

Q114

091

سورة الشمس

al-Shams

The Sun



فاطمة
Q Fatima

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SURATUSH SHAMS

Suratul Shams consists of 15 ayaat.

It was revealed in Makka and is the 91st sura of the Qur'an.

Benefits

Recite for increase in sustenance, popularity and courage

To remove intense grief recite 7x with Suratul Layl

Recite on water (to drink) to cure fever

SURATUL SHAMS (91)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا

I swear by the sun and its brilliance,

وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّاهَا

And the moon when it follows the sun,

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّاهَا

And the day when it shows it,

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا

And the night when it draws a veil over it,

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا

And the heaven and Him Who made it,

وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا

And the earth and Him Who extended it,

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا

And the soul and Him Who made it perfect,

فَأَلَّهَمَّهَا فَحُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

Then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it;

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

He will indeed be successful who purifies it,

وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

And he will indeed fail who corrupts it.

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَاهَا

Samood gave the lie (to the truth) in their inordinacy,

إِذِ انْبَعَثَ أَشْقَاهَا

When the most unfortunate of them broke forth with

فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا

So Allah's messenger said to them (Leave alone) Allah's she-camel, and (give) her (to) drink.

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذَنبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاهَا

But they called him a liar and slaughtered her, therefore their Lord crushed them for their sin and levelled them (with the ground).

وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاهَا

And He fears not its consequence.

AYAAT 1 & 2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا

I swear by the sun and its brilliance,

وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَاهَا

And the moon when it follows the sun,



The sun is the most prominent feature in our solar system. It is the largest object and contains approximately 98% of the total solar system mass. One hundred and nine Earths would be required to fit across the Sun's disk, and its interior could hold over 1.3 million Earths. The Sun has a temperature of 6,000°C (11,000°F). This layer has a mottled appearance due to the turbulent eruptions of energy at the surface.

Solar energy is created deep within the core of the Sun. Energy generated in the Sun's core takes a million years to reach its surface. Every second 700 million tons of hydrogen are converted into helium ashes. In the process 5 million tons of pure energy is released; therefore, as time goes on the Sun is becoming lighter.

The sun is therefore the primal source of energy.

The term 'dhuha' originally means 'those hours of the morning which follow shortly after sunrise', and, here, it means 'the full brightness of the sun'. The particular emphasis put on the term 'dhuha' is for its importance, when the glory of sunlight extends brightness over the horizon.

The sun of knowledge of our path is Rasulullah (S.A.W.). Spiritually he is the source of energy. It is only by following his path that the

darkness of ignorance can be dispelled. It is a constant fathomless energy.



The light of the moon is actually a reflection of the light from the sun. So on a full moonlit night, we're actually getting sunlight that's bouncing off the moon. The moon rises and sets each day as it orbits the earth, even on the nights when there appears to be no moon. The age of the moon is approximately 4.6 billion years old, about as old the earth. The moon has no water and no atmosphere, but it does have an iron core (like the earth).

At different times of the month, the moon can appear as a crescent, half circle, or full. These are the different phases of the moon. These phases of the moon are determined by the position of the sun and how it is reflecting off the moon's spherical surface, with respect to our view of the moon.

In the picture, the bright crescent is light from the Sun, reflecting off the moon's surface. But also, the dark portion of the moon seems to be slightly illuminated. That is caused from sunlight reflected off the earth and hitting the dark side of the moon. In other words, the sun shines on the earth, some light is reflected and shines on the moon, and then that light is reflected again from the dark part of the moon.

The sun of knowledge of our path is Rasulullah (S.A.W.). Spiritually he is the source of energy. It is only by following his path that the darkness of ignorance can be dispelled. It is a constant fathomless energy. Those who follow in the footsteps of Rasulullah (S.A.W.) are like the moon in that at best, we reflect part of the prophetic path. Reflections follow the light of day and echoes follow sound,. This is the relationship between the Creator and the human being.

