

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Recitation, tafseer and lessons from Surat (90) AL-Balad.  
(The City)

Tafseer and Lessons:-

15 Nov. 2008

1. This sura touches on a large number of facts

which are of central importance in human life.

2. The sura opens with a forceful vow (1-4)

The city is Makka, the sacred House of Allah which was the first temple ever to be <sup>built</sup> erected on this earth as a place of peace where people put down their weapons and forget their quarrels. They meet outside in peace, each is sacred to all.

Even the plants, the birds and all the creatures that happen to be there, all are enjoying full security

3. Allah then honoured His prophet 'Mohamed' by mentioning him and his residence in Makkah, a fact which adds more honour and glory.

3. Then Allah mentioned Prophet Ibrahim and His son Ismail i.e the founder of the House and his offering.

This can be also a general statement, which may be taken as an introduction to the discussion of the nature of man, which is the subject matter of the Sura.

4. The oath reaffirms an intrinsic fact in human life which is "man's life is a process of continued hardship that never ends.

~ No sooner does the first living cell settle in mother's womb that it starts to encounter affliction and to work in order to prepare <sup>for</sup> itself the right conditions for its survival with the permission of its Lord. It continues to do so until the process of birth which is difficult for both the baby and the mother.

If you watch the baby, every new step or movement is attended by suffering i.e

when the baby starts to learn the breast feeding or the bottle one, then when he begins to crawl and walk. Thus affliction continues with teething, developing the abilities of standing up, walking firmly, learning and thinking. Then struggle takes different forms.

3 One person strive to achieve a position of Power, the other struggle for the sake of Allah and the third for the sake of wealth, desires or ideology. One strives to achieve no more than Hell and another strives for Paradise. Every one is carrying his own burden and climbing his own hills to arrive finally to Allah.

Affliction, the life foremost characteristic, takes various forms and shapes, but it is always judged by

its final results. The loser is the one who ends up suffering more affliction in the Hereafter and the winner is the one whose striving qualifies him to be released from his affliction and ensures him the ultimate repose under his Lord's shelter.

4 Then from Verse (5 → 10)

Having established this fact concerning human nature and life, the sura goes on to discuss some of the claims that man makes. This creature, man always forgets his real nature and become so arrogant with what Allah has given him of power, ability, skill and prosperity that he behaves as if he is not accountable for what he does. He is always an oppressor, trying to collect wealth by any means and when he is called to spend for good causes, he

says "I have given more than enough".

• In reality, man is arrogant because he feels himself powerful but he is granted his power by Allah. He is mean with his wealth while Allah is the real Owner of the wealth and He is the Provider.

5 • And so, the Quran puts before man the bounties Allah has bestowed upon him, which are manifested in his make up abilities

• These are the favours bestowed on man to help him to follow the Right Path: his eyes with which he recognizes the signs, verses, proofs

and the facts all over the universe that prove the Oneness of Allah. His tongue and lips

which are his means of speech and

expression. These are the favours which

the believer must use to believe and to obey Allah.

Mu'ath Ibn Jabal said " I was with the Prophet on a journey. One day I was walking beside him, when I said " Messenger of Allah, point out to me something I may do to take me to Paradise, and keep me away from Hell! " He said: " you have indeed asked about something great, yet it is quite attainable by those for whom Allah has made it easy. Worship Allah assigning Him no partner, offer your prayers regularly, pay out what is due to the poor of your money, fast in the Month of Ramadan and offer Pilgrimage (Hajj). "

The prophet then said " Shall I point out to you the gates of good? " - I said " Yes, Messenger of Allah please do. " He said " Fasting is a safeguard and a means of protecting yourself, charity erases your errors just as

water extinguishes a burning fire, and your praying in the late hours of the night is the sign of piety." He then recited the verse, (those who forsake their beds as they call on their Lord in fear and hope, and who give in charity of what

We have bestowed on them. No soul knows what bliss and comfort is in store for these as reward for their labours). The Prophet then went on

7 " Shall I tell you what the heart of the matter is, its backbone and its highest grade? I said " Yes Messenger of Allah please do ". He said:

" The heart is Islam, submission to Allah, the backbone is the prayer and the highest grade is to struggle for the cause of Islam<sup>1)</sup>. He then

said " Shall I tell you what commands all these? " I said: " Yes Messenger of Allah

Please do." He said " Control this " as he

pointed to his tongue. I said "Are we, Prophet of Allah, really accountable for what we say?" He said "Watch what you are saying, for what else people are dragged on their faces in the Hell apart from what their tongues yield?"

The meaning then from (10 → 20)

1. Then Allah explains the "Ascent" which is

"that stands between man and the paradise,"

If he crosses it, he will arrive" i.e. the obstacle depriving man of Paradise.

2. Then Allah mentions examples of actions that were totally lacking at the time of Revelation, i.e.

The freeing of the slaves and the feeding of the orphan

and the ~~poor~~ <sup>yet</sup> also their implications are general.

Regarding orphans, it was mentioned in the

Quran, regarding the rules of <sup>kind</sup> inheritance

treatment and the care of their wealth.



• These acts are followed by the widest and most important act of all : the true believe in Allah and the counselling of each other, the support of each other and to enjoin each other to be merciful. This is the main responsibility of the believers so that they can have a muslim Community."

This idea is central to the concept of the religion of Islam which is a religion and a way of life of a community,

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• So these are the believers who will <sup>scale</sup> ascend the ascend, they shall have their dwelling place on the right hand, which indicates a happy life in Paradise.

• As for those who deny the Revelations, they dwell on the left hand, which indicates their degradation and disgrace as the Hell will close above them. These people cannot scale the ascent

M.S. - 16 Nov. 2008. Houston