

Surah Lahab [111] - Dream Student Notes - Nouman Ali Khan

Bismillah ArRahman ArRaheem

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Surat Lahab:

- Surah no. 111
- One of the shortest surahs in the Quran
- It is dedicated to **Abu Lahab** and his Wife
- **Allah has never dedicated a particular Surah to a particular enemy anywhere else in the Quran**
- Other enemy's such as Abu Jahl, and others were mentioned a few times but never by name



Question to be considered is:

- *Why is there this special emphasis given to this enemy of Islam?*
- *The placement of the surah*

Historical Background of Abu Lahab:

- He was one of the most famous and wealthiest people in Makkah (even before Islam)
- He was the treasure secretary at that time
- His original name is Abdul Uzzah
- His nickname is Abu Lahab.
 - Lahab is a red flame that flickers and gives off light
 - Abu doesn't literally mean father necessarily. When someone is affiliated or associated with something you can put Abu in front of their name.
 - Example: When Ali bin Abi Taleb was sleeping on the dust, the Prophet called him *Ya Aba Turaab*. Meaning he was covered in dust
 - Example: Abu Hurayrah was called that because he had a cat that he loved.
 - Abu Lahab was given this nickname because he had a reddish complexion in his skin. And this was considered as good looking
 - He had a powerful lineage. He was the grandson of Hashim.
 - He was the Uncle of the Prophet, and his father in law.

History of Urwah (wife of Abu Lahab)

- She was the granddaughter of Ummayyah
- She used to flaunt her status and family background
- Her nickname was Umm Jamil (beautiful)
- The city used to look up to this couple because of their good looks and high status

Negative side of Abu Lahab

- He was the next door neighbor of the Prophet and he would throw filth into the house of the Prophet whenever the Prophet used to read Quran
- He ordered his sons to divorce the daughters of the Prophet
- When the Prophet's son Qasim passed away, Abu Lahab came out of his house screaming and dancing. And he says ***Batara Muhammadun*** – Muhammed has had his lineage cut off
 - This was the death of a child in his own family and yet he celebrates
 - Even enemy's in battle do anything like this
 - This kind of hatred is not shared by any other enemy of Islam
 - This is one of the reasons why he was given this special dedication
 - He curses Islam by saying ***Taban li Hadha Ad-Deen*** he was invited to become Muslim
 - When the Prophet stood on the mountain and called everyone, he told them that he was a Prophet and a warner. Abu Lahab said to him, ***Taban Lak!***

Ayah 1:

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ

- Because **Abu Lahab** said Taban to the Prophet twice, it is said to him twice.
- When this Ayah was sent down, **Abu Lahab** use to make fun of it. He would go into public gatherings and he would take out his hands (because Allah said may his hands by destroyed) and he would sarcastically say **Taban Lakuma May you be destroyed**. Then he would say ***I don't see in you any signs from what muhammed said.***

Tabb:

- A past tense verb of Tabba
- The feminine form is used because 'hands' in Arabic are feminine
 - There's no it in Arabic
 - **Body parts that are in twos are feminine**
 - **Body parts that are singular are masculine**
 - Arabs used past tense for several reasons
 - One of them is when something is guaranteed
 - The past is associated with certainty, the future is not
 - **So Allah is saying that his hands being destroyed is guaranteed**
 - The second is to refer to a dua
 - That is why you'll sometimes find the ayah translated as **May both hands of Abu Lahab be destroyed**
 - You can pray for someone and you can pray against someone
- Tab literally means to break apart slowly or to collapse
 - Other similar words are ***infasama, inqadha, and taqada3ah***
- It is specifically used when something is falling apart little by little until it's completely destroyed
 - That kind of destruction is called tabaab
 - From Tabaab we get the verb tab
 - This means Allah is saying that **Abu Lahab** is not going to die an immediate death, rather he's going to die a slow and painful death
- Tab was used by the ancient arabs, they would go to a woman and ask her ***A shaabah am taabah*** (Are you a young woman or are you being destroyed)
 - They didn't say old woman, they said destroyed because they affiliated old age with you deteriorating slowly and slowly towards your destruction/demise (death)

Other meanings of Tabat

- **Tabat** = **Halakat** (die violently)
- **Tabat** = **Khasirat** (To suffer loss)
- **Tabat** = **Khaabat** (To go bad)
- **Tabat** = **Dhalat** (To go to waste)
- **Tabat** = **Safarat min kuli Khair** (To be completely void of any good)

Other names for **Flame**:

- **Shiwadh**
- **Nu7aas**
- **Maarij**
- **Sharar**

One reason why both hands of **Abu Lahab** are mentioned is because it is narrated that he once picked up a rock and tried to throw it at the Prophet Muhammed peace be upon him.

