

Surat Al-Asr

'Aisha

وَالْعَصْرِ ۝ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ۝

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ۝

By the time. Verily man is in loss. Except those who believe (in Islâmic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth (i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds (Al-Ma'ruf) which Allâh has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds (Al-Munkar) which Allâh has forbidden), and recommend one another to patience (for the sufferings, harms, and injuries which one may encounter in Allâh's Cause during preaching His religion of Islâmic Monotheism or Jihad).

Imam Shafi , a jurist and traditional scholar of Islam, held-that if God had only revealed this surah it would have been sufficient for the guidance of all humankind. (IbnKathir, 2010). It summarized the very essence of the Qur'anic message. Thus, Imam Shafi'i asserts that if one followed its counsel, it was enough for humankind to achieve success in life.(Imam Shafi'i d. 820)

Ibn Kathir , a traditional exegete holds that this sura, as a warning to believers not to waste time or they we could be humiliated or even ruined. (IbnKathir, 2010).

T. B. Irving , a contemporary exegete, says that the surah offers a consoling prayer, since it brings home to believers how all things change, and to strengthen one to learn patiently to face the inevitable. (Irving, 1985, p. 389).

Sayyid Qutb , a modern exegete of the Qur'an, asserts that this surah outlines a complete system for human life based on an Islamic viewpoint. He says that it defines, in the clearest and most concise form, the basic concept of faith in the context of its comprehensive reality (1979, p. 274). He further says that he is gravely shocked to see the loss and ruin in which humanity finds itself. He is critical of Muslims and non-Muslims and particularly witnessing that humankind is turning away from the goodness that God has bestowed upon it. He is confident that the guidance of this surah is what made the early Muslim great as it can do for those that follow it in the long history of humanity. He says that once the early Arabs were aroused by such surahs, they quickly burst the bounds of Arabia and zealously worked toward the salvation of humanity (Qutb (d. 1966), 1979, p. 280).

Al-Tabarani: Interestingly, when humankind finds itself at a loss; it can revive itself by returning to the formula provided by the third verse and the four principles/conditions, which are adhered to as a foundation. We saw how these four principles operated on both physical and spiritual levels. This is probably the reason why the companions of the Prophet did not want to become heedless of the foundational message of Islam. Consequently, they used to meet one another and only depart until one of them recited surat-Al-Asr to the other and they bid peace upon one another. (Tabrani 2010).

Hamiduddin Farahi: One of the lessons of this surah is that a lot of people see historical sites, which are a sign of destroyed nations. So when we see the legacies; the Pyramids, the Mountain homes of Thamud, and the great buildings and nations of power who have died - we realise that Allah destroyed them through time. This is a reminder of; Inna al insaana la fee Khusrin - surely man is in loss. Allah replies to such people; **أَوَلَمْ تَكُونُوا أَقْسَمْتُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلُ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ زَوَالٍ Were you not of those who would swear before that your time of downfall will not come? (Ibrahim (sura) 14:44)**

Al-Zamakhshari: People are in tremendous loss because of that which they buy and sell in life (of good and bad), except for the Saaliheen (righteous). O Allah, make us of the Saliheen (righteous), ameen. Because the Saliheen buy for the next life instead of for the pleasures of this life. And then they were profitable and happy on Judgment Day, and whoever was an enemy to their buying - then he was in loss and deaspair.

Mufti Muhammad Shafi: the Struggle of the human being is like the one who is trying to sell ice. It is melting away and he needs to sell it quickly and make as much sales before the end of the day comes. Otherwise - all his valuables' and efforts will go to waste. [In the past - there were no Freezers, so your ice would melt into water by the end of the day.]

Abul Ala Maududi: This Surah is a matchless specimen of comprehensiveness and brevity. A whole world of meaning has been compressed into its few brief words, which is too vast in content to be fully expressed even in a book. In it, in a clear and plain way it has been stated what is the way to true success for man and what is the way to ruin and destruction for him. Imam Shafe has very rightly said that if the people only considered this Surah well, it alone would suffice them for their guidance.

**O Allah, make us of the
Saliheen, Ameen**

'Aisha