

The Tafsīr of Sūrat Al-Kawthar (Chapter - 108)

Which was revealed in Al-Madīnah and They also say in Makkah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

﴿إِنَّا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَىكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ۝ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرْ ۝ إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ﴾

- ﴿1. Verily, We have granted you Al-Kawthar.﴾
- ﴿2. Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice.﴾
- ﴿3. For he who hates you, he will be cut off.﴾

Muslim, Abu Dāwud and An-Nasā'ī, all recorded from Anas^[1] that he said, "While we were with the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ in the Masjid, he dozed off into a slumber. Then he lifted his head smiling. We said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! What has caused you to laugh?' He said,

«لَقَدْ أَنْزِلَتْ عَلَيَّ آيَةُ سُورَةٍ»

«Verily, a Sūrah was just revealed to me.»

Then he recited,

﴿إِنَّا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَىكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ۝ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرْ ۝ إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ﴾

«Verily, We have granted you Al-Kawthar. Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice. For he who hates you, he will be cut off.»

Then he said,

«أَتَذَرُونَنِي مَا الْكَوْثَرُ؟»

«Do you all know what is Al-Kawthar?»

^[1] Muslim 1:300, Abu Dāwud 5:110, and An-Nasā'ī in *Al-Kubrā* 6:533.

We said, 'Allāh and His Messenger know best.' He said,

«فَإِنَّ نَهْرَ وَعْدِيهِ رَبِّي عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، عَلَيْهِ خَيْرٌ كَثِيرٌ، هُوَ حَوْضٌ تَرِدُ عَلَيْهِ أُمَّتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، أَنْتَهُ عَذُّ الشُّجُومِ فِي السَّمَاءِ، فَيُخْتَلَجُ الْعَبْدُ مِنْهُمْ فَأَقُولُ: رَبِّ إِنَّهُ مِنْ أُمَّتِي، فَيَقُولُ: إِنَّكَ لَا تَذَرِي مَا أَخَذْتَ بِعَدَاكَ»

«Verily, it is a river that my Lord, the Mighty and Majestic, has promised me and it has abundant goodness. It is a pond where my Ummah will be brought to on the Day of Judgement. Its containers are as numerous as the stars in the sky. Then a servant of Allāh from among them will be (prevented from it) and I will say: "O Lord! Verily, he is from my Ummah (followers)." Then He (Allāh) will say: "Verily, you do not know what he introduced (or innovated) after you."»^[1]

This is the wording of Muslim.

Aḥmad recorded this Ḥadīth from Muḥammad bin Fuḍayl, who reported from Al-Mukhtār bin Fulful, who reported it from Anas bin Mālīk.^[2]

Imām Aḥmad also recorded from Anas that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«دَخَلْتُ الْجَنَّةَ فَإِذَا أَنَا بِنَهْرٍ حَافَتَاهُ خِيَامُ اللَّؤْلُؤِ، فَضَرَبْتُ بِيَدِي إِلَى مَا يَجْرِي فِيهِ الْمَاءُ، فَإِذَا مِنْكَ أَذْفَرُ، قُلْتُ: مَا هَذَا يَا جِبْرِيلُ؟ قَالَ: هَذَا الْكَوْثَرُ الَّذِي أَعْطَاكَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ»

«I entered Paradise and I came to a river whose banks had tents made of pearls. So I thrust my hand into its flowing water and found that it was the strongest (smell) of musk. So I asked, "O Jibril! What is this?" He replied, "This is Al-Kawthar which Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic has given you."»^[3]

Al-Bukhārī recorded this in his Ṣaḥīḥ, and so did Muslim, on the authority of Anas bin Mālīk. In their version Anas said, "When the Prophet ﷺ was taken up to the heaven, he said,

«أَنْتَبْتُ عَلَى نَهْرٍ حَافَتَاهُ قِيَابُ اللَّؤْلُؤِ الْمُجَوَّفِ قُلْتُ: مَا هَذَا يَا جِبْرِيلُ؟ قَالَ: هَذَا

^[1] Muslim 1:300.

