

Tafsīr Juzu adh-Dhāriyāt

Sūrat an-Najm

سُورَةُ النَّجْمِ

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- In his introduction to this Surah, Sheikh al-Barāk said: ‘Sūrat an-Najm is a Makkan Sūrah, according to scholarly consensus. It contains sixty-two ayāt. The Sūrah begins with an oath from Allah, declaring that the Prophet ﷺ is completely free from all the faults that the polytheists accused him of, such as being misguided, astray, or lying about Allah. The Sūrah then praises the one from among the angels through whom the Prophet ﷺ received revelation, namely Jibrīl. It describes how the angel came to the Prophet ﷺ, how he conveyed revelation to him, and how the Prophet ﷺ saw him on two occasions. The Sūrah then rebukes the polytheists for taking al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā as deities. It criticizes them for attributing offspring to Allah, even though they themselves preferred to have sons and considered daughters inferior, while attributing daughters to Allah. The Prophet ﷺ is then instructed to turn away from them. Allah will reward His servants according to their deeds, whether they are people who do good or people who do evil. The Sūrah concludes by mentioning some of what was recorded in the Scriptures of Ibrāhīm and Mūsā concerning Allah’s laws regarding reward and punishment, as well as His established ways in the universe. Among these examples are what happened to ‘Ād, Thamūd, the people of Nūh, and the people of Lūṭ. The Sūrah then draws attention to the nearness of the Hereafter, which is called al-Āzifah (the Approaching Event). It rebukes those who deny the Hereafter and reject the Qur’an. In an authentic narration, ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd said: ‘The first Sūrah in which a prostration verse was revealed was an-Najm. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ prostrated, and those behind him also prostrated, except for one man whom I saw take a handful of dust and prostrate upon it. I later saw that he was killed as a disbeliever. He was Umayyah ibn Khalaf.’ [Bukhāri, Muslim]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ ۝۱ مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ ۝۲ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۝۳ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ۝۴ عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ ۝۵ ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَىٰ ۝۶ وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ ۝۷ ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّىٰ ۝۸ فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ ۝۹ فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ ۝۱۰ مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ ۝۱۱ أَفَتُمَرُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَىٰ ۝۱۲ وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ ۝۱۳ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ ۝۱۴ عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ ۝۱۵ إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ ۝۱۶ مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ ۝۱۷ لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ ءَايَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ ۝۱۸﴾

(1) - By the star when it descends. (2) - Your companion has not strayed, nor has he erred. (3) - Nor does he speak from his own desire. (4) - It is nothing but revelation that is revealed. (5) - Taught to him by one mighty in strength. (6) - Possessing soundness, so he rose and appeared. (7) - While he

was in the highest horizon. (8) - Then he approached and descended. (9) - And was at a distance of two bow lengths or nearer. (10) - And he revealed to His Servant what he revealed. (11) - The heart did not lie about what it saw. (12) - Will you then dispute with him over what he sees? (13) - And he certainly saw him in another descent. (14) - At the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary. (15) - Near it is the Garden of Refuge. (16) - When there covered the Lote Tree that which covered it. (17) - The sight did not swerve, nor did it transgress. (18) - Indeed, he saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord.

- **General meaning:** In these *ayāt*, Allah declares His Prophet ﷺ free from everything the *mushrikūn* (polytheists) said about him, and affirms the soundness of his knowledge and actions. Allah swears by the star when it descends to affirm this. The *ayāt* also mention the angel from whom the Prophet ﷺ received the revelation, namely Jibrīl, the greatest of the angels. The *ayāt* also relate that the Prophet ﷺ saw Jibrīl twice in his true form in which Allah created him, once on earth and once in the heavens at the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary (*Sidratul Muntahā*). There he saw some of the greatest signs of Allah.

- **Tafseer:**

{وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ} – “**By the star when it descends**”. This is a *qasam* (oath) by Allah. He swore by the star in the state of its descent, meaning when it sets and disappears at the appearance of the dawn. Some scholars of *tafseer* mention that this specifically refers to *al-Thurayya* (Pleiades) which is a cluster of stars seen over the Arabian Peninsula. Other scholars said that it refers to all the stars that are used to drive away the *shayāṭīn* (devils). It descends (*tahwā*) when it shoots after the *shayṭān* who tries to steal the news of the heavens. This explanation is the most correct one, and the scholar Ibn al-Qayyim preferred it and attributed it to Ibn Abbās and al-Ḥassan al-Baṣrī.

{مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ} – “**Your companion has not strayed**”. This is the *jawāb al-qasam* (response to the oath) or what the oath is affirming. Allah affirms that the Prophet ﷺ did not deviate from the path of truth. This is what *al-ḍalāl* (misguidance) is.

