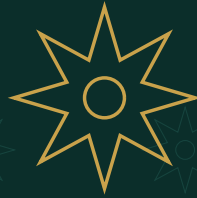


SURAH AS A STORY



Surah Al-Masad

The Palm Fibre

The complete journey — a prophecy that could have been disproved —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 111 • 5 Ayahs • Meccan

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The Surah at a Glance

Tabbat yadaaaa abee Lahabinw-wa tabb

1. May the hands of Abu Lahab perish, and he has perished.

Maaa aghnaa 'anhu maaluhoo wa maa kasab

2. His wealth will not avail him, nor what he earned.

Sayaslaa naaran zaata lahab

3. He will burn in a Fire of blazing flame,

Wamra'atuhoo hammaalatal-hatab

4. and his wife as well — the carrier of firewood.

Fee jeedihaa hablum-mim-masad

5. Around her neck is a rope of twisted palm fibre.

Listen to the Arabic recitation of this Surah, ayah by ayah, with the Qari — free on nooraniilm.com (Read & Recite section).

The Uncle on the Hill

Beta, this surah is about a man who had every advantage and threw them all away — the Prophet's ﷺ own uncle.



His real name was 'Abd al-'Uzza ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, but he was called ABU LAHAB — 'the father of flame' — because of his striking, fiery-red, handsome complexion. Beta, remember that nickname; the surah will use it against him.

The story of this surah begins on a day recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari. Allah had commanded the Prophet ﷺ to warn his closest relatives. So he climbed the hill of Safa and called out: 'Ya sabahah!' — the ancient Arabian cry of alarm, the one used when a raiding party was approaching at dawn. Every family sent someone, and the Quraysh gathered.

He ﷺ asked them: 'If I told you that a cavalry was in the valley about to attack you, would you believe me?' They said: yes — we have never known you to lie. Beta, note that: his own enemies testified to his honesty in public.

Then he said: 'Then I am a warner to you before a severe punishment.'



And Abu Lahab — his uncle, his own flesh and blood — said in front of everyone: 'TABBAN LAKA! Did you gather us for THIS?'

'Tabban laka' means: may you perish, may you be ruined.

And Allah answered, beta — in the same words, turned back.

May His Hands Perish

'TABBAT YADA ABI LAHABIN WA TABB — may the HANDS of Abu Lahab PERISH, and he HAS perished.'

Beta, notice the mirror: he said 'tabban laka' — may YOU perish. Allah replied: 'tabbat yada...' — may HIS hands perish. The insult was returned to its sender, and preserved in a Book recited until the end of time.

And why 'his HANDS'? Because the hands represent effort and doing — everything a person builds, grasps, and strikes with. Beta, his hands had been busy: the reports describe him following the Prophet ﷺ to



gatherings and markets and telling people to ignore him, and throwing stones. So Allah names the instruments of his opposition.

'MA AGHNA 'ANHU MALUHU WA MA KASAB — his WEALTH will not AVAIL him, nor what he EARNED.'

Beta, 'ma kasab' — what he earned — is explained by the scholars as including his children, since a man's children are counted among his earnings. So both pillars a man leans on — money and sons — are declared useless for him.

'SAYASLA NARAN ZATA LAHAB — he will BURN in a Fire of BLAZING FLAME.'

And there it is, beta: 'zata lahab' — possessed of FLAME. The man called 'Abu Lahab', father of flame, because of his glowing handsome face — will be a father of flame in a completely different sense. His nickname became his sentence.

The Carrier of Firewood



'WAMRA'ATUHU HAMMALATAL-HATAB — and his WIFE — the CARRIER OF FIREWOOD — FEE JEEDIHA HABLUN MIN MASAD — around her NECK is a ROPE of twisted PALM FIBRE.'

Beta, his wife was Umm Jameel — and she was no ordinary woman. She was the sister of Abu Sufyan, from the highest nobility of Quraysh, wealthy, and famous for her jewellery. And she was as active in the persecution as her husband.

