



SURAH AL FALAQ

Introduction to the last two Suras of the Quran

We learn from Ahadith that these Suras should be oft-recited, at least every morning and evening. The companion Syeduna Uqba was taught by the Prophet ﷺ 'Recite these two Suras whenever you lie down and whenever you rise'¹

Umm ul Momineen Syeda Aisha reported that the Prophet ﷺ would read these two suras, blow on his two hands and pass them over his head, face and front of the body. When he ﷺ was too ill Syeda Aisha would read them and take the Prophet's ﷺ hands and pass them over his body.² Ibn Katheer states that she used the Prophet's ﷺ hands because of the barakah (blessing) of his hands.

These final two chapters of the Quran are two supplications and pleas for refuge, shelter and protection. They are thus known as the *Muawwizatain* (the two shelters). Both suras were revealed at the same time, the distinction between the two being that the first, Al Falaq, is a plea for protection from the dangers to one's physical well being whilst the second, An Naas, seeks shelter from the dangers to one's spiritual well being.

The Prophet ﷺ said there were no Suras like these (two) for the one seeking refuge³. After their revelation the Prophet was overjoyed for both of them together were a comprehensive refuge for all matters.⁴

These two suras teach the human to seek the assistance, help and refuge of the entity which is the Most High, Most Grand and Most Powerful. The One which knows well the humans enemies, who is not only aware of their plots and schemes but also has the means to destroy and counter such plots.⁵

Tafseer Dhiyaa ul Quran explains the rationale for these two suras being at the end of the Quran; the Quran is a comprehensive manual of life for the human and a road map to his salvation. However on this journey the traveller faces ever present enemies seeking every opportunity to bring him harm and derail him. Some of these enemies will seek to destroy him physically; whilst others will be bandits after his Imaan. The human will have to deal with and overcome all these enemies at the same time. So after giving the complete manual and roadmap and with the human ready to begin his journey, Allah ﷻ gives him two suras as

¹ Tafseer Ibn Katheer from Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud and Nasai

² Tafseer Ibn Katheer

³ Tafseer Ibn Katheer, Tafseer Qurtubi from Nasai.

⁴ Tafseer Kabeer

⁵ Tafseer Dhiyaa ul Quran

provision for this journey so ‘Having sought Allah’s ﷻ complete refuge the human can set off on his journey with confidence and security.’⁶

Tafseer of Sura Al Falaq

Ibn Kathir describes this Sura as ‘A secure refuge and Cure for ills’. The Prophet ﷺ taught this sura to the companion Uqba and said that no sura was more beneficial for him with Allah than this⁷.

الفلق The literal definition of Falaq is to rip and is used to describe the daybreak for it rips through the darkness of the preceding night⁸.

Several other meanings and interpretations of falaq have been mentioned. Ibn Abbaas states that it has been said that it refers to a well or a valley in Hell⁹. Al Hubuli Abu Abdur Rahman said that it is one of the names of Hell¹⁰, whilst Ibn Katheer lists a few of the different meanings mentioned; such as Ibn Abbass’ statement that falaq refers to Creation or Kaab Akhbaar’s view that it is a place in hell which when its gate is opened the people of hell scream from the intensity of the heat (from it)¹¹... but (he concludes that) the most accepted opinion is that of Morning, as related by Ibn Jareer and Bukhari¹². Qurtubi also concludes that morning is the statement of many of the companions and scholars¹³.

Imam Qurtubi also supports this meaning by proving that the Arabs use Falaq to refer to daybreak/morning by quoting verses of Arabic poetry.

أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ***Say I seek refuge with the Rabb il Falaq (lord of the Daybreak)***

In the first verse the human is being taught to seek refuge of the Lord of the Daybreak.

Dhiyaa ul Quran discusses very elegantly the reason for referring to Allah ﷻ by the title ‘Lord of Daybreak’ for the Quran could have used countless other titles to describe Him so what is the wisdom in specifying the Lord of the Daybreak.

‘We are told to seek the refuge of the Lord of the Daybreak, He who turns the darkness of night into the brightness of day, the deserted nights into the hustling day, the frightful night into the joyous day ... and just as He can bring this transformation He can also transform

⁶ Tafseer Dhiyaa ul Quran

⁷ Tafseer Ibn Katheer

⁸ Tafseer Dhiyaa ul Quran. Tafseer Jalaalayn also describes it as the daybreak and morning.

⁹ Tafseer Ibn Abbaas

¹⁰ Tafseer Qurtubi

¹¹ Whilst Tafseer Ruh il Bayaan and Qurtubi states that a companion (Syeduna Kaab in Qurtubi) stated that Falaq was a house in Hell, when whose door opened all the inhabitants of Hell screamed Abdullah bin umar is narrated to have said it is a tree in hell (Qurtubi)

¹² Tafseer Ibn Katheer

¹³ Tafser Qurtubi mentions them as Jaabir bin Abdullah, Hassan, Saeed bin Jabeer, Mujaahid, Qataada and Ibn Zaid.

your despondent and empty hearts into joyful and content hearts. He can transform the darkness of your life into happiness.¹⁴

In other words any one who has the power to bring such a complete transformation from night to day surely has the power to transform your life and safeguard you from the evil dangers.

