

For Fast 30

Note: We end appropriately by going forward to the prayers in the last two chapters of the Holy Quran. For this, we must skip the many prayers which occur between the chapters covered in the last fasts and the end of the Quran.

It is a great tragedy, and most lamentable, that it is commonly believed that these two last chapters of the Quran should be read, in a ceremonial way, for the purpose of warding off spells cast by magic. People even believe that ch. 113 was revealed after the Holy Prophet Muhammad had himself fallen victim to such a spell by someone's witchcraft in Madina.

The fact is that the words of these prayers themselves guide us as to what to seek refuge from, who to seek refuge in, and how, by impressing upon our minds certain attributes of God, we can save ourselves from being misled in darkness and by wrong ideas.

Chapter 113: *The Dawn*

- 1 Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the dawn,
- 2 from the evil of what He has created,
- 3 and from the evil of intense darkness, when it comes,
- 4 and from the evil of those who cast (evil suggestions) in firm resolutions,
- 5 and from the evil of the envier when he envies.

Notes: 1. We seek refuge in the Lord Who brings about dawn after the darkness, that He will also lead us out of our darkness when we don't know how to achieve a difficult goal which is before us.

2. To achieve any goal, we need to use resources. But anything which God has created can cause harm if it is used in an incorrect way. We seek refuge from that misuse.

3. Then we may be in complete darkness as to how to proceed.

4. After overcoming these two obstacles, so that we have gathered our resources and can use them without harm, and we know how to proceed, there is then the problem that other people try to weaken our resolution by casting suggestions that the task is impossible and the goal unachievable. We seek refuge in being influenced by them.

5. Finally, when we begin to achieve success, there are those who are envious of us. We seek refuge in Allah from the danger they may pose to us.

Chapter 114: *Mankind*

- 1 Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind,
- 2 the King of mankind,
- 3 the God of mankind,
- 4 from the evil of the whisperings of the sneaking (devil),
- 5 who whispers into the hearts of people,
- 6 (and is) from among the jinn and mankind.

Notes: This chapter refers us to three aspects of the relation of God with mankind: Lord, King, and God. It teaches us to remember these three attributes when facing any difficulty.

‘Lord’ (*rabb*) means the One Who makes us progress by taking us through various stages of development, one after another. So, when in difficulty, we remember that God is Lord Who makes us pass through difficulties as stages in our own progress and betterment.

‘King’ (*malik*) means God is the One holding complete control of the material world. So we must persevere in the difficult situation and not abandon our efforts out of fear that something will do us harm in this world’s life.

‘God’ (*ilah*) means that God is the only One to be worshipped. If, for example, we rely on some unlawful way to get out of a difficulty, in violation of the commandments of God, then we are not taking God as being the only One to be worshipped. If we believe that there is only a certain someone, usually someone in power above us, who can get us out of our difficulty, provided that we do their bidding regardless of God’s commands, then again we are not considering God as being the only One to be worshipped.

Verses 4–6 tell us that ideas will be whispered into our hearts, by evil forces outside us, and by powerful persons, authorities, media etc. (i.e., *jinn*) and ordinary persons, to make us deviate from regarding God as Lord, King and God. They will suggest some shortcut, involving wrongdoing, as a quick solution.

The following three ideas will enter into our minds: (1) that we are not being led to improvement through being required to deal with the difficulty in a moral and legitimate way (i.e., Allah is not Lord), (2) that someone else has control of the material world who can harm us and do us good ultimately (i.e., Allah is not King), and (3) that we must regard someone else as our real saviour and submit to them absolutely as if no one was higher than them (i.e., Allah is not God). In this chapter, we seek refuge from all such suggestions.