^[2] Aḥmad 3:102.

^[3] Aḥmad 3:103.

الْكَوْثَرُ

«I came to a river whose banks had domes of hollowed pearl. I said: "O Jibrīl! What is this?" He replied: "This is Al-Kawthar."»^[1] This is the wording of Al-Bukhārī.

Aḥmad recorded from Anas that a man said, "O Messenger of Allāh! What is Al-Kawthar?" He replied,

«هُوَ نَهْرٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ أَغْطَانِيهِ رَبِّي، لَهُوَ أَشَدُّ بَيَاضًا مِنَ اللَّبَنِ، وَأَخْلَى مِنَ الْعَسَلِ، فِيهِ طُيُورٌ أَغْنَانُهَا كَأَغْنَانِ الْجُرُزِ»

«It is a river in Paradise which my Lord has given me. It is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey. There are birds in it whose necks are (long) like carrots.»

Umar said, "O Messenger of Allāh! Verily, they (the birds) will be beautiful." The Prophet ﷺ replied,

«أَكْلُهَا أَنْعَمُ مِنْهَا يَا عُمَرُ»

«The one who eats them (i.e., the people of Paradise) will be more beautiful than them, O 'Umar.»^[2]

Al-Bukhārī recorded from Sa'īd bin Jubayr that Ibn 'Abbās said about Al-Kawthar, "It is the good which Allāh gave to him (the Prophet)." Abu Bishr said, "I said to Sa'īd bin Jubayr, 'Verily, people are claiming that it is a river in Paradise.'" Sa'īd replied, "The river which is in Paradise is part of the goodness which Allāh gave him."»^[3]

Al-Bukhārī also recorded from Sa'īd bin Jubayr that Ibn 'Abbās said, "Al-Kawthar is the abundant goodness."»^[4] This explanation includes the river and other things as well. Because the word Al-Kawthar comes from the word Kathrah (abundance) and it (Al-Kawthar) linguistically means an abundance of goodness. So from this goodness is the river (in Paradise).

Imām Aḥmad recorded from Ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

[1] Al-Bukhārī no. 4946.

[2] Aḥmad 3:220.

[3] Faṭḥ Al-Bārī 8:603.

[4] Aṭ-Ṭabari 24:647.

«الْكَوْثَرُ نَهْرٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ حَافَتَاهُ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ، وَالْمَاءُ يَجْرِي عَلَى اللُّؤْلُؤِ، وَمَاؤُهُ أَشَدُّ بَيَاضًا مِنَ اللَّبَنِ، وَأَخْلَى مِنَ الْعَسَلِ»

«Al-Kawthar is a river in Paradise whose banks are of gold and it runs over pearls. Its water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey.»^[1]

This *Hadīth* was recorded in this manner by At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Abi Ḥātim and Ibn Jarīr. At-Tirmidhi said, “*Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ*.”^[2]

Then Allāh says,

﴿فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَحْسِرْ﴾

«Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice.»

meaning, ‘just as We have given you the abundant goodness in this life and the Hereafter – and from that is the river that has been described previously – then make your obligatory and optional prayer, and your sacrifice (of animals) solely and sincerely for your Lord. Woship Him alone and do not associate any partner with him. And sacrifice pronouncing His Name alone, without ascribing any partner to Him.’ This is as Allāh says,

﴿قُلْ إِن صَلَائِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١﴾ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَلَئِكَ أُورِثُ ﴿٢﴾ وَآزِلُ الشَّيْطَانِ ﴿٣﴾﴾

«Say: “Verily, my *Ṣalāh*, my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allāh, the Lord of all that exists. He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.”» (6:162-163)

Ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Aṭā, Mujāhid, Ikrimah and Al-Ḥasan all said, “This means with this the *Budn* should be sacrificed.”^[3] Qatādah, Muḥammad bin Ka’b Al-Quraẓi, Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk, Ar-Rabī, ‘Aṭā’ Al-Khurāsāni, Al-Ḥakam, Ismā’īl bin Abi Khālīd and others from the Salaf have all said the same.^[4] This is the

[1] Aḥmad 2:67. See Al-Bukhārī 4965.