Tabat Yadahu: May both his hands be destroyed also includes his deen, dunya, the things he does, and their outcomes.

Tabat Yadahu: Your right hand is used to attack, and your left hand is used to defend. When Allah says may both his hands be destroyed this means that **he won't be able to attack anyone. And he won't be able to defend himself either.**

Abu Lahab's name:

- His real name is Abdul Uzzah, who was an idol/false god. **So Allah does not dignify him by mentioning the false god that he worshiped.** Also nobody is the slave of Uzzah so his name is a lie so Allah does not mention his name.
- Because he is of the people of the Fire and Allah is going to put him in a flame that is flickering red, why not call him by his nickname because **his nickname has now been given a new meaning.** Now when he is called **Abu Lahab**, he's not called that because he has redish skin or he looks good, but because he's going to be in a Lahab forever.

Wa Tab

- The first part is Dua (May his hands be destroyed)
 - There's no guarantee that it will happen
 - The second part – wa tab – is Khabr
 - It means that it is bound to happen. i.e. it is **guaranteed to happen**
 - **Abu Lahab** developed a very serious disease and he started developing a swelling in his body
 - His sons, servants, family, and friends all stayed away from his because they were afraid to catch the diseases from him
 - He's dying painfully and **slowly** and no one is there for him

- His corpse was lying there and no one wanted to touch it so his sons finally hire some Abyssinians who use logs to drag him into a pit and then throw stones at him to fill up his grave. They didn't even want to touch him either.
- Allah's promise came true - that he would die a **slow painful death**.

Ayah 2:

مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ

- His wealth and assets did not benefit him at all.
- There are different kinds of negations in Arabic. Ex. Lam Yughni
- The word 'ma' is strong: emphatic
 - It means not at all
 - It is always used to negate a countering idea.
 - He and Quraish believed that the biggest thing he had in his advantage was his wealth
 - This verse negates this belief
 - Since the past is used to guarantee something, this verse is not only saying that **His wealth and assets did not benefit him at all** it is also saying that it **will not benefit him**
 - Kasb: also includes children
 - So the ayah is also saying that your children will not benefit you either
 - Also Allah uses the third person 'him' instead of 'you'.
 - Allah does not dignify him by addressing him.
 - This is a tradition of Allah against the worst Kafir
 - Wa La Yukalimullah

Abu Lahab use to take pride in two things and **Allah took both of them away from him in this surah**

- His good looks (the disease he got was one of the skin)
- And his wealth (his wealth will never benefit him)

Ayah 3:

سَيَصَلَّىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ

- The tone has changed – now the ayah speaks about the future
- When the past tense is used it's usually used for the immediate future, something that will happen very soon (or something that will happen in this world/dunya)
- Meaning of Verse: Very soon he will be cast into a **flame** which has the quality of red flame or flicker. This is an attack against him – you like to be called by **flames**? Then that's what you'll get.
- The letter 'seen' is used here as a threat and warning

Umm Jamil:

- She was the granddaughter of Ummayyah and the sister of Abu Sufyan
- She had very high status and a noble lineage and she would show it off
- She and **Abu Lahab** were a **high class celebrity couple** in Makah

She use to grab her necklace when she saw the Prophet and she would swear by Lat and Uzzah that she would spend the necklace to complete her animosity against the Prophet.

Ayah 4:

وَأَمْرَاتِهِ حَمَالَةَ الْحَطَبِ

- Now the surah starts talking about his wife Umm Jamil
- The word **Imra'ah**
 - There are two words for wife in the Quran. Imra'ah and Zawj
 - The two functions of marriage are, one to increase good in society and decrease evil, and number two, children.
 - When any of these things is missing Allah uses Imra'ah.
 - And when they're both there he uses Zawj.

- In this situation, they have harmony and children but **two negatives can't make a positive** [except in math]
- They didn't increase good in society so Allah uses the word Imra'ah
- Because the word Wamra'atuhu is marfoo' (has dhamma) it is a second khabr
 - This means the ayah is saying: He will be cast into a flame and so will his wife
 - They tag team in this dunya and in the akhira
- The word **7amalata**
 - The word is mansoob (has fat7a)
 - There are 16 reasons why a word can have a fat7a on it
 - One of the reasons is shatm – condemnation/curse/anger
 - This is a way of Allah mentioning her in disgust and the disgust is captured in the fat7a
 - Allah uses 7amaalah instead of 7amilah to indicate that she will keep on carry it
 - 7amaalah comes from Fa3aalah
 - It's also used to indicate one's profession
 - The slave girls who use to bring in the wood were called 7amaalat al-7adab, and Umm Jamil use to think of her self as being way over them but Allah degrade her and brings her down as if to say I don't care of your status in society. If you mess with the Prophet then you don't deserve anything like that

