

## Lessons from Surah al-Falaq and Surah al-Nas

Muaz Billoo

### **Translation of Surah al-Falaq (Surah #113)**

Say, “I seek refuge with the Lord of the daybreak from the evil of everything He has created, and from the evil of the women who blow on the knots, and from the evil of an envier when he envies.”

### **Translation of Surah al-Nas (Surah #114)**

Say, “I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, the God of mankind, from the evil of the whisperer who withdraws (when Allah’s name is pronounced), the one who whispers in the hearts of people, whether from among the Jinn or Mankind.”

### **Cause of Revelation**

A man from the Jewish tribes afflicted the Prophet ﷺ with black magic, which caused him significant pain. Thereafter Jibril ؑ came down with the *mu’awwidhatayn* (Surah al-Falaq and Surah al-Nas). He said, “A man from the Jews has afflicted you with black magic, and the (source of) the magic is in this particular well.” The Prophet ﷺ sent ‘Ali ؑ who brought it (the knot upon which the magic was cast). He commanded him to untie the knot while reciting each ayah. He began reciting and untying until the Prophet ﷺ stood up and was full of energy.<sup>1</sup>

### **Virtues and Benefits of Reciting the Surahs**

1. The Prophet ﷺ said, “Oh ‘Uqbah, seek protection (in Allah) through these two (Surahs al-Falaq and al-Nas), as none has ever sought protection through anything like them.”<sup>2</sup>
2. The Prophet ﷺ also said to ‘Uqbah ؓ, “Do not go to sleep until you have recited them (Surahs al-Ikhlās, al-Falaq, and al-Nas).”<sup>3</sup>
3. The Prophet ﷺ said, “Recite them whenever you go to sleep and whenever you get up.”<sup>4</sup>
4. The Prophet ﷺ said that one should recite Surah al-Ikhlās, Surah al-Falaq, and Surah al-Nas both morning and evening three times each as they will suffice one from all evils.<sup>5</sup>
5. The Prophet ﷺ used to seek Allah’s protection from the evil eye of the jinn and mankind (i.e. he used to seek protection from them separately in his duas). Once Surahs al-Falaq

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<sup>1</sup> *Sharh Mushkil al-Athar* #5935 with similar narrations in *Sahih al-Bukhari* #3268 and *Sahih Muslim* #2189.

<sup>2</sup> *Sunan Abu Dawud* #2177

<sup>3</sup> *Musnad Ahmad* #17334; Hafiz al-Haithami declared the narrators reliable in *Majma’ al-Zawaid* #11557.

<sup>4</sup> *Musnad Ahmad* #17296

<sup>5</sup> *Sunan Abu Dawud* (5082), *Jami’ al-Tirmidhi* (3575). Imam al-Tirmidhi declared it *Hasan Sahih Gharib*.

and al-Nas were revealed, he would seek protection through them and left everything else.<sup>6</sup>

6. ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Amir رضي الله عنه said, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ commanded me to recite the *mu’awwidhat* (Surahs al-Ikhlās, al-Falaq, and al-Nas) after every salah.”<sup>7</sup>
- a. **Note:** If the fard salah is such that it is followed by a sunnah prayer such as Zuhr, Maghrib, and ‘Isha, then it is preferable to recite the lengthier adhkar after performing the sunnah prayers. This is because ‘Aishah رضي الله عنها has said that when the Prophet ﷺ would complete his prayer, he would only sit for the duration of reciting *Allahumma Antas Salam wa minkas Salaam; Tabarakta Ya Dhal Jalali Wal Ikram* before standing up.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the fuqaha (jurists) have deemed it slightly disliked (*makruh tanizhan*) to sit and engage in lengthy adhkar after the fard prayer. Rather, one should suffice on a succinct dua and thereafter stand up for the sunnah prayer. If there is no sunnah prayer after the fard prayer such as in Fajr and ‘Asr, then one can recite lengthy adhkar immediately after the completion of the prayer.<sup>9</sup>

## Summary of the Surahs<sup>10</sup>

**Surah al-Falaq** was revealed in Madinah<sup>11</sup> and has five verses. This is the first of the *mu’awwidhatayn* (the two surahs recited for protection) and was revealed simultaneously with Surah al-Nas. In this surah, Allah ﷻ commands us to seek protection in Him, the Lord of the dawn, from four evils:

1. The evil of the creation
2. The evil of darkness (e.g., robbers, twisted humans and jinn, etc. These things pose the most danger at night).
3. Those female magicians who blow into knots (a form of black magic).
4. The evil of the one harboring jealousy.

**Surah al-Nas** was also revealed in Madinah, containing six verses. This is the second of the *mu’awwidhatayn* and was revealed simultaneously with Surah al-Falaq.

