

SURATUL' AṢR (103)

The *Suratul' aṣr* carries on the theme of warning those vying for excess (striving for superiority in wealth and power) regardless of accountability of their conduct in the world to come. The Surah opens with the oath by time. The *Quraan* uses the word *al' aṣr'* which is, here, synonymous with human history because *al' aṣr'* has been related to man's loss (ruin) specified in the second verse. Hence, the Surah, in its first verse, quotes the entire human history as the witness to the fact that man has been suffering loss (ruin) through ages past for not acting on the bases outlined in the third verse. The *Lisaanul' arab* means by '*Khusr'* to be misled and ruined and to support this meaning, the eleventh verse of the *Suratulḥajj* has been quoted, "He loses both, the world and the afterworld" __ such (a loss) is the clear loss (ruin in the world and damnation in the afterworld). Human history proves the assertion in the second verse that peoples, communities, and societies have been wiped out for their sin of going astray arrogantly and defiantly. The *Quraan* quotes many examples of such societies as were ruined, when they defied their messengers arrogantly.

The third verse specifies four bases __ whoever conforms with them shall prosper, as given below:-

(I) *Eimaan*, belief in Allah, His angels, His messengers, His scriptures revealed from time to time culminating in the *Quraan* and the afterworld where the Last Judgement shall be pronounced among all the human beings resurrected for this purpose. (II) Doing good __ the word used is '*ṣaaliḥaaṭ'* derived from '*ṣaluḥa'* which is the opposite of '*fasuda'*. The former means to be good, right, or proper while the latter means to be evil, wrong, and rotten. Hence, '*ṣaaliḥaaṭ'* comprehend not only all the virtues, all the forms of good, and all the acts of guarding oneself against evils but also imply putting down all the acts of wrong, all the forms of evil, and all the social vices. (III) *Tawaṣaubilḥaqq* __ enjoining, admonishing, recommending, or counselling one another to live by the truth which, in this context, after the first basis __ *Eimaan*, __ signifies nothing but the *Quraan*. *Ḥaqq* has been used to mean the *Quraan* in the ninety-fourth verse of the Surah *Yoonus*, the forty-eighth verse of the *Suratulqāṣaṣ*, the sixty-eighth verse of the *Suratul' ankaboot*, the seventh verse of the *Suratulahqaaṣ*, the third verse of the Surah *Muḥammed* and the sixteenth verse of the *Suratulḥadeed*. (IV) *Tawaṣubiṣṣabr* __ enjoining, admonishing, recommending, or counselling one another to practise and live by patience, forbearance, and constancy through sufferings, pains, trials, and distress. Such are the enjoinders of the Islamic way of life. Hence, the Surah lays down, in words terse and cogent, the positive, the policy __ a definite course or method of action in life __ and the quintessence of Islam which means submission to Allah, peace within and peace without.

The entire Surah is in the plural number which presupposes a polity, as, without a polity, Islam can neither be lived nor implemented. Polity and plurality are essential, cardinal, and fundamental to Islam. It cannot be realized and established without a well-knit polity. Islam is not a personal matter. It founds a Community.

SURATUL 'AṢR

In the name of ALLAH, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

1. By time! (Human history is the witness of the fact that)
2. Man (human beings in general) has, certainly, been in (grievous) loss (physical, mental, moral, and social ruin),
3. Except (those people) who believe in (Allah) and do good deeds and enjoin one another (to live by) the truth (*Quraan*) and enjoin one another (to practise) patience (through pains, trials, and sufferings while striving for His cause).

سُورَةُ الْعَصْرِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَالْعَصْرِ ١

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِفِي خُسْرٍ ٢

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا

بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ٣