Daybreak and dawn are also associated with relief, so we are taught to seek refuge in the Lord or Creator of relief. ‘Ulama state that the coming of dawn changes heaviness into lightness and sorrow into happiness. Experience bears witness that the one in pain in the early part of the night finds relief towards the end of the night’¹⁵.

It is narrated that when Syeduna Yusuf was thrown into the well he hurt his knee and was in great pain. At dawn Allah sent Jibril to him who advised him to supplicate to Allah. Yusuf told Jibril to supplicate and he would say Aameen. Thus they did so and Allah gave relief to Yusuf. After regaining his health Yusuf said to Jibril ‘I will now supplicate and you say Aameen’ and supplicated to Allah ﷻ that all those in distress be given relief at that same time of the day. ‘Thus every sick person is given some relief at this time of the night’¹⁶.

It is also possible that dawn is the time of when most people in distress, sadness and desperation supplicate to Allah ﷻ thus we seek refuge form the Lord of the time when the distressed supplicate. It could also be because that time has a special prayer.¹⁷

An important etiquette is found here; the supplicator should remember his lord with the attribute most appropriate to his need¹⁸. For example if one is seeking forgiveness he should call out to the Ghafoor (the Most forgiving) and if he is seeking mercy he should call out to the Rahman (the Most Merciful).

مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ (I seek refuge) From the evil of what He created

In this realm there are two types of being; the creator and the creation. There is only one creator, the Almighty Allah, everything else is His creation so in this verse we seek Allah’s ﷻ protection from the evil of every being, save Him. Ibn Katheer confirms that this verse refers to the whole of creation including Hell, Iblis and his progeny¹⁹. Jalaalayn mentions that it refers to both animate and inanimate beings, including poison etc.

There is great wisdom in seeking such a blanket protection; we have been taught to seek refuge from the evil of all of creation, not any one specific creation. This is actually a sign of His boundless mercy and benevolence ‘Because there are things we are unaware of, some creatures of Allah ﷻ about whom we have no knowledge... there are also some things that

¹⁴ Tafseer Dhiyaa ul Quran

¹⁵ Tafseer Ruh ul Biyaan

¹⁶ Tafseer Kabeer

¹⁷ Tafseer Kabeer

¹⁸ Tafseer Nur ul Irfaan

¹⁹ Tafseer Ibn Katheer and Tafseer Qurtubi. Qurtubi mentions that Hell has also been mentioned as the subject of this verse

we think are good for us but are actually bad for us. Therefore forget the specific detail, leave that for Allah ﷻ ... He is the creator, He will know what harm each one can do.²⁰

وَمِن شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ From the evil of the night when it overcomes

Although in the previous verse we have sought a comprehensive protection, from the evil of everything, we are now taught to seek protection from the evil of three specific beings. The Mufasireen explain the reason for this specification after the comprehensive plea 'it is because of the severity of their evil'²¹ and 'because we need to be continuously seeking protection from them for they occur a lot'²².

Gaasiq (Night)

There are several meanings of Gaasiq but the most accepted usage of it here is in the meaning of night or darkness.

Ibn Zaid states that Gaasiq is when the Suriya star declines and with its decline illnesses prevail and when it rises illnesses lift. Some Mufassireen say that Gaasiq refers to the Moon based on the hadith of Aisha narrated in Musnad Ahmed 'The Prophet ﷺ pointed towards the moon and told her to seek refuge from the evil of the Gaasiq'²³ However Ibn Katheer concedes that both of these meanings could symbolise the night as both the stars and the Moon appear at night²⁴.

Zia ul Quran adds further specification and states that it is not just any night but a specific type or part of the night. 'It is 'Al lail ul Mudhlim', the dark night or that part of the night when darkness is at its most intense and immerses everything.'²⁵ Jalaalayn mentions it is the night in which the moon disappears, again symbolizing a very dark period of time.

Not only is this part of the night the most frightening but it also gives opportunity and cover for those wishing to carry out their evil, for example steal, murder, and rape. It is also the time when the victim is most ignorant, lost in dreamland and unaware of what he is being subjected. It is also the time when there are less helpers around to help him.²⁶

Another meaning of gaasiq mentioned is the lunar eclipse when the moon disappears during the eclipse or when it disappears towards the end of the lunar month for this is the time when most magic is done. This reveals that certain times are ill fated and Allah tells us to seek protection from such times²⁷.

²⁰ Tafseer Dhiyaa ul Quran

²¹ Tafseer Jalaalayn

²² Tafseer Ruh ul Biyaan

²³ Tafseer Qurtubi mentions this hadith from Tirmidhi

²⁴ Tafseer Ibn Katheer

²⁵ Tafseer Dhiyaa ul Quran

²⁶ Tafseer Dhiyaa ul Quran

²⁷ Tafseer Nur ul Irfaan

The night is a time when the human should take care; the Prophet ﷺ ordered not to travel in the early part of the night, to hide kitchen utensils, close the doors and stop the children going outside the house²⁸.

