

# Introduction to Surah Yunus:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## Period of Revelation

This Surah was revealed during the last stages of the Prophet's (PBUH) life in Makkah. We learn from traditions, and this is supported by the contents of the Surah itself, that the whole of this Surah was revealed at Makkah. But there are some scholars who are of the opinion, that some of its verses were revealed at Al-Madinah. This is, however, a superficial view. The continuity of the theme clearly shows that this does not comprise isolated verses or discourses that were revealed at different times and on different occasions. On the contrary, it is, from the beginning to the end, a closely connected discourse which must have been revealed at one sitting. Besides this, the nature of its theme is itself a clear proof that the Surah belongs to the Makkan period. For the mode of the discourse suggests that at the time of its revelation, the antagonism of the opponents of the Message had become so intense that they could not even tolerate the presence of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his followers among themselves, and that things had become so bad that no hope was left that they would ever understand and accept Allah's message. This indicates the last stages of PBUH life in Makkah and the final warning like the one in this Surah had to be given.

## Major Issues, Divine Law, and Guidance

- Allah is the only Creator of this universe.
- Deities whom the Mushrikeen worship other than Allah, have no power to either benefit or harm anyone.
- Deities other than Allah are not even aware that they are being worshiped.
- To every nation Allah sent a Rasool for guidance.
- Al-Qur'an provides a cure for all the problems of mankind.
- Mushrikeen follow nothing but conjectures
- The story of the Prophet Nuh and his people.
- The story of the Prophet Musa, Fir'oun, and his chiefs.
- Belief after seeing the scourge (affliction/suffering/punishment) did not benefit any nation except the nation of the Prophet Yunus.
- Prohibition against forcing anyone to convert to Islam.

## **Theme**

In the introductory verses of this Surah, an invitation towards the Right Way is extended to the people who were considering it a strange thing that Allah's message was being conveyed by a human being (Muhammad PBUH). They were charging the Prophet with sorcery, whereas there is neither anything strange in it nor has it anything to do with sorcery or soothsaying. The prophet is simply informing mankind about two facts:

- Allah, Who has created the universe, is, in fact, your Rabb, and He Alone is entitled to be worshipped.
- That after the life in this world, there will be another life in the next world, where you shall have to render full account of this world's life. You shall be rewarded or punished according to whether you adopt the righteous attitude required by Allah after acknowledging Him as your Rabb, or act against His will.

Both of these facts are realities in themselves, whether you acknowledge them as such or not. If you accept these, you will have a very blessed end; otherwise you shall meet the evil consequences of your misdeeds.

## **Subject matter of Surah Yunus**

This Surah is based on propagation of Allah's Tawheed and rejection (Radd-e-Shirk) of Shirk. 'He is your Lord as he created the universe and all that is in it, so worship only him alone without any intermediary'.

Agreed upon by majority scholars of Tafsir that the Surahs in the Quran like this one which start with Alif Laam Ra 'اَلرَّ' are called 'Zawaatir Ra'. These Surah's starting with Alif Laam Ra instigate & entice (Targheeb) you to the Quran and its verses. As well as this, these types of Surah's have the word 'HAKIM' or 'MOBEEN' in the starting verses which are of the Asama-al-Husna (attributes of Allah) telling you that these verses are clear and full of wisdom and are from your 'Lord'. Moreover, these types of Surah's include mostly Daleel Akli (rational evidences) to prove Allah's Tawheed.

This Surah takes its name from Verse 98, in which there is a reference to Prophet Yunus (Jonah). The name, as usual, is symbolical and does not indicate that the whole Surah deals with the story of Prophet Yunus (Jonah).

## **NUZUL (Order)**

Order of revelation: This is a Makki Surah consisting of 109 Verses, its 51<sup>st</sup> in order of revelation (Nuzul) coming after Surah Bani Israel, but 10<sup>th</sup> (after Surah At-Tawbah) in order of the book (Quran) as placed by PBUH.

