



“An-Nas - The Men”

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In chapter Al-Falaq (113), the protection of Allah was sought against all kinds of evils which are caused by others. But in this chapter the protection of Allah is been sought against evil suggestions and temptations which crop up in man's heart and causes harm to others.

Here protection has been implored from three beings:

The Lord of men

The King of men

The God of men

Rabb or Lord is the Being Who nourishes man by degrees till he attains perfection. Malik or King is the Being Whose rule and laws command obedience. Allah or God is the Supreme Being Who is to be worshipped, loved and must be one's ultimate Objective.

If we ponder over human nature and its behaviour we see that man is apt to seek protection or help from three beings. Firstly, he seeks protection of the being who provides him with nourishment and care. Take the example of a child. Whenever any trouble or harm is caused to him, he spontaneously goes to his parents for help and guidance, for they have been showering nourishment and care over him, and to him they are the best of helpers. Secondly, he seeks the protection or help of the king or ruler. If there is a fear of being robbed or there exists the danger of injury from evil characters, he naturally seeks the help of the police or a government agency. And thirdly, man seeks help from his God as He is the best and last resort for him, for when neither his nourisher, nor his parents, nor any government agency can save him, then the only source of help is the Being Whom he worships. Man knows well, or at least realises, that when all worldly sources fail to provide any help or protection, it is Allah alone Who can provide help or come to his rescue.

Thus all three sources from whom he happens to seek protection or help have been combined in the One Being of Allah. Almighty Allah is the Being Who is the one source Who can provide help and protection in the three situations mentioned earlier.

Thus Allah is that Being Who combines in Himself all the perfect attributes and has the power and authority to provide help and protection in all sorts of situations including the three referred to in this chapter.

Allah is the real Lord and Nourisher. Any person who nourishes someone and brings him up, in fact demonstrates Allah's attribute of Rabubiyyat as it is He Who has instilled love and sympathy in the hearts of men. Parental love and affection are also manifestations of Allah's attribute of Rabb or Nourisher.

Once a woman with her two daughters went to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to get some food, as they were hungry. Hazrat Ayesha (rta), wife of the Holy Prophet, gave her one date, as at that time she had nothing else to give. The woman divided the date into two pieces and gave one piece to each of her two daughters. She herself remained hungry. Later Hazrat Ayesha (rta) disclosed to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) how the mother had showed love for her daughters. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said:

"I swear by the Being in Whose hands my life lies that Allah's love for His creatures is far greater than that which the mother showed to her daughters."

The Being Who inculcated love in the heart of a mother must indeed possess far greater love for His servants. Allah is the real Lord and Nourisher of men. Similarly, true rulership belongs to Allah. Allah grants worldly kingdoms and He takes them away when He wills. In the same way, the only being worthy of being worshipped and adored is Allah as He is the Being Who creates everything, nourishes and makes everything perfect. He alone has control and authority over the huge planets in the universe and even the tiny atoms on this earth, and so He alone deserves to be worshipped as the Lord and Nourisher of men.

Thus, Almighty Allah is the Being Who is the Real Nourisher, the Real King and the Real Being that deserves to be worshipped. And can there be a better or greater being than Allah from whom help and protection can be sought? So, in this chapter, protection has been sought against the slinking devil who makes evil suggestions and arouses evil inclinations in the hearts of men.

Khannas, or the slinking devil, is the one who makes evil suggestions and then withdraws. That is why he is described in the Qur'an as yuwas-wisu fi sudurin nas (one who whispers evil suggestions secretly into the hearts of men). Khannas is of two kinds: minal jinnati wan-nas (jinn and men).

Jinn is that kind of creature who is hidden from the human eye. Anything which is hidden is called jinn in Arabic. People who live in mountains or jungles are also called jinn, because they are generally not seen by people. Similarly, germs of diseases are also called jinn, because they cannot be observed by the naked eye

except with the help of a microscope. In the same way, the creature which motivates human passions in the hearts of men is here called jinn, because it is not visible as such.

It may be pointed out that man combines in himself animal and angelic passions. Animal passions are love, anger, etc. These are the passions that motivate human actions. On the other hand, intelligence, conscience and high morals create in him the awareness to differentiate between right and wrong and make him cognisant of accountability for his actions in this life.

The hidden element that generates human activities in man through animal passions is called jinn, and the one which regulates and prevents human activities from exceeding the limits and deviating from the right path through noble conscience and high morals is called angel in the terminology of the Qur'an. But when a jinn causes human activities to deviate or exceed the limits, then he becomes a shaitan (devil).

The word shaitan comes from two sources: shayata, which means to destroy, and shatana, which means to become distant or remote. When a person exceeds the limits or deviates from the right path, he takes himself away from the mercy of Allah. In other words, when the jinn which motivates evil human activities makes man exceed the limits, he becomes shaitan, but when the same jinn, through noble conscience and high morals, keeps human activities under control, then he becomes the one who submits to the commandments of Allah and thus becomes a Muslim. It is in this sense that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: "My shaitan has become a Muslim."

