if you pardon and overlook and forgive - then indeed, God is Forgiving and Merciful.

¹⁵⁶⁷ *At-Taghābun*: Deprivation, another name for the Day of Judgement. See footnote 1569.

¹⁵⁶⁸ See footnote to 57:1.

¹⁵⁶⁹ "*At-Taghābun*" suggests having been outdone by others in the acquisition of something valued. That Day, the disbelievers will suffer the loss of Paradise to the believers.

-
15. Your wealth and your children are but a trial, and God has with Him a great reward.
 16. So fear God as much as you are able and listen and obey and spend [in the way of God]; it is better for your selves. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful.
 17. If you loan God a goodly loan, He will multiply it for you and forgive you. And God is Most Appreciative and Forbearing,
 18. Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.