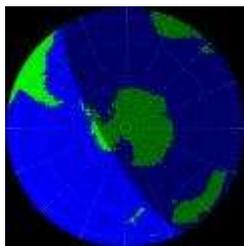
AYAAT 3 & 4

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّاهَا

And the day when it shows it,

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا

And the night when it draws a veil over it,



The solar system and all its planets are in constant motion. Each of the planets revolves around the sun. The planets also rotate, or spin, around an internal axis. One manifestation of rotation is the cycle of night and day. Day after day, month after month, year after year, the alternation of night and

day continues. Sometimes it is sunny outside, and other times it is dark. In addition to rotation, day and night occur because the earth is spherical. When a portion of the earth faces the sun, it is daytime. When the same are rotates away from the sun, it is nighttime. The cycle of light and dark is continuous except near the North and South Pole. During the Northern Hemisphere summer, the North Pole always faces the sun, so daytime is continuous for several weeks. At the same time, the South Pole faces away from the sun (Southern Hemisphere winter) and is in continuous night.

It might refer to the time when inner knowledge shines forth in the heart making the heart open so that it seen nothing but tawheed – reality.

In this existence night comes and covers the light of day; whilst the darkness of ignorance covers those who have the potential of awakening to knowledge.

AYAAT 5 & 6

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا

And the heaven and Him Who made it,

وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا

And the earth and Him Who extended it,

The word 'banaa' means 'build or construct'. From it comes the word 'ibn' 'ibnah' – son and daughter.

The term tahaaha is derived from tahw meaning 'to spread'. It also means 'to repel' Here it means to 'spread or expand', because: Our attention is drawn to the perfection of the systems to contemplate the Creator.



The creation of the heavens with its heavenly bodies and their regularities, is one of the manifestations of Allah might and wisdom which none else, besides Him, could ever produce.

The Earth, which is a cradle of life for Man and all living creatures, with all its wonders; mountains, seas, valleys, forests, springs, rivers, mines, and other precious sources, is a collection of the Divine Signs, each of which, if studied intelligently, is an evidence of His might and wisdom, and more important than the Earth is the Creator of the Earth Who spreads it out.

The earth was totally submerged under water at the beginning and then, gradually the water subsided into the low lands causing high points of land to appear and spread which is called 'dahw-ul-ard'.

The earth was totally in the form of high and low lands with steep slopes that were uninhabitable. Continuous heavy rains washed the high lands and, thereby, filled the valleys, so, little by little, dry

level lands appeared, becoming suitable for Man to live and farm on.

Imam Ali (A.S.) describes the creation of the heavens and the earth in Sermon 1 of Nahjul Balagha

“....Then Allah created the wind.....intensified its movement and spread it far and wide. Then He ordered the wind to raise up deep waters and to intensify the waves of the oceans. So the wind churned it like the churning of curd and pushed it fiercely till its level was raised and the surface was full of foam. Then He raised the foam and made from it the seven skies and made the lower one as stationary and the upper one as protective ceiling without any pole to support it or nail to hold it together. Then He decorated them with stars and the light of meteors and hung in it the shining sun and effulgent moon under the revolving sky.....”

AYAAT 7 & 8

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا

And the soul and Him Who made it perfect,

فَاللَّهُمَّهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

Then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it;

The literal translation of the word 'nafs' from the Arabic is 'self', and, in fact, nafs contains the entire spectrum of meanings included in the English word 'self' (the entity 'I'). The nafs is by far the most important element of our existence. It contains within it the essence of the heart, the intellect, the drives and the witness. We have seen how it evolves from the original self, the fitra, from the fusion of heaven and earth.

Allah tells us, first of all, that we are all created from one nafs, one self. This, as we have seen, means that we all share a basic original design. God then tells us that He created from this one self its opposite, or pair, which means the duality represented by man and woman.

Existence is based on opposites: for every manifested reality, every experience, every feeling, there is its opposite. If this was not so, we would not understand or experience the meaning of anything. We only understand wetness because we also know what dryness means, day because of night, health through illness, good because of bad, and so on.

Every person contains within him two opposing elements -- the movement toward transgression and the movement towards piety. But awareness comes through recognizing boundaries and through the knowledge that transgression will cause us only affliction and danger.