There are a number of Ahadith that discuss the virtues of these two surahs. For example, ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Amir رضي الله عنه narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said regarding these two surahs,

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<sup>6</sup> *Jami’ al-Tirmidhi* (2185), *Sunan al-Nasai* (5494), *Sunan ibn Majah* (3511). Imam al-Tirmidhi declared it *Hasan Ghareeb* and Hafiz al-Suyuti authenticated it in *al-Shamail al-Sharifah* pg. 280 (504). Imam al-Munawi says that this does not mean it is not permissible to seek protection from harm through ones’ duas, but it means that the best way to seek protection is to recite these surahs.

<sup>7</sup> *Musnad Ahmad* #17417

<sup>8</sup> *Sahih Muslim* #1334

<sup>9</sup> See: *Hashiyah ibn ‘Abidin* 3:425-427 and *Maslah al-Najah Ila Maraqi al-Falah* 1:669-673

<sup>10</sup> See: Shaikh Aslam Shaikh-puri’s *Khulasah al-Qur’an* pgs. 239-240

<sup>11</sup> Hafiz al-Suyuti declares this to be the preferred view in his *al-Itqan* pg. 42, under the discussion of Makki and Madani surahs.

“Have you not seen such verses which have been revealed tonight the likes of which have not been revealed previously?”<sup>12</sup>

Meaning, as far as seeking Allah’s protection is considered, these two surahs are unparalleled. Imam ibn Qayyim r says that not a single person can remain independent of these two surahs. They are unparalleled in their ability to provide bodily and spiritual protection.

There is great wisdom in the Qur’an concluding with these two surahs and beginning with Surah al-Fatihah. In Surah al-Fatihah, we have been instructed to seek Allah’s help, and this is the exact message in these two surahs as well. This chronology serves as an indication that from the very beginning to the very end, one must remain constantly focused on Allah, continuously seeking help from Him.

Three descriptions of Allah have been mentioned in Surah al-Nas:

1. **Lord** of mankind
2. **King** of mankind
3. **God** of mankind

Upon mentioning these three descriptions, Allah commands us to seek protection from just a single evil: the evil of satanic whispers. From this, we come to realize the severity and potential harm that can be caused by satanic whispers. Satanic whispers can come from Shaitan himself, and they can come from humans as well. Much of the media (whether via television, the phone, social media, etc) serves as a vessel through which numerous whispers find their way into the hearts of the Muslims, as a result of which this disease has spread far and wide. It is of utmost necessity that the Muslims recite these two surahs in abundance.

In Surah al-Falaq, Allah mentions just one of his descriptions, commanding us to seek His protection from four evils, whereas in Surah al-Nas, Allah mentions three of His descriptions and commands us to seek His protection from a single evil.

As we can see in the translations of the two Surahs, Surah al-Falaq focuses on protection from physical harms, whereas Surah al-Nas focuses on protection from spiritual harms. This indicates that the most miniscule of spiritual harms is far more detrimental than the greatest of physical harms.

If we manage to maintain a true connection with the Qur’an: by reciting it, understanding it, acting upon it, and continuously attempt to fulfill all of its rights, then inshaAllah, then the Islam and Iman (faith) of our coming generations will remain safeguarded.

### **Shaitan’s Strategy and the Cure to Satanic Whispers**

Shaitan’s strategy in attempting to misguide a person can be summarized in the following way:

1. Corrupt one’s faith and introducing doubts regarding one’s beliefs

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<sup>12</sup> *Sahih Muslim* #264

2. Urging one to engage in sin
3. Distract one from good deeds
4. Place ostentation (showing off) in his good deeds, thereby rendering them unacceptable
5. Place self-conceitedness (‘*ujb*) into one’s heart regarding his deeds.
6. Ignite the flames of jealousy, malice, and anger in one’s heart.

As for the cure from his whispers:

1. Abundantly remember Allah ﷻ, as Shaitan flees upon hearing the name of Allah, as is established in numerous Ahadith.
2. Abundantly seek Allah’s protection from Shaitan, such as by reciting Surah al-Nas.
3. Make a firm resolve to completely disobey and contravene his whispers.

Hafiz ibn al-Juzay رحمته الله writes,

“Shaitan’s whispers into the hearts of mankind can come in multiple forms. From among them is that he tries to corrupt one’s faith and forms doubts in one’s beliefs. If he is unable to do so, then he urges the person to engage in sin. If he is unable to do so, he tries to distract him from good deeds. If he is unable to do so, then he tries to place ostentation (i.e. showing off) in the person when engaging in good deeds, so that he can waste those deeds (as deeds done for other than Allah will not be accept). If the person is safe from that, then Shaitan tries to place a feeling of self-conceitedness and in that state ... He can further ignite the fire of jealousy, malice, and anger, thereby steering the human towards the worst of deeds and the most disgraceful of stages. The cure to his whispers is found in three things: abundant remembrance of Allah, abundantly seeking Allah’s protection from Shaitan the best method of which is to recite this surah (al-Nas), and by going against him and making a firm resolve to disobey him.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Al-Tashil li ‘Ulum al-Tanzil* 2:632