

The sermon of Surat Al `Asr

Allah swore in His Book that all people are losers and shall enter Hell except those who believe in Allah, do righteously, and commend one another with the truth and patience.

Allah (Glory be to Him) says: In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful:

"By Al-'Asr (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 *Jihâd*)." [Surat Al `Asr: 1 - 3].

Al Shafi`y (may Allah bestow mercy on his soul) said: If people do not ponder over any *Surah* except this, it will be enough for them.

This *Surah* combined all the teachings of the religion.

Allah swore by the time of the Companions and by the ancient and the modern time.

Allah (Glory be to Him) swore by time that most people are in a great loss, most people are in

error, and most people shall be driven to Hell. Allah (Glory be to Him) says: "And most of mankind will not believe even if you desire it eagerly." [Surat Yusuf: 103].

Allah (Glory be to Him) says: "And most of mankind will not believe even if you desire it eagerly." [Surat Yusuf: 10]. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be to Him) says: "And if you obey most of those on earth, they will mislead you far away from Allah's Path." [Surat Al An`am: 116].

Allah (Glory be to Him) says: "Except those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and they are few." [Surat Sad: 24].

So, the survivors from loss are few who have the four qualities which Allah explained in this Surah, which are:

1- Belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and Fate whether good or bad.

2- Righteous deeds which are free of hypocrisy and are done according to the *Sunnah* because faith is not gained by wishing or decoration but what has been settled in the heart and was confirmed by action. The greatest actions after the *Shahadah* (Testimony of Faith) are: Establishing the Five Daily *Salahs* in their due times, fasting Ramadan, paying *Zakah* (poor-due) by the one who owns the due amount, and performing Hajj to the Sacred House of Allah [in *Makkah*] for those who can afford it.

3- Commending one another with the truth because the religion is based on advice. one of the attributes of the believing men and women is enjoining good and forbidding evil as Allah (Glory be to Him) says: "The believers, men and women, are *Auliyâ'* (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another; they enjoin (on the people) *Al-Ma'rûf* (i.e. Islâmic Monotheism and all that *Islâm* orders one to do), and forbid (people) from *Al-Munkar* (i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that *Islâm* has forbidden); they perform *As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât)* and give the *Zakât*, and obey Allâh and His Messenger (peace be upon him). *Allâh* will have His Mercy on them." [Surat At-Tawbah: 71].

4- Commending one another with patience: Patience is divided into three sections:

A- Observing patience on obedience: Obedience has a part of difficulty, therefore it needs patience to perform it as Allah (Glory be to Him) says: "Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, so worship Him (Alone) and be constant and patient in His worship. Do you know of any who is similar to Him? (of course none is similar or coequal or comparable to Him, and He has none as partner with Him). [There is nothing like unto Him and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer]." [Surat Maryam: 65].

B- Observing patience on sins: A soul always inclines to evil, so a Muslim should prevent himself from following desires. Allah (Glory be to Him) says: "Then, for him who *Tagha* (transgressed all bounds, in disbelief, oppression

and evil deeds of disobedience to Allah). * And preferred the life of this world (by following his evil desires and lusts), * Verily, his abode will be Hell-fire * But as for him who feared standing before his Lord, and restrained himself from impure evil desires, and lusts. * Verily, Paradise will be his abode." [Surat An-Nazi`at: 37 - 41].

C- Patience on the painful decrees of fate: Allah afflicts His Servants with whatever He wills as He promised us saying: "And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to *As-Sâbirûn* (the patient). * Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: Truly! To *Allâh* we belong and truly, to Him we shall return." [Surat Al Baqarah: 155 - 156].

So, how great this Surah is and how multiple their meanings are!

The Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were eager to recite it and remind one another with it. *At-Tabarany* reported in *Al Mu`jam Al Awsat* (5124) on the authority of *Abu Madinah Ad-Darimy* (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: "When two of the Prophet's Companions met, they did not separate but after reciting to one another: "By *Al-'Asr* (the time). * Verily, man is in loss." [Surat Al `Asr: 1 - 2] then each one shakes the hand of the other."

[Al Albany mentioned it in *Silsilat Al Ahadith As-Sahihah* (2648), and *Al Albany* commented on it saying:

This *Hadith* has two benefits taken from the actions of our Pious Predecessors (may Allah be pleased with them):

1- Shaking hands at departing.

2-The Companions used to recite Surat Al `Asr frequently because we believe they were the purest people who cannot fabricate something in religion without hearing it from the Messenger of Allah, and why not after Allah (Exalted be He) praised them saying: "And the foremost to embrace *Islâm* of the *Muhâjirûn* (those who migrated from *Makkah* to *Al-Madinah*) and the *Ansâr* (the citizens of *Al-Madinah* who helped and gave aid to the *Muhâjirûn*) and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). *Allâh* is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success." [Surat At-Tawbah: 100].

Ibn Mas`ud and *Al Hasan Al Basry* said: Whomever among you was taking an example to follow, he should follow the example of the Companions of Muhammad (peace be upon him), for they their hearts were the purest of this nation, the most knowledgeable, the less fake, the most guided, and the best well-mannered. They were a group whom Allah chose for the company of His Prophet (peace be upon him), so admit their favor and follow them in actions and sayings for they were on the straight path.