

Tafseer Surah Quraysh (قریش)

Notes on Nouman Ali Khan's Concise Commentary of the Quran

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Introduction

- Some of the companions viewed this surah and the one before it (Surah al-Fil) as one surah. They would not recite the Basmallah between them for that reason. It is also possible that they did this in order to highlight the strong connection between them
 - They both need to be understood together because they complement each other and are grammatically connected
 - Surah al-Fil discusses the security of Mecca and this surah discusses its prosperity. For any society to prosper, it needs both of these things
 - We need to understand that the safety and prosperity of Mecca was due to the supplication of Ibrahim (pbuh), which he made when he was building the Ka'ba with his son Ismaeel (pbuh)
 - He had asked Allah to make Mecca safe and fill it with all kinds of fruit because it was a barren desert without life. He requested safety because in the desert you are more susceptible to be attacked by looters
 - Due to the fact that the Quraysh were considered the custodians of the Ka'ba, they would be left alone when traveling in the desert because of the respect the Arabs had for the Ka'ba
- The objective of this surah and the one before it is to show Allah's favors on the Quraysh so that they worship Him in gratitude and become His slaves
- Why were they called Quraysh?
 - There a number of reasons suggested:
 - They were originally different tribes but unified all together under one name
 - They were people who could not be overpowered. They were very powerful in the peninsula
 - They were called this due to their business and constant trading in the land

Tafseer of the Verses

1. [He did this] to make the Quraysh feel secure

- a. As mentioned in the introduction, this verse is a continuation of the discussion from the previous surah. It is as if to say that Abraha's army was destroyed, as discussed in the previous surah, for the convenience of Quraysh so that they could be safe
 - i. After the army was destroyed, the Quraysh were considered sacred people in Arabia and their repute as custodians of the Ka'ba through Divine decision became solidified, therefore, no one in the peninsula would mess with them

- b. The Arabic word *eelaaf* (feel secure)
 - i. Linguistically, it means to make love happen between two immediately. Something so powerful happens that it makes your heart immediately soften
 - 1. The implication here in the context is that Allah has granted so many favors to the Quraysh, especially with regards to defeating Abraha's army with a Divine punishment, that their hearts should soften immediately towards Allah's servitude
 - a. This teaches us that our hearts need to become soft before turning to Allah

2. Secure in their winter and summer journeys

- a. Meaning Allah destroyed Abraha's army so that the Quraysh could do their business travels in safety and not be threatened by his army
 - i. The Quraysh used to travel in the winter and summer months to do business outside of Mecca
 - 1. They would be safe crossing the Arabian desert from even other tribes due to their status as being custodians of the Ka'ba
- b. Why use the word *rihla* (journey)
 - i. It means a journey in which you carry a lot of baggage. Specifically, they used to travel with lots of bags to sell
 - 1. The implication in this verse is that despite them carrying a lot of bags on their journeys, they are still safe from robbers in the desert
- c. They used to travel to Yemen in the winter and Syria in the summer every year

3. So let them worship the Lord of this House

- a. Meaning how shocking is it that despite Allah's favors upon the Quraysh, they still refuse to worship the Lord of the Ka'ba
- b. Another meaning is that because Allah granted them all these favors which soften the heart, they should worship Him
- c. The Ka'ba is emphasized because it is because of that very building that all of the blessings are coming to the Quraysh
- d. This verse also shows us that the proper way to thank Allah for His blessings is to enslave yourself to Him. Verbal gratitude alone is not enough

4. Who provides them with food to ward off hunger, safety to ward off fear

- a. This is the central message of this surah and the previous one (Surah al-Fil)
 - i. This surah is speaking about prosperity while the previous one spoke about security
 - ii. The implication here is that the only reason all of the favors were given to Quraysh was so that their hearts could become soft
- b. One of the reasons Allah gave them such security and prosperity was so that they do not need to be too preoccupied with the worldly life and can focus more on worship
- c. Why did Allah emphasize that He provided them with food to ward off hunger?
 - i. He is telling them that despite the fact that Mecca is a desert which does not grow food, He has provided them with provisions so that they are not hungry