Izzaa Waqab (when it overcomes)

Literally means the concealing or disappearance of something.²⁹

If we take Gaasiq to mean night the complete verse means when the night overwhelms everything or covers everything, which is the dead of the night when darkness is most intense.

***وَمِن شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ* From the evil of the women who blow onto knots**

We have been taught to seek protection from the evil of the women who blow onto knots.

Nafathaat is the plural of Nafaatha and refers to a very light spit(tle) or discharge. Imam Ibn Manzoor states that *Tafala* is to spit lightly whilst *Nafatha* is subtler and is more like blowing.³⁰

***Aqad* (Blow onto knots)**

When people cast spells, they recite words, tie a knot(s) in a piece of string and blow upon it. Just as the Quran's recitation has beneficial effects, these evil spells and words have a negative effect e.g. the story of Haaroot and Maaroot tells that people cast spells to break up husbands and wives.³¹ This verse reveals that there is effect in the words of magicians. Consequently there must also be effect in blowing after reciting the name Allah, thus reciting verses and tying knots is permissible³².

The Mufasssireen have noted that Nafathaat is the feminine noun. Usually when a general term is required the masculine noun is used to denote both men and women. However here the feminine term is used and the scholars explain that it could be because most magic is either performed or initiated by women³³.

Another additional reason for Nafathaat could be that it specifically refers to Lubeed's daughters³⁴.

Dhiyaa ul Quran explains why we should seek protection from such spells, 'No one of us knows if there is a wretched person out there conniving to put a spell on us or ready to pay someone to do so. Thus we are told to specifically ask Allah ﷻ to protect us from the evil

²⁸ Tafseer Ruh ul Biyaan

²⁹ Tafseer Ruh ul Biyaan

³⁰ Tafseer Dhiyaa ul Quran

³¹ Tafseer Dhiyaa ul Quran

³² Tafseer nur ul Irfaan

³³ Tafseer Dhiyaa ul Quran

³⁴ Tafseer Nur ul Irfaan

of the magic merchants. In effect we are saying ‘O Allah I cannot protect myself from them so You protect me.’³⁵

وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ From the evil of the envier when he envies

Jalaalayn adds that it is when the envier acts in accordance with his envy.

Hasad is defined as ‘To wish for another’s blessing or virtue to be transferred to you or, (at least), he be deprived of it.’³⁶

Hasad has been specifically mentioned because it is the worst and lowest level of human character³⁷. The Prophet ﷺ said ‘there are three whose dua is not accepted; the one who eats haraam, the one who backbites a lot and the one who has *Gill* (spite) or Hasad in his heart for the muslims.’³⁸ Hasad does not benefit the muslim, the Prophet said ‘The believer is happy whilst the hypocrite is envious’³⁹

In addition envy is harmful because it often does not remain a simple wish, the envier busies himself in plotting and undertaking acts to make his wish a reality. Qaabeel murdered Haabeel because of Hasad and also Abu Jahal and the other Quraysh refused to accept the Prophet because of Hasad.⁴⁰ Jalaalayn mentions that the Jews were envious of the Prophet ﷺ and Lubid was from among the Jews.

This evil sin of Hasad was first undertaken in the Heavens by Iblis and on the earth by Qaabeel and everyone knows their fate!⁴¹

We are asked to seek refuge from the evil of the enviers because ‘it is fact that whenever a person is bestowed a blessing from Allah ﷻ, immediately people begin to envy and burn. ... The human cannot tell who is envious of him or what they are plotting. Even if he becomes aware of what they are plotting he might not be able to stop them.’⁴² Thus one should constantly seek Allah’s refuge from these envious people.

Tafseer Nul ul Irfaan concludes that there are numerous lessons in this sura:

- Magic and its effects are a reality
- Magic can have an effect on the Prophet’s ﷺ body in the same way as a sword or arrow and this concept is not contrary to Prophethood.
- To counter magic Dua, permissible taaweez and mantra are lawful.
- Allah ﷻ protects the mind of the Prophet so that his mission of Tableegh (preaching) is unaffected.

³⁵ Tafseer Dhiyaa ul Quran

³⁶ Tafseer Dhiyaa ul Quran et al

³⁷ Tafseer Nur ul Irfaan and Dhiyaa ul Quran

³⁸ Tafseer Qurtubi

³⁹ Tafseer Qurtubi

⁴⁰ Tafseer Dhiyaa ul Quran

⁴¹ Tafseer Nur ul Irfaan

⁴² Tafseer Dhiyaa ul Quran

- Hair and broken combs should not be thrown out, but should be put in a secure location as a great deal of magic is cast upon them.

This sura tells us that Magic and Hasad are two very evil acts because they were specifically mentioned after the seeking of protection from general evil.⁴³



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⁴³ Tafseer Nur ul Irfaan