## **RABAT (Connection)**

This Surah's connection or (Rabat) with previous Surah are as follows:

- This Surah from the start deals with Tawheed and Nafi shirk-e-Itteqadi (rejection of the shirk in ones Aqeedah) and then deals with Nafi shirk-e-Fehli (rejection of shirk in one's actions). This connects with Surah Al-Baqarah, Surah Al-Ana'am, Surah Al-Maidah, and Surah Al-A'raf because they also focus on this. Thus, this surah shadows those previous surahs.
- In the previous Surah 'At-Tawbah Allah discussed in the last Verse 'Tawheed' (there were also verses of Tawheed scattered around in the surah). However, in this Surah, Allah discusses Tawheed throughout the whole Surah.
- The previous Surah discusses Allah's Tawheed with not many Daleels (evidences). However, this Surah discusses Allah's Tawheed with many Daleels (evidence).
- The previous Surah had a discussion of Tawheed. However, this Surah shows how the Mushrikeen rejected and objected to Allah's Tawheed with Allah giving them befitting replies.
- In Surah At-Tawbah Allah discussed Jihad and instigated the Momins towards it. However, in this Surah, Allah discusses how Jihad is done for Allah's Tawheed and it's the way to get rid of Shirk which is the focus of this Surah.
- The previous Surah discusses Jihad in the context of fighting (Kitaal). However, this Surah talks about Jihad-e-lisani (verbal Jihad), which is done with your words and dawah.
- The previous Surah discussed how the disbelievers rejected Muhammad PBUH as a messenger of Allah. In Verse 129 At-Tawbah Allah says to PBUH 'say, Allah is enough for me and I put my trust in Allah'. However, this Surah replies to this rejection and shows how other previous messengers were rejected by their people and they (the previous messengers/ambiya/Prophets) put their trust and relied (Aajiz) on Allah.
- Surah At-Tawbah shows how PBUH says in verse 129; 'Kul Hasbiyallah' (Allah is enough for me). However, this Surah shows how PBUH says 'Wa ma Ana Alaykum bi Wakil' (I myself are reliant and Aajiz upon Allah, as he is the disposer of my affairs), meaning I (PBUH) am not your 'Wakil', your Wakil is only Allah who is the only disposer of affairs. He is your protector, your trustee, your guardian.
- In the previous Surah Allah referred to the Mushrikeen with specific words like in Verse 1; 'Barat-al-Mushrikeen'. Allah is specifically discharging, finishing or cutting all ties with them in order to finish off Shirk. However, in this Surah Allah is addressing the Mushriks in a different manner and with advice to accept Tawheed and give up shirk. This is because this Surah is Makki surah where Muslims were few and were persecuted and they were just giving Dawah (spreading Islam). Whereas, the previous surah At-Tawbah is Madani Surah where Muslims were a lot stronger and had a state of their own (an army etc.), Allah was much harsher and strict with Mushrikeen.
- The previous Surah At-Tawbah discussed the 'Tawbah' of the Sahabah (companions of the PBUH), those who didn't go for Jihad and then they repented to Allah. However, this Surah discusses the 'Tawbah' of the people or companions of Yunus (a.s) and how thereafter seeing Allah's azaab (punishment) they repented.
- The previous Surah discusses the Jihad of Muhammad PBUH However, this Surah discusses the Jihad of other civilizations alongside their respective Prophets/Ambiya.

- The previous Surah discusses the 'Siff'at' (praise) of Muhammad PBUH. However, this Surah discusses the Siff'at (praise) of the previous Prophets/Ambiya.

### **MUMTAZ (Importance/Excellence)**

The Mumtaz or importance and Excellence of this surah are many, such as:

- This Surah's excellence (Imtiaz) is on 'Radd-e-Mushrikeen' (rejection of Mushriks/those who do Shirk), like not seen in the previous Surah's.
- The Surah talks about the Tawbah (repentance) of Yunus (a.s) and his people. (remember that Yunus (a.s) did not sin, he was tested by Allah and he left his people with Anger that they were not listening to Allah's message).
- This Surah's excellence is that it discusses the 4 'Maqasid Arba'ah Aliyah' (The 4 fundamental issues discussed throughout the Quran and on which the Quran is based on):
  - 1) Tawheed (Allah's oneness)
  - 2) Risaalah (Prophethood)
  - 3) Sadakat-Al-Kitab (Truthfulness of the book/Quran)
  - 4) Iman-Bil-Aakhira (Belief in the Hereafter)
- This Surah talks about Fir'oun's (pharaoh) tawbah when he was dying.
- Surah talks about the 'Hamd' & 'Sanah' (praising of Allah) of the Jinn's.

### **MAQSAD (Purpose)**

The main purpose or Dawah of the Surah is to outline and reject the shirk of the Mushrikeen and to promote Allah's Tawheed. To make it clear to the Mushrikeen that they are on the wrong path and Allah will never forgive Shirk and come to something better which is Tawheed and Allah will forgive you. Allah uses the examples of the previous nations and how they made Tawbah so that these Mushriks could take heed from their examples.

Nafi shirk-e-Itteqadi (rejection of the shirk in ones Aqeedah) and Nafi shirk-e-Fehli (rejection of shirk in one's actions) are discussed and their types with the main reference to Shirk-fit-Duah.