'Hammalatal-hatab' — the carrier of firewood — is explained in two ways, and both are true to her.

Literally: the reports say she would gather thorny branches and scatter them at night on the path the Prophet ﷺ walked, to wound his feet. Beta, picture the malice in that — a wealthy noblewoman going out at night to place thorns on a road.

And figuratively: in Arabic, 'carrying firewood' between people means carrying tales, spreading slander — because gossip feeds the fire of enmity the way wood



feeds a flame. And she did that too, going between the households of Makkah with stories.

'A rope of masad around her neck.' Beta, masad is rough, twisted palm fibre — the coarse rope of a labourer, the very opposite of the jewelled necklaces she was known for. It is reported that she swore she would sell her famous necklace to fund opposition to Muhammad ﷺ.

So the woman who wore a necklace to fight the deen is described with a rope around her neck. Beta, the poetic justice in this surah is exact at every point.

The Prophecy That Was Never Refuted

And now, beta, the most remarkable thing about this surah — something worth explaining to anyone who asks you why you believe the Quran is from Allah.

This surah declares, in the present tense, in the middle of Makkah, that Abu Lahab will die a disbeliever and enter the Fire.



Now think, beta. Abu Lahab lived for about ten more years after this was revealed. Every day of those ten years, he had in his hands the simplest possible way to destroy Islam completely and permanently.

All he had to do was say: 'I accept Islam.'

One sentence. He did not even have to mean it. He could have declared shahadah publicly, in front of the Quraysh, and then announced: look — your Quran said I would die a disbeliever and burn. It is wrong. Muhammad's book has failed.

Beta, that would have been the end of the message. No argument could have recovered from it. And Abu Lahab was a man who spent a decade of his life and his wealth trying to destroy this deen — he had every motive on earth to do it.

He never did. For ten years, the door stood open, and he never walked through it. He died at Badr's aftermath, of a disease his own family feared to touch, and was buried in a way even his relatives were ashamed of.



Beta, no forger writes a checkable prophecy about a living enemy and then hands that enemy ten years to disprove it. This surah is a standing challenge that was never answered.

And there is a second lesson, beta, and it is a heavy one. Nearness to a righteous person saves nobody. This man was the Prophet's ﷺ uncle. He lived in the same city, walked the same streets, knew him from childhood. His brother Abu Talib protected the Prophet ﷺ; his other relatives — Hamzah and 'Abbas (radiyallahu anhuma) — became pillars of Islam. Same family, same blood, same access.

Guidance is not inherited, beta. It is not transmitted through surnames or family names or being 'from a religious family'. Every soul stands alone before Allah with what it chose.

And a third lesson, which is the most beautiful one. Beta, look at what Abu Lahab's fate did NOT do: it did not make the Prophet ﷺ harsh toward his other relatives, or



bitter, or suspicious of family. He continued to call his people with kindness for the rest of his life.

So when your own relatives oppose you in matters of deen — and for many people, the hardest opposition comes from inside the family — remember this surah. Say the truth clearly, leave the judgement to Allah, and keep your own character intact.

What This Surah Teaches Us

- 1.** Even his enemies testified he had never lied — build the kind of reputation that speaks for you before you speak.
- 2.** Wealth and children availed him nothing: the two things people lean on hardest are the two named as useless.
- 3.** Beware 'carrying firewood' — spreading tales feeds enmity the way wood feeds a fire.
- 4.** This surah is a prophecy an enemy had ten years and every motive to disprove — and never could.



5. Guidance is not inherited: the same family produced Abu Lahab, Hamzah and 'Abbas.

6. Opposition from relatives is the oldest test in this deen — speak the truth and keep your manners.

7. A person's nickname, his status, his beauty and his lineage change nothing about his standing with Allah.

Ya Allah, save us from opposing Your truth, and let our hands build what will benefit us on that Day. Ameen.

— This is a simplified, faithful retelling for understanding, based on the Quran's translation and established tafseer (Ibn Kathir and others). For deeper study, always read with a qualified teacher. —

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