



The Thinking Muslim

# SURAH AL-KAWTHAR EXPLAINED

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# INTRODUCTION TO AL-KAWTHAR

- This surah is about the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) being given spiritual goodness
- This is one of the few surahs which exclusively addresses the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) from beginning to end
- Why it was revealed?
  - One of the enemies from Quraysh told the Prophet (pbuh) that because he did not have any sons, he would be cut off after his death
    - This surah was sent down as a response and defense for him



# VERSE 1

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ

Indeed, We have granted you, [O Muhammad], al-Kawthar

## Explanation:

- The surah starts with emphasis to ascertain that no doubt is left in the listener's mind as to what the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is given
- The Arabic word أعطى
  - Carries the following meanings:
    - To give what is not expected
    - To give more than what is expected
  - The past tense is used to emphasize that it is a done deal even though it will take place in the future. It is guaranteed for him



# VERSE 1

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ

Indeed, We have granted you, [O Muhammad], al-Kawthar

## Explanation:

- The Arabic word al-Kawthar الكوثر
  - Linguistically, it means the abundant good, the great good, etc.
    - Arabs used to use this word to emphasize when something was so great that it was beyond their imagination or to indicate a great abundance of something
  - It was also used to indicate the following:
    - When someone had a lot of followers
    - For a leader that had lots of good to offer
    - A huge dust cloud in the desert during a sandstorm
  - There are many opinions regarding the exact nature of this al-Kawthar
    - The opinion about the pond is widely accepted as the most correct one



# VERSE 2

## فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرْ

So pray to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone]

### Explanation:

- Meaning to pray (salah) before your Master and for His sake. When it is time for salah, there is no one else and the focus is Allah alone. This is what the Prophet (pbuh) is being told
  - He is being told to take care of his relationship with Allah
    - Salah is one the things that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is constantly told to do in all cases. He is told to do salah whether things are going bad or good. It is as if he is being told that just focus on salah and Allah will take care of the rest



## VERSE 2

### فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأُحِرْ

So pray to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone]

#### Explanation:

- The Arabic word صلاة
  - Linguistically, it means to soften something and then straighten it out
    - In the context of salah, it means to soften and straighten out the hearts
- The Arabic word نحر
  - The upper body slicing of an animal
    - It is referring to the days of Hajj because we do the salah of Eid al-Adha and then go to perform sacrifice



# VERSE 3

إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ

Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off

## Explanation:

- The Arabic word شَانِئٌ  
  - It refers to an enemy that has a deep seated hatred
    - This enemy completely despises you and there is no cure for it
  - Some said it is referring to the Prophet's (pbuh) uncle Abu Lahab while others said it is referring to Abu Jahl
- The Arabic word الْأَبْتَرُ  
  - Arabs used it to refer to someone who had sons and daughter but all of the sons died out and only the daughters remained



# VERSE 3

إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ

Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off

## Explanation:

- The Arabic word الأبتَرُ
  - Why were they considered cut off? Because of the following reasons:
    - Daughters did not get inheritance share
    - Daughters did not carry the family name
      - So for them it was like their legacy was forgotten



# CONCLUSION OF AL-KAWTHAR

- There is a difference of opinion whether this surah was revealed in response to some of the Meccans accusing the Prophet (pbuh) of being cut off after the death of his son Qasim, Abdullah, or Ibrahim
- Allah is telling his Prophet (pbuh) that his enemies are the ones that will be cut off and not him
  - Meaning their influence, money, land, etc. will be cut off
    - Some scholars also said that it means their hearts will be cut off from guidance