

al-Tabarsi (AR)

CHAPTER AL-FALAQ

The literal meaning of "Falaq" is the difference caused by a split [rendered asunder]. Like when we say, " He split his head with his sword". When this term is applied to the morning, it is meant as the first rays of sunshine that splits the darkness to bring forth the morning.

The literal meaning of "Ghasiq" is to distance something because of its harmfulness and is also used in the sense of "shepherding". Here it refers to the night that keeps the beasts away from their lairs and the animals away from their abodes. It is also used in the sense of mucus emitting from the wounds; the mucus flows from the bodies of those in Hell because of their punishment. At times it is used to describe the flowing of tears also.

The word "Thaqub" means entrance and the term "Waqaba al-naqrah" is derived from it and it means the accumulation of blood in a wound's cavity and it is similar to the term used for the word bloating; but naqal means "expectorating" or commonly, spitting, and this is the difference between *Nafas* and *Nafaq*.

"Hasid" or jealous is a person who wishes the well being of his friend to wither away because he himself has not attained it. This is why a jealous person is condemned and "Ghabat" is praised. Now *Ghabat* is a person who wishes the same well being for his friends that he himself enjoys.

The Background of the revelation

It is said that the Jew Labeled bin A'sim cast a spell on the Holy Messenger, and then took him to the well of Bani Zareeq. The Messenger fell ill and was sleeping when two angels came to him. One sat near his head and the other near his feet and they informed him about this witchcraft. He was at Ra'ufa, the lower portion of the well where a person stands to draw water. He sent Ali, Zubair, and Ammar who drew water from the well then took the stone and they found a comb with two teeth missing with a string that had eleven knots in it. This is the time when these verses were revealed. The moment the messenger started reciting, one knot was untied and he felt a little relieved. He stood up relaxed and told Jibril " I raise you above all evils that may be inflicted by any jealous person. God will cure you" this has been confirmed by Ummul Muslimeen Ayesha together with Hazrat Abbas who said that one who is inflicted by witchcraft loses his mental equilibrium but God has said that this cannot happen to His messenger " Reflect on how such an example can be made of you."

It is quite possible that the Jew Asim and his daughters tried to but failed for God had had already informed him about their modus operandi. He also extracted him out of the spell. This confirms the truthfulness of the Messenger. How can it be that that they had inflicted the disease, for if they had this power they would certainly have killed the Messenger and other believers as well?

The Meaning

" Say I seek refuge with the Lord of the daybreak."

Is an ordinance of God addressed to the Messenger but applicable totally on all the believers. It means " O Mohammad seek refuge in the Lord and creator of dawn, who is also its planner. "

" From the evil of what He has created."

Means seek refuge from the Jinns and mankind. Falaq has been used to describe the daybreak because it stands between light and darkness. It is also called dawn, because darkness dissolves when it comes.

Ibn Abbas, Jabir, Hasan, Saeed bin Jabeer and Futada say that the word "Falaq" means a new born out of the union of its parents, and in the womb of the mothers just like the plant grows out of the seed.

There is another explanation that says that Falaq is a part of Hell and the residents of Hell seek refuge from it because of its intense heat. Abu Hamza Thumali and Ali bin Ibrahim have also consented to this.

God says, " Ma Khalaq' or What He has created, includes every creation including those from which evil emanates. So the verse really means, "I seek refuge from the evil of that which is created in the night; I seek refuge from the evil of all that has been created by Allah, like the beasts, the insects and the Satans."

The words mean that I seek refuge from the evil of the night when it permeates the world with its darkness. Ibn Abbas, Hasan, Mujahid have explained the words as such.

This includes evil and things abhorred like when we say that we seek shelter from the evil of any city. Night has been mentioned to lay stress because evil and its adherents become active in the night. The beasts and animals also make trouble in the night. The word "Fasaq" actually means to create evil and torment. A "Fasaq' is a person who creates evil whenever and wherever he wants.

" And from the evil of witchcraft inflicted through the knots."

Means that I seek refuge from the witches who blow their evil upon the knots in the strings at night. According to Hasan and Futada we have been asked to seek shelter from the evil of the witches because they inflict the people with illness without considering the good and the evil about their doings. Most people confirm these words. The evil thus is enlarged. They create doubts, and serve the Jinns seeking knowledge of the unknown. Its evil is apparent in matters of religion. We have been ordered to seek refuge from them and their evil and thus we do.

Abu Muslim says, " Nafasat" are those women who change the decisions of men and make them obey their own ideas. They do this by casting spell in knots. The knots are opened and the spell is removed.

" And from the evil of the envier when he envies."

The evil is cast by the envious on the one envied. This is why we are asked to seek refuge from his evil. It includes the evil of the soul as well as the evil of just envy. Both give birth to envy and mankind becomes a prisoner of this malady. This has been discussed earlier.

The tradition says that once the camel of the Messenger would not step forward so a Bedouin came and sat on it to make it go forward and the camel went forward. The companions of the Messenger did not like this and the Messenger said, " It is the decision of God that He does not take anything from the world until He brings that creation to its ultimate stage."

Anas has narrated, The Prophet has said,

When anyone sees something rare or surprising he should immediately praise God. So that nothing evil can affect him.

One tradition quotes the Messenger saying that Hasan and Hussain often used to invoke these Surahs to seek refuge from evil. Some people are of the view that God has included all kinds of evil in this Surah and envy is the last of them, and we know that it is natural to seek refuge in the Lord.