### **KHULASA (Summary)**

This Surah is divided into 2 sections:

1<sup>st</sup> section: Verses 1 – 70; As we will see, this first section is divided into a further 7 subsections. The discussion is based on Radd-e-Shirk Itteqadi (rejection of the shirk in ones Aqeedah) & Radd- shirk-e-Fehli (rejection of shirk in one's actions). As well as this Allah in this section discusses the 4 'Maqasid Arba'ah Aliyah' (The 4 fundamental issues discussed throughout the Quran).

2<sup>nd</sup> section: Verses 71 – end Verse 109 discuss the perished nations of old (stories of the perished nations or communities to whom Allah sent Prophets & Messengers. Allah uses these stories to prove his Tawheed and reject the Shirk of Mushrikeen as he outlines what happened to the previous nations because of their Shirk and denial of Allah's Tawheed.

## **Section 1**

### 1<sup>st</sup> sub-section:

Verses 1 – 4: In these Verses Allah is instigating people towards the Quran (Targheeb al Quran) and proving Sadakat al Rasool (truthfulness of Muhammad PBUH) (Verse 2).

In Verses 3 & 4 Allah is giving us Aqli Daleels (Rational evidence or proofs) to back/prove his claim of Tawheed (this is why you must worship me alone without any intercessor/waste/wasilah). As well as this there is Takhweef (warning or admonition) to the disbelievers (kafir).

### 2<sup>nd</sup> sub-section:

Verses 5 – 17: The focal point is continuing on Allah's Tawheed and again, Aqli Daleels (Rational evidence or proofs) are given by Allah to reject 'Radd-e-Shirk Itteqadi' (rejection of the shirk in ones Aqeedah).

Further, Allah is distinguishing from the good people (believers/Muslims) who accept Allah's Tawheed & the bad people (disbelievers/Kafir) who reject Allah's Tawheed. The situation of these 2 types of people is also discussed and Allah gives warnings and threatens (Zajr) the Kafir with Jahannam (hellfire) because of their rejection of the hereafter (Aakhirah) and turning away from Allah's book the Quran. On the other hand, Allah gives glad tidings to the Muslims who believe and do good deeds and gives them Basharat (good news) of Jannah.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> sub-section:

Verses 18 – 30: Continuing the proclamation of Tawheed Allah provides further Aqli Daleels (Rational evidence or proofs). Allah makes his claim of thawed crystal clear in Verse 18 where he says; They worship besides Allah others who can neither harm nor benefit them, and say, "These are our intercessors with Allah."

Allah then talks of his mercy and how the disbelievers show no thanks and transgress. Allah then further warns and threatens (Zajr) the Kafir (disbelievers) and an example is given to them in Verse 24 about human life and how Allah has beautified it and then he can take it away just like that by his command. Allah then discusses the believers (Mumineen)/Muslims and gives them glad tidings and good news of Paradise (Jannah) with a reference to the disbelievers and their end Hell (Jahannam).

From Verses 28 – 30 Allah discusses 'Radd-e-Shifa'at-e-Qahriya' (rejection on the belief that the intercessors had power to forcefully save their worshippers from Allah's punishment or they can put a request in to Allah to save this person). Allah is showing here the Aqeeda (creed/faith/belief system) of the Mushrikeen and making clear cut the rejection of this Aqeedah (faith) (Verse 28; Allah will pull over both, the ones who were seeking the intercession and the ones who were supposedly giving the intercession. Now tell me what u were up to??,

the ones who were supposed to be the intercessors will say, 'we didn't even know what they were doing'). Then there is a warning for them in verse 30.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> sub-section:

Verses 31 – 54: In these following verses we see a different type of Daleel; 'Daleel Iterafi Ilzami' (ask them about Allah so that they may confess to his Oneness. This type of Daleel/proof/evidence is also rational), we see it in verses 31, 34 & 35 where Allah is telling them to accept (Iterf karo) that Allah has power to do everything and anything and then the blame (Ilzam) is on them as to why do you then turn away from Allah's book and his Tawheed and not accept it?

Then Allah strongly threatens and warns (Zajr) those who turn away from his Quran (the final revelation), Allah says they are deaf and blind to the message of Tawheed and thus has put a seal on their hearts. As well as this there is Zajr (threats and warnings) for their rejection and denial of the hereafter (Akhira).

In Verses 37 & 38 there is Sadakat al Kitab (truthfulness of the book; Quran).