Ayah 5:

فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ

- She use to call the prophet Mudhamam (the one who is condemned)
- She use to also make poetry against the Prophet
 - Mudhamaman Qalayna – We are tired of him (mudhamam)
 - Wa Deenahu Abayna – And his religion we have rejected
 - Wa 7ukmahu 3asayna – And his rule we will always disobey
 - The Prophet use to say that they're making fun of someone called Mudhamam and that his name was Muhammed (someone who is praised and thanked)

When a dog is barking, there's no wisdom in barking back

When people start talking obnoxiously and ignorantly the worst thing you can do is respond

We have to learn to recognize a bark for a bark and an intellectual criticism as an intellectual criticism

Two themes are coming to a conclusion in surah lahab

- One theme has to do with **Abu Lahab**
- The second has to do with Umm Jamil

Four different kinds of disbelievers:

1. A friendly disbeliever

- Mu'tem bin adiyy
- Abu Taleb

2. A noble enemy

- He does show animosity, but if he had become Muslim, he would have been amazing
- Abu Jahl

3. Wretched enemy but nothing personal against the Prophet

- Utbah ibn Rabiah (the great debater)
- Waleed ibn Mugheerah (poet)

4. Hates Islam and hates the Prophet

- **Abu Lahab**

Four domestic situations for women

1. A wonderful woman with a wonderful wali (guardian)

- **Maryam**

2. A wonderful woman with a terrible wali (guardian)

- Asiyah – wife of Firown

3. A terrible woman but a wonderful wali (guardian)

- Wives of Lut and Nuh

4. A terrible woman with a terrible wali (guardian)

- Umm Jamil

Two negatives don't make a positive

The worst male enemy and the worst kind of female character are both mentioned in this surah

Placement of the Surah

- In the previous surah Allah mentions that which will benefit you in the akhirah
 - Tasbeeh and Istighfaar (glorifying Allah and asking for forgiveness)
 - In this Surah Allah tells us about what will absolutely have no benefit in the akhirah
 - Money and the things you earn
 - Allah says in surah Baqarah, “For disbelievers worldly life was beautified, and as a result they make fun of those who believe. And people who have Taqwa will be above them **[not in this world]** on the day of resurrection.
 - In this Surah Allah gave his messenger a gift:
 - **Not only will he be above Abu Lahab in the akhirah but also in this dunya**

Kataballah La’aghlibana Ana wa Rusuli (Allah has declared I will dominate, I and my messenger)

Ghalaba: is used for victory in this world

Afla7a or **Falaa7:** is used for victory and success in the next world 17

- Allah says regarding Firown, **he was kept from accepting the deen/path**
- Part of the miracles in the Quran is the **prediction** of the quran
- The Quran says rome will dominate in ten years, and this happened
- In this surah Allah says Abu Lahab will be destroyed.
 - Abu Lahab was very smart and clever enemy and had a sharp tongue
 - This was one of the **easiest** ways the quran made itself open to attack

- Abu Lahab could have said **La ilaha ilallah**
- If he had said that, even if it was sarcastically, he could say ‘your book is saying I’m burning in hell but here I am taking shahadah and it’s suppose to protect me against the hell fire. **So your book must be wrong.**
- He had many years to take this opportunity but the Quran said about Firown **he was kept from accepting the deen.**
- **He never took the opportunity and we learn from that he too was kept from accepting the deen.**
- This is part of the miracle of the Quran

Placement of the Quran (continued)

- This surah comes after Surah kafiroon and Surah nasr
- Surah Kafiroon concluded that there are two distict religions
 - Lakum deenakum wa liya deen
 - To you your religion, and to me, my religion
 - The deen of islam, and whatever you people have
 - One of them is true, and one of them is false
- In Surah Israa’ Allah says: The truth will manifest and the falsehood will be destroyed
- The truth will manifest
 - Idha Jaa’a nasrullah (when the victory of Allah comes)
 - Surah nasr is the fulfillment of the promise of the truth will manifest
- Falsehood will be destroyed
 - Tabat Yada **Abi Lahab**
 - Surah Lahab is the fulfillment of the promise falsehood will be destroyed
- Dr. Israr Ahmed use to say **Allah plants the seed somewhere and shows the flower blooming somewhere else**