

# 'Abasa [He Frowned]

## Makkan Period

*In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate*

[1] He frowned and turned away

[2] that the blind man came to him.<sup>1</sup>

[3] How could you know? Perhaps he would cleanse himself,

[4] or he might be mindful and good counsel might avail him.

[5] Now he who waxes indifferent,

[6] you attend to him,

[7] though you are not to blame if he would not cleanse himself.

[8] But he who comes to you running,

[9] and fears (Allah),

[10] you pay no heed to him.

[11] No indeed;<sup>2</sup> this is only a Reminder.

1. As the sentences that follow indicate, he "who frowned and turned away" was the Prophet (peace be on him) himself. As for the "blind man," this was Ibn Umm Maktum, a cousin of the Prophet's wife, Khadijah. Ibn Umm Maktum, came to the Prophet (peace be on him) at a time when he was deeply engrossed in conveying Islam's message to the most influential people of Makkah, the heads of the different clans. Ibn Umm Maktum had wanted to ask him a few questions, but the Prophet (peace be on him) was irked by this intrusion.

2. The words "no indeed" are here indicative of God's directive to the Prophet (peace be on him) not to show undue deference to those who are heedless of Him on account of their worldly eminence. For Islam's teachings should not be presented as though the Prophet (peace be on him) were abjectly begging those who had spurned it to now honour him by accepting it. It also did not become the Prophet (peace be on him) to invite such arrogant people to Islam in such manner for this might give rise to the misconception that their acceptance of Islam would serve the Prophet's own interests. Nor was it appropriate that they be made to feel so important that if they accepted Islam, it would prosper as a result; and if they did not, then Islam would court disaster. Islam cares as little for them as they care for it.

[12] So whoso wills may give heed to it.

[13] It is contained in scrolls highly honoured,

[14] most exalted and purified,<sup>3</sup>

[15] borne by the hands of scribes,

[16] noble and purified.<sup>4</sup>

[17] Accursed' be man! How stubbornly he denies the Truth.

[18] Out of what did Allah create him?

*3. This is to stress that the scrolls which embody the Revelation were free of impurity. These scrolls expound nothing but unadulterated Truth because false or corrupt ideas and doctrines have not been able to find their way into them.*

*4. The scribes mentioned here denote the angels who were charged under God's Own guidance with writing down the scrolls of the Qur'an. This so as to safeguard them and faithfully convey them to the Prophet (peace be on him).*

*5. From here on God's reprimand is addressed directly to the unbelievers who were disregarding the Truth. Prior to this, from the opening verse of the **surah** to v. 16, the discourse seems to be addressed to the Prophet (peace be on him), but it was in actual fact meant to reprimand the unbelievers. This reprimand, however, was implicit. It consisted of asking the Prophet (peace be on him) why he paid scant attention to a genuine seeker of the Truth and instead directed his entire focus on those who were worthless from the point of view of his Mission. These unbelievers had gone too far in opposing the Truth to merit that the Prophet (peace be on him) should present before them something as exalted as the Qur'an.*

[19] Out of a sperm-drop did He create him and then determined a measure for him,

[20] and then made the course of life easy for him,

[21] then He caused him to die and brought him to the grave,

[22] and then, whenever He wishes, He will raise him back to life,

[23] Nay, but man did not fulfil what Allah had enjoined upon him,

[24] So let man just consider his food:

[25] We poured water, pouring it in great abundance,<sup>6</sup>

[26] and cleaved the earth, cleaving it asunder;

[27] then caused the grain to grow out of it,

[28] together with grapes and vegetables,

[29] and olives and palms,

[30] and dense orchards,

[31] and fruits and pastures –

[32] all this as a provision for you and your cattle.

[33] But when the deafening cry shall be sounded<sup>7</sup>

[34] on the Day when each man shall flee from his brother,

[35] and his mother and his father;

[36] and his consort and his children;

[37] on that Day each will be occupied with his own business, making him oblivious of all save himself.

[38] Some faces on that Day shall be beaming with happiness,

[39] and be cheerful and joyous.

[40] Some faces on that Day shall be dust-ridden,

[41] enveloped by darkness.

[42] These will be the unbelievers, the wicked.

*6. Water here means rainwater.*

*7. This refers to the final and very horrendous sound of the Trumpet. After it has been blown all the dead will rise to life again.*