The spectrum of self is composed of three main degrees, ranging from the highest to the lowest.

The Commanding Self (Nafsul Ammara)

The lowest level of nafs is called the commanding self. It is the grossest, the most treacherous, the most solid. The name implies that this self commands one to do whatever comes to mind, like a brutal tyrant. It acts entirely upon selfish motives. Neither emotional, nor rational, nor intellectual appeals get through to people in whom this self predominates. They are totally without guilt and nothing will stop them from acting out their whims. This nafs is solidified in its selfishness.

وَمَا أُبْرِيءُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي إِنَّ
رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

And I do not declare myself free, most surely (man's) self is wont to command (him to do) evil, except such as my Lord has had mercy on, surely my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful. Suratu Yusuf - 12:53.

It is the most stubborn and selfish states of the nafs which commands to evil. Neither compassion nor reason appeals to this nafs. He/she thinks of him/herself and as long as his/her wants are satisfied and he/she can get away it. Then it is 'all right'. The longer the nafs remains in this state the more it solidifies and the less the chances of change.

Kibr (pride) is the major illness of the nafs which leads to the state of Ammara. It hides one's shortcomings from one's view thus preventing their removal.

... كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ قَلْبٍ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ

“...thus does Allah seal every proud arrogant heart.”. 40:35 This nafs will not listen to reason nor rationality. It is purely whimsical.

The Blaming (or Reproachful) Self (Nafsul Lawwama)

The second level is the blaming self. At this level, the hardened heart occasionally softens and a ray of conscience enters in. This self occasionally questions its wrong actions. This questioning indicates a crack in the solidity of the egoism of the self, allowing a beam of light to shine upon its reality and to occasionally reflect. It's root is 'Lawm' which is to reproach (constructively criticise). It means that the thick skin enveloping the nafs (Ammara) occasionally cracks open a little and a ray of light enters in (guilty conscience). Allah in the Qur'an swears by Nafsul Lawwama emphasising it's importance.

وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ

Nay! I swear by the scolding soul. 75:2

Nafsul Lawwama is one's personal preacher. Imam Ali (A.S.) - "He who is not granted a preacher within him/herself, will not be affected by other's preaching." Onus to listen to Lawwama is upon oneself.

Slightly higher on the scale is the nafs whose conscience is pricked because of its bad behaviour. As a result, it blames itself for being extreme and may be spurred into positive action in order to do something about its dismal condition.

The Certain Self - Nafs al-mutma'inna

When the nafs al-lawwama is brought under control, it is on the road to contentment, to becoming nafs al-mutma'inna This self is certain that it will come to faithfully reflect the fitra in time, with diligence, commitment, honesty, companionship and applying the

right prescriptions. It will increase in its certainty that it has come from beyond time; that it is only here to learn, to experience and to be poised for that final, incredible journey out of the prison of its body.

'Itminaan' means certainty and trust. The nafs is therefore at peace (content).

Allah addresses the nafs al-mutma'inna in the Qur'an:

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ

O soul that art at rest!

ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَةً

Return to your Lord, well-pleased (with him), well-pleasing (Him),

فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي

So enter among My servants,

وَادْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي

And enter into My garden. Suratul Fajr -89:29.

In other words, God is telling this nafs to enter into a zone of contentment that is within itself. The root of contentment lies inside each of us so that we may recognize it within creation and become instruments of contentment for others.

These models or states of the self are only hooks for the mind to latch on to, so we can say, 'This is my lower self, my selfishness, arrogance or vanity.' All of us possess negative qualities. The only difference is that the man of spiritual insight will immediately see his arrogance, vanity or selfishness and seek refuge in the Creator.

He will recognize the negative tendencies within him and their destructive potential.

The nafs is like a thief, the more we see it the more it runs away. Where is our anger? Once we have seen it, it disappears. What about our irrational insecurity? The problems we had last year have disappeared; our current ones will also disappear in time.