In Verse 49 Allah discusses 'Shirk-fit-Tasarruf' (believing that the PBUH or any other Prophet, Messenger, Saint, Sheikh, Peer, Monk, or Rabbi possessed power to benefit or harm). However, this verse was related to Muhammad PBUH. The PBUH is told to declare that He has no 'power' from himself to benefit, harm or protect except by the will of Allah. Moreover, Allah has complete power over everything and is done by his will.

Then in Verse 50 -54 Allah threatens, warns and frightens (Zajr) & (takhweef) for those who reject (Munkar) the hereafter (Akhira). As well as this in Verse 53 Allah tells the PBUH to make Kassam (take an oath or swear by Allah) that Qiyamah (the day of Judgement/Akhira) will surely take place/happen.

#### 5<sup>th</sup> sub-section:

Verses 55 – 65 Allah is continuing to discuss his Tawheed and again, Aqli Dalees (Rational evidence or proofs) are given by Allah to reject 'Radd-e-Shirk Fehli' (rejection of the shirk in one's actions), (this is seen in Verses 55 & 56).

In Verses 57 & 58 there is instigation (targheeb) towards Quran, (the warning is the Quran) and its is a cure for the hearts, a guide and a mercy for those who believe in it and follow it.

In verse 59 there is the 'Nafi Shirk-e- Fehli' (rejection of the shirk in one's actions) referring to how the Mushrikeen make lawfull (Halal) and unlawful (haram) from themselves and do not follow Allah's law/rules (refer this back to Surah Al-Maidah where this was discussed in great detail). Thus, Allah is saying in this verse that he hasn't given you any authorisation for this and you are just fabricating (making up) lies against Allah (that Allah is saying this). Then in Verse 60 Allah is showing us what will be their end on the day of Judgment.

From Verse 60 – 65 there is Basharat (good news and glad tiding) for the believers in this world and in the hereafter.

#### 6<sup>th</sup> sub-section:

Verses 66 & 67: Aqli Dalees (Rational evidence or proofs) are given by Allah to reject the shirk of the Mushrikeen and promote Allah's Tawheed. Mushriks who call upon other than Allah as their intercessors, their request for intercession is just an assumption which is a lie (and has no basis/It's nothing).

#### 7<sup>th</sup> sub-section:

Verses 68 – 70: The focal point in these few Verses is again Allah's Tawheed. There is Takhweef (Allah is intimidating, warning and frightening the Mushriks) as they say Allah has offspring, But Allah is replying to their Shirk and saying 'Subhanahu' وَلَئِنْ سُبْحَنَهُ 'Glory be to Him (Allah), He is free & pure from what you say' (you have no proof for this and you don't know).

### **Section 2**

This section of the Surah (Verses 71 – to the last Verse) discusses (Bayaan) the previous perished nations and there are 3 stories told regarding them.

- 1) Story of Nuh (Noah)
- 2) Story of Musa (Moses)
- 3) Story of Yunus (Jonah)

The stories are being told in order to intimidate, warn, frighten and scare the Mushriks (Takhweef), (look what happened to previous people who rejected my verses and their Prophets/Messengers). In Verses 71 -73 Allah uses the example of Nuh (a.s) to promote his Tawheed and describes the end of those who rejected Allah's signs.

Allah also uses these stories for 'Tasjih fit- Tabligh'; instigate the Believers (Muslims) to do Dawah (spread Allah's Deen) and be strong on the path of Tabligh (dawah) as were the prophets that were sent to these perished nations mentioned in these 3 stories.

As well as this Allah uses these stories to discuss (Bayan) 'Umoor-e-Musliha' (coming together of your society/community) (Islah or reforming your community/society), and has used the story of Musa (a.s) in Verse 87 as an example of how he made islah (reform) of his community with the order of Allah.

Allah tells us how 'Azaab' (punishment) disappears with 'Iman' (faith) and uses Yunus (a.s) as an example in Verse 98.

Verse 104; There is 'Nafi Shirk-fil-Ibaadah' (rejection of the shirk in the Ibaadah of the Mushriks)

Verse 106; There is 'Nafi Shirk-fit-Duah' (rejection of the shirk in the Duah of the Mushriks)

Verse 107; There is 'Nafi Shirk-fit-Tasarruf' (rejection of the shirk of Mushriks that they thought others than Allah have powers to benefit and harm).

At the end of the Surah Allah gives 'Tasalli' (solace & reassurance) to Muhammad PBUH and there is targheeb (instigation) towards the Quran. In the last 2 Verses Allah is reassuring the PBUH that your job is only to give the message and you are not a keeper over them and they the (Disbelievers) are at loss if they do not believe or follow.