In this chapter it has been explained that people who are called khannas in the Qur'an are of two kinds: One kind acts stealthily like jinns and creates doubts and suspicions in the hearts of people. In this case, such a jinn is called khannas or shaitan. The other kind consists of those people who instigate others to do evil and such people have also been called khannas or shayatin in the Qur'an. The Holy Qur'an tells us that on the Day of Resurrection shaitan will try to clear his position before Allah by saying that it is man who is responsible for his evil deeds and that he only gave the suggestion. Thus, whether khannas acts stealthily like a jinn or is from that group of mankind who creates doubts and suspicions in the hearts of others, it is the duty of a true Muslim to seek Allah's help and protection against the evil prompting of the khannas so that he may be saved from causing harm to himself or to others. That is why the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said that a Muslim is a person from whose tongue and hands others are safe. In other words, a Muslim should be careful about his responsibilities when he is acting as someone's nourisher, ruler and object of love. When discharging his duties he should not be influenced by the doubts or evil suggestions of the khannas.

In the explanation of these three attributes of Allah as Rabb or Nourisher, Malik or King, and Ilah or the perfect Object of worship and adoration, there is a deeper meaning. Khannas creates suspicion in three ways. Sometimes a person regards someone besides Allah as his real nourisher; sometimes a person accepts the supremacy of, or obeys others to an extent that he virtually bows to them as he should to Allah; and sometimes man loves human beings and himself to such a degree that he forsakes Allah. In other words, he is so engrossed in the love of himself, his children, his reputation and his worldly gains that he forgets Allah. Thus he disregards the rights and obligations of others and causes harm to them in the scramble to gain something for himself. But when a person seeks the help and protection of his Lord, King and God, he in fact saves himself from the evil consequences of evil suggestions and suspicions of devilish people who dissuade a person in the three ways mentioned earlier. So man should accept the Lordship of Allah, follow His commandments and under no circumstances should he give himself wholly to worldly objectives. Instead Allah should become the main objective of his love, obedience and adoration.

Human rights, for which man is responsible and regarding which there is always a danger that he may not discharge them impartially because of the evil instigation of the devil, can be divided into three categories:

1. Rights concerning one's self
2. Rights concerning one's fellow human beings

(These two are called huquq ul-'ibad, that is, rights which are due to human beings.)

3. Rights concerning Allah

(These are called huquq ul-Allah.)

When a person believes Allah to be his sole Nourisher, he will not act in such a way that Allah's nourishment is denied to him and in this way, he preserves the rights concerning himself. When man believes Allah to be his real King and obeys all His commandments concerning his fellow beings, then in this way, he guarantees the rights of others. And when man believes Allah to be the only Being worthy of worship, he discharges his duties which he owes to his Creator. Thus if a man believes Allah to be his real Nourisher, his real King and his real Object of Worship, and keeping these three attributes in mind he seeks his Creator's help and protection against the insinuations and evil suggestions of the devil, then he is sure to guarantee the rights and safety regarding himself and he is also sure to

fulfil the obligations he owes to others and he will also perform his obligations to Allah. Such a person can then be called a true Muslim.

Classical commentators of the Holy Qur'an have mentioned a fine point with regards to the use of the word an-nas on five occasions in this chapter. According to them, on each occasion the word an-nas conveys a different connotation. In Rabb un-nas, it refers to one's childhood at which stage Allah's blessings and grace concerning His nourishment are very evident. In Malikin-nas, reference has been made to one's maturity and youth when it is essential for one to obey the laws and regulations of the government for one's progress. In Ilahin-nas, reference has been made to one's old age when generally one realises that Allah alone is one's Lord and Nourisher. In sudurin-nas, the word an-nas refers to those righteous persons in whose hearts the devil tries to create suspicions and doubts and thus tries to make him deviate from the path of righteousness. And lastly, in minal jinnat-i wan-nas, reference has been made to those evil-minded people who weaken other people's determination to go along the path of righteousness by creating suspicion and doubt in their minds.

Now think carefully over this: If an individual seeks the help and the protection of Allah Who is the Nourisher, the King and the Lord of the worlds, against the devil, then can such a person do harm in any way to himself or to his fellow beings or entertain any doubt about, or be disobedient in any way to Allah? In fact, a person who seeks Allah's blessings and protection through the prayers mentioned in these two chapters of the Qur'an (113 and 114), called mu'awwazatain, lives and dies in Islam and is safe from all sorts of troubles and tribulations. He lives a life that is peaceful for himself and for his fellow human beings. He is in an abode of peace and is a perfect Muslim in all respects.