These patterns of the nafs are the shields that veil our eyes from the eternal truth. You and I hide the one and only Reality, which dwells in us all. But the way to recognize the infinite truth is by the recognition of the limited self. This is the meaning of 'He who knows himself knows his Lord.'

So we start by recognizing what goes on in ourselves; seeing that all our higher aspirations can only be achieved by recognizing the lower ones as they arise. The further we go on the path, the more we see everything disappear except the perfect beauty and mercy of our Rabb.

Each one of us must choose whether to utilize our God-given potential. Time is short and our tendency is to postpone a decision. But if we invest a little of our time in the spiritual life now, that investment will blossom. If we dedicate a small proportion of our time to God's purposes, our investment will be amply rewarded. Our life is our investment; we are its portfolio.

Having recognized our nafs pattern, everything becomes easier and lighter. As a result of that lightheartedness we begin to see the light of truth, for we are nothing other than the light.

Spiritual journey towards attaining Nafsul Mutmainna - One must have a determination to hold fast to the path that will stimulate the nafs to attain its goal. Abu Ali Sina (Avicenna) defines this as "...that longing which a human being feels when he/she finds him/herself lonely and helpless and wants to be united with the truth so that he/she may not have a feeling of loneliness and helplessness."

- ✚ Observing all the waajibaat and keeping away from all the muharrimaat.
- ✚ Spiritual exercise (riyadhat). In Arabic the word riyadhat means training a young horse. A daily programme with effective time management of reflection, nafila prayers, salatut tahajjud, Qur'an recitation and gaining knowledge. However, it must be with moderation, and continuance. Imam Sadiq (A.S.) "...Eiman has 10 degrees like the steps of a ladder which are climbed one by one. If you find anyone below you by one step, pull him/her up to you gently and do not burden him/her with what he/she cannot bear, or else you will break him/her."
- ✚ Continued tahara – try to be in a state of wudhu and/or ghusl.
- ✚ The spiritual traveller must constantly assess him/herself. Imam Musa ibn Ja'fer (A.S.) has said: "He who does not take account of him/herself once every day is not one of us."
- ✚ Less food, less sleep, less talk. Imam Sadiq (A.S.) - "There are 3 things that Allah does not like in a person : Too much sleeping, too much laughing and eating after the stomach is full." "The mu'min enjoys hunger. For him hunger is the food of the nafs." "Silence is a part of wisdom. It is a sign of every virtue."
- ✚ Remembrance of Allah - "
- ✚ Nahjul Balagha - Sermon 198 - A companion of Imam Ali (A.S.) called Hammam wanted signs of a virtuous person (one with nafsul mutmainna); he requested the explanation to be so vivid and graphic that he could visualise it. Some of the signs are: "...they have visualised mentally the glory of Allah in such a way that beyond Him nothing in this world frightens or overawes them....when

they come across an aya (in the Qur'an) describing Janna., they feel attracted towards it developing a keen desire to reach it, while an aya about Jahannam makes them feel if they are seeing and hearing the raging fire and the groans of those who are suffering it's tortures....." "You will find he/she is firm in faith, resolute though tender hearted and kind...he/she is greedy for knowledge...he/she forgives those who have harmed him/her fully knowing that they have wronged him/her....thought he/she does good deeds he/she feels nervous of his/her shortcomings....every night he/she thanks Allah for having passed one more day under His Rahma (mercy) and every morning he/she starts his/her day with dua...."

FOR FURTHER NOTES ON THE NAFS GO TO PLEASE REFER TO THE BOOK TITLED - **The Human Being**

AYAAT 9 & 10

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

He will indeed be successful who purifies it,

وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

And he will indeed fail who corrupts it.

Everything within the nafs has been inspired by Allah – they were there before birth. ‘Alhama’ means to inspire – Therefore good and evil tendencies have already been introduced into the nafs.

For the original self to evolve into a reality which is personal to each one of us, the nafs must be educated. The most effective way to attain the higher degrees of understanding is by learning the ability to harness the two natural drives of attraction and repulsion.

