

Al-Shams [The Sun] **Makkan Period**

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

[1] By the sun and its heat and brightness,

[2] and by the moon as it follows it;

[3] and by the day as it displays the sun's glory,

[4] and by the night as it envelopes the sun;

[5] and by the sky and by Him Who made it;

[6] and by the earth and by Him Who stretched it out;

[7] and by the soul and by Him Who perfectly proportioned it,¹

[8] and imbued it with (the consciousness of) its evil and its piety.²

1. That is, God has invested man's body and mind with special characteristics and has also equipped him with Senses and other powers and abilities by means of which he can perform the task that is required of him.

*2. This has two meanings. First, that the Creator has imbedded in man's nature tendencies and inclinations towards both good and evil. Second, that God has impregnated every person's subconscious with certain notions of good and evil; that good and evil deeds are intrinsically different, and are not of equal worth; that while **fujur** (immorality) is condemnable, **taqwa** (avoidance of evil) is praiseworthy, etc. These ideas are not foreign to man. On the contrary, his nature is quite profoundly acquainted with them. This is because man's Creator has endowed him with an innate capacity to distinguish between good and evil.*

[9] He who purifies it will prosper,

[10] and he who suppresses it will be ruined!

[11] In their presumptuous insolence the Thamud called the Truth a lie

[12] when their arch-criminal rose up in rage.

[13] Then Allah's Messenger warned them: "Hands off the she-camel and her drink!"

[14] But they rejected his statement as a lie and hamstrung the she-camel. For that crime their Lord rumbled down upon them, utterly razing them to the ground.⁴

[15] He has no fear of its sequel.

3. *"To purify the self" means to cleanse oneself of evil and to nurture good qualities in oneself instead. On the contrary, "to suppress the self" means to develop one's evil potentialities.*

4. *The wicked person hamstringed the she-camel not simply with the consent and approval of his people, but also at their behest. See **al-Qamar** 54: 29. The whole nation, therefore, invited God's wrath upon itself.*