[2] *Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhī* 9:294, Ibn Mājah 2:1450, and Aṭ-Ṭabari 24:650.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 24:653.

[4] Aṭ-Ṭabari 24:654.

opposite of the way of the idolators, prostrating to other than Allāh and sacrificing in other than His Name. Allāh says,

﴿وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَتَّىٰ يَخْرُجَ إِلَيْكُم مِّنْهُ وَلَئِنَّكُمْ لَفِى شَيْءٍ لَّا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

﴿And do not eat from what Allāh's Name has not been pronounced over, indeed that is Fisq.﴾ (6:121)

The Enemy of the Prophet ﷺ is Cut Off

Allāh says,

﴿إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ﴾

﴿For he who hates you, he will be cut off.﴾ meaning, 'indeed he who hates you, O Muḥammad, and he hates what you have come with of guidance, truth, clear proof and manifest light, he is the most cut off, meanest, lowliest person who will not be remembered.'

Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Sa'īd bin Jubayr and Qatādah all said, "This *Āyah* was revealed about Al-Āṣ bin Wā'il.^[1] Whenever the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ would be mentioned (in his presence) he would say, 'Leave him, for indeed he is a man who is cut off having no descendants. So when he dies he will not be remembered.' Therefore, Allāh revealed this *Sūrah*."^[2] Shamir bin 'Aṭiyah said, "This *Sūrah* was revealed concerning 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'ayt."^[3]

Ibn 'Abbās and 'Ikrimah have both said, "This *Sūrah* was revealed about Ka'b bin Al-Ashraf and a group of the disbelievers of the Quraysh."^[4]

Al-Bazzār recorded that Ibn 'Abbās said, "Ka'b bin Al-Ashraf came to Makkah and the Quraysh said to him, 'You are the leader of them (the people). What do you think about this worthless man who is cut off from his people? He claims that he is better than us while we are the people of the place of pilgrimage, the people of custodianship (of the *Ka'bah*), and the people who supply water to the pilgrims.' He replied, 'You

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 24 :656, and 657.

[2] Ibn Hishām 2 :7.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 24 :657.

[4] Aṭ-Ṭabari 24 :657.

all are better than him.' So Allāh revealed,

﴿إِن شَاءَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ﴾

﴿For he who hates you, he will be cut off.﴾”

This is how Al-Bazzār recorded this incident and its chain of narration is authentic.^[1]

It has been reported that ‘Atā’ said, “This Sūrah was revealed about Abu Lahab when a son of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ died. Abu Lahab went to the idolators and said, ‘Muhammad has been cut off (i.e., from progeny) tonight.’ So concerning this Allāh revealed,

﴿إِن شَاءَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ﴾

﴿For he who hates you, he will be cut off.﴾” As-Suddi said, “When the male sons of a man died the people used to say, ‘He has been cut off.’ So, when the sons of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ died they said, ‘Muhammad has been cut off.’ Thus, Allāh revealed,

﴿إِن شَاءَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ﴾

﴿For he who hates you, he will be cut off.﴾”

So they thought in their ignorance that if his sons died, his remembrance would be cut off. Allāh forbid! To the contrary, Allāh preserved his remembrance for all the world to see, and He obligated all the servants to follow his Law. This will continue for all of time until the Day of Gathering and the coming of the Hereafter. May the blessings of Allāh and His peace be upon him forever until the Day of Assembling.

This is the end of the *Tafsīr* of Sūrat Al-Kawthar, and all praise and blessings are due to Allāh.

[1] *Kashf Al-Astār* 3 :83.