A GLIMPSE
FROM
THE HOLY QURAN
WITH
COMPLETE TEXT, INTRODUCTION, COMMENTARY AND INDEX
BY MAULANA MUHAMMAD ALI, M.A., LL.B.

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CHAPTER 112

Al-Ikhlas THE UNITY

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 4 verses)

This is really the concluding chapter of the Holy Qur'ān — the two chapters that follow only show how the protection of the Lord is to be sought — and it gives the sum and substance of the teachings of the Holy Qur'ān, which is the declaration of the Unity of the Divine Being. Ikhlas means purification of a thing from dross, and as this chapter purifies the Unity of God of all dross of polytheism, it is called al-Ikhlas. The chapter is one of the earliest revelations.

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Say: He, Allāh, is One.

2 Allāh is He on Whom all depend.

3 He begets not, nor is He begotten;

4 And none is like Him. 

2817 This, a very early Makkah revelation, points out the fundamental errors of many religions, including Christianity, in its four short sentences. The first verse proclaims the absolute Unity of the Divine Being, and deals a death-blow to all forms of polytheism, including the doctrine of the Trinity.

In the second verse Allāh is said to be ‘Sāmir’, which the Holy Prophet is reported to have explained as meaning the Lord to Whom recourse is had in every need (AH), so that all have need of Him and He has need of none. This statement negates the doctrine according to which soul and matter are co-eternal with God and God stands in need of them to bring about creation. The doctrine prevails in India, and could not have been known to the Holy Prophet.

The third verse points out the error of those religions which describe God as being father or son, such as the Christian religion.

The fourth verse negates such doctrines as the doctrine of incarnation, according to which a mere man is likened to God.

Thus four kinds of shirk are rejected here, a belief in the plurality of gods (v. 1), a belief that other things possess the perfect attributes of the Divine Being (v. 2), a belief that God is either a father or a son (v. 3), and a belief that others can do that which is ascribable only to God.

CHAPTER 113

Al-Falaq: THE DAWN

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 5 verses)
This chapter and the one that follows — both together known as nūrū-wisāb-hāfān from ‘adha, be sought refuge — teach man how to seek refuge in Allāh and how to betake himself to His protection. This subject being referred to in Makkah revelations, as in ch. 16 and 41, the two chapters must have been revealed at Makkah, and most probably they belong to the early Makkah period. The stories regarding their revelation at Madīnah, as stated by some commentators, must be rejected as conc Perrations of a later age. This chapter is called Al-Falah or The Dawn, that word occurring in the first verse, showing that Truth would ultimately dispel all darkness.

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the dawn,\footnote{Falah signifies the dawn (LL), meaning primarily clearing or splitting, the daybreak being so called because it cleaves through the darkness. Hence it comes to signify the plain appearing of the Truth after its having been dubious (T, LL). The reference in the Lord of the dawn is to the gradual manifestation of the Truth and its ultimate triumph.}

2 From the evil of that which He has created,\footnote{Qādīq is derived from qadaq, which signifies intense darkness (R). Hence it means darkness in which there is no ray of light, and stands for the dark difficulties with which an affair is sometimes attended — difficulties through which a man is unable to see his way. Man is, therefore, here taught to pray that his affairs may not be enveloped in utter darkness.}

3 And from the evil of intense darkness,\footnote{Nafūṣāba‘ is the plural of nafṣāb, which is an intensive nominative from nafṣaba, meaning primarily he blew. But nafṣaba fi qadib-hi means he put a thing into his heart (LL), and nafṣaba fi rā‘ means he inspired or put it into my mind (N). ‘Uqad is the plural of ‘uqād, which signifies a tie (LL), and judgment and consideration of one’s affairs (T), and management, regulating and ordering of one’s affairs (LL). It also signifies a promise of obedience or vow of allegiance (LA, LL). Hence the nafṣābā‘ fi l-‘uqād are really those who put evil suggestions into the resolution of men or into the management of their affairs. Note that nafṣābā‘ are not necessarily women; the word equally applies to amūdā’, or companions of men (Rz).}

4 And from the evil of those who cast (evil suggestions) in firm resolutions,\footnote{This verse deals with the second difficulty in the management of an affair. The first difficulty is its being enveloped in utter gloom (v. 3); the second is that darkness is dispelled, but the resolution to accomplish the affair is yet weak.}

5 And from the evil of the envier when he envies.\footnote{This is the third difficulty. Success is now in sight, but there are those who envy that success. Therefore, Divine protection has still to be sought when a man is successful in accomplishing an affair.}

Note that the Prophet, who was charged with the heavy task of establishing Truth in the world and making it triumphant over falsehood, had to face all these difficulties, and his faithful followers, whose goal of life is the same as that of the Prophet, stand most in need of resorting to this prayer with which the Holy Qur’ān draws to a close.
CHAPTER 114

Al-Nás: THE MEN

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 6 verses)

The introductory note on the last chapter may also be read here. Al-Nás, or The Men, the name of this concluding chapter of the Holy Qur'an, has reference to the fact that it is for the perfection of mankind that the Holy Qur'an has been revealed. This name is taken from the opening verses of the chapter in which God is spoken of as Rabb of men, i.e., their Nourisher unto perfection, King of men, i.e., the real Controller of their affairs, and the Ilāh of men, i.e., the Controller of their hearts.

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1. Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of men,
2. The King of men,
3. The God of men,
4. From the evil of the whisperings of the slinking (devil),
5. Who whispers into the hearts of men,
6. From among the jinn and the men.2822

2822 These verses are, as it were, a complement to the previous chapter. Three kinds of mischief are pointed out there which may be done to the cause of Truth. Here a fourth, but the gravest mischief of all, is pointed out. This is the mischief of the slinking devil, who comes stealthily and casts evil suggestions into the hearts of men. The whispering of the evil one is the greatest mischief because its source is in the hearts of men (v. 5). The word khannās is derived from khanasa, meaning be held back or hung back, and also he hid himself (LL), and al-khannās is the devil, because he retires or shirks or hides himself (LL).

Man is here taught to seek refuge in God Who is, in the first place, the Rabb of mankind, i.e., its Nourisher by degrees to perfection; secondly, He is the Malik or King of mankind, i.e., holds control over them, so far as the physical laws of nature are concerned; thirdly, He is the Ilāh of mankind, Who alone deserves to be worshipped and before Whom the whole of mankind must ultimately bow. In other words, the protection of God is sought because He is the Nourisher Who brings to perfection, and He holds control over Matter as well as Mind. The Divine purpose is thus again disclosed at the end, as it is disclosed in the very beginning (1:1) of the Holy Qur'an. It is to bring mankind to perfection. Nothing in this world can frustrate this purpose, as God holds control over matter as well as mind.