Every self has within it these driving forces: to us everything is either attractive or repulsive. All of our motivations are governed by either the desire for, or repulsion towards a situation, value or object. Whatever we do, whether with the body, mind or higher faculties, is subject to this push/pull mechanism. It is inherent in our nature. The word nafs is related to nafas, breathing - inhaling and exhaling. Even on this biological level, every organ in our body either takes in what is of use to it or rejects the waste or excess. Whatever we are thinking of we find either agreeable or disagreeable. If we smell a rose, we want to get closer and closer still. While nature has programmed the body to regulate itself to a certain extent, the nafs needs education. This is where standards of conduct come to our aid and regulate the nafs, until we become self-regulators, learning what damages us and what elevates us. Eventually we find that, of our own volition, we have fewer options, less choice. This is the ‘freedom of no choice’ that sincere

seekers have. We are only truly free from confusion once we are free of choices, when we know there is only one true avenue open to us.

One who strives towards purifying the nafs does it by recognising its impurity. This is when one reduces the energy and gratification of the lower nafs.

'Dassa' means to 'scheme, plot or conceal'. The love of this world secretly bedazzles us and we find we get drawn in and are held prisoner. 'Khaba' means to be 'dissatisfied or frustrated'. One is only dissatisfied when one has failed. Failure to reach our full potential.

AYAAT 11 to 15

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَاهَا

Samood gave the lie (to the truth) in their inordinacy,

إِذِ انْبَعَثَ أَشْقَاهَا

When the most unfortunate of them broke forth with

فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا

So Allah's messenger said to them (Leave alone) Allah's she-camel, and (give) her (to) drink.

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُم بِذَنبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاهَا

But they called him a liar and slaughtered her, therefore their Lord crushed them for their sin and levelled them (with the ground).

وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاهَا

And He fears not its consequence.

Prophet Saleh (A.S.) was sent to the people of Thamood. The tribe of Thamood were well to do people who lived in the valley of Hijr between Medina and Syria. They used to carve their homes of huge rocks in the mountains. The tribe of Thamood is also known as the second Aad. Allah had favoured them with wealth and bounties but they forgot him and worshipped idols.

Prophet Saleh (A.S.) preached to the people for a long time urging them to abandon their idols and to worship Allah. They used to annually worship a piece of the mountain offering sacrifices to it. They called Prophet Saleh (A.S.) to bring a sign from Allah to them if he was one of the truthful ones.

Allah sent as a sign to them a she-camel and it was commanded by Allah that the she-camel would drink all the water of the spring one day and the people of Thamood would drink from it one day.



Never had the people seen such a camel who drink all the water of the spring on alternate days but still would not abandon their idols. Prophet Saleh (A.S.) had also warned them that if they harmed the she camel they

would be punished by Allah.

Their pride and stubbornness however caused them to kill the she-camel.

They then came to Prophet Saleh (A.S.) and said

فَعَقَرُوا النَّاقَةَ وَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقَالُوا يَا صَالِحُ ائْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا
إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

So they slew the she-camel and revolted against their Lord's commandment, and they said:."O Saleh, bring us what you threatened us with if you are of the messengers" Suratul A'raaf - 7:77.

He asked them to repent (do tawbah) within three days but they only mocked him.

On the fourth day there was a thunder bolt from the sky and earthquake killing the people of Thamood. Prophet Saleh (A.S.) and his few followers escaped.

Prophet Saleh (A.S.) was greatly moved to see the dead bodies of his tribe and he returned and addresses the dead saying:

فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رِسَالَةَ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ
وَلَكِنْ لَا تُحِبُّونَ النَّاصِحِينَ

Then he turned away from them and said: "O my people, indeed I did deliver to you the message of my Lord and did warn you but you did not heed the warners" Suratul A'raaf - 7:79.

The message is very clear – if we do not even respect the sanctity of outward visible things that are sacred; how will we ever be able to know the sanctity of our own souls.

The people of Thamud denied what their Prophet (S.A.W.) told them – and this message was atest for them.

Imam Ali (A.S.) said: "For only one person killed the camel of Thamud, but Allah punished all of them, because all of them consented to it."