{وَمَا غَوَىٰ} – “**Nor has he erred**”. He also did not follow the path of *ghay* (error). Since Allah denied both deviation and error from him, then it necessarily follows that he was guided in his knowledge and rightly directed in his words and actions. The expression ‘*your companion*’ is an invitation to them to follow the Prophet ﷺ and believe in him, because they were the people who knew him the best. He lived among them in Makkah for forty years before prophethood, upright and noble. They used to call him *al-Ṣādiq* (the truthful) and *al-Amīn* (the trustworthy) because they had never known him to lie.

{وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ} – “**Nor does he speak from his own desire**”. Meaning, he does not speak any speech which arises from his own personal desire. Rather he speaks according to what Allah reveals to him. This is why Allah subsequently says:

{إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ} – “**It is nothing but revelation that is revealed**”. Meaning, what he speaks of the Qurān and Sunnah, it is nothing but revelation that Allah reveals to him.

{عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ} – “**Taught to him by one mighty in strength**”. This is a description of the angel who brought down the revelation. The Prophet ﷺ was taught the revelation by an angel mighty in strength, namely Jibrīl. The tremendous strength of Jibrīl prevents the *shayāṭīn* from having any hope of stealing the revelation

{ذُو مِرَّةٍ} – “**Possessing soundness**”. Meaning, possessing a beautiful appearance and noble character. These are two other descriptions of Jibrīl.

{فَاسْتَوَىٰ} – “**So, he rose and appeared**”. Meaning, Jibrīl rose and appeared in his true form when the Prophet ﷺ saw him blocking the horizon.

{وَهُوَ بِالْأَفْقِ الْأَعْلَى} – **“While he was in the highest horizon”**. Meaning, the horizon of the heaven. Jibrīl appeared to the Prophet ﷺ in the form Allah created him, with his wings filling the horizon.

{ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى} – **“Then he approached and descended”**. Jibrīl approached and came close to the Prophet ﷺ to convey the revelation to him. In approaching him, he descended from the upper horizon until he was close to him.

{فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى} – **“And was at a distance of two bow lengths or nearer”**. Jibrīl drew close to the Prophet ﷺ at a distance of two bow lengths, or even closer to that. The Arabs used to measure distances by the bow, the spear, the forearm, and the handspan.

{فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ} – **“And he revealed to His Servant”**. Meaning, Jibrīl revealed to the servant of Allah, which is referring to the Prophet ﷺ. Mentioning the Prophet ﷺ with the description of ‘ubūdiyyah (servitude) and attributing him to Allah, is a great honour for him.

{مَا أَوْحَىٰ} – **“What he revealed”**. Meaning, he revealed to him something immense and great, namely the religious rulings and the straight path.

{مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ} – **“The heart did not lie about what it saw”**. The heart of the Prophet ﷺ did not deny what his eyes saw of the true form of Jibrīl. Rather he knew it and was certain of it. His heart and his sight were in perfect harmony, which shows the perfect nature of the revelation that Allah sent to him. His heart did not deny or doubt what his eyes saw.

{أَفْتُمِرُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يُرَىٰ} – **“Will you then dispute with him over what he sees?”**. Allah addresses the *mushrikūn* when they denied the Prophet ﷺ concerning what he told them of his night journey and his seeing Jibrīl. Meaning, do you argue with him and deny what he saw with his own eyes? The question form is to rebuke them and to condemn them for their denial.

{وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ} – **“And he certainly saw him in another descent”**. The Prophet ﷺ saw Jibrīl in his true form a second time coming down to him. He saw Jibrīl in a place whose full knowledge only Allah possesses. This was in the seventh heaven when the Prophet ﷺ was ascended to the heavens.

{عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ} – **“At the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary”**. This is where the Prophet ﷺ saw Jibrīl the second time. *Sidratul Muntahā* is a great lote tree from the world of the unseen. The knowledge of all created beings comes to an end there. Whatever ascends from the earth ends there and is received, and whatever descends from above it ends there and is received. In the *ḥadīth* of the Night Journey, its leaves are described as being like the ears of elephants and its fruits like large vessels.

{عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْمُونِ} – **“Near it is the Garden of Refuge”**. Near the Lote Tree is the garden of Paradise in which the *muttaqūn* (righteous) take refuge and which they enter and dwell. This shows that Paradise is in the highest location above the seventh heaven.

{إِذْ يَغْشَى السَّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى} – **“When there covered the Lote Tree that which covered it”**. The Prophet ﷺ saw Jibreel at the time when the Lote Tree was covered by tremendous things, whose description is known only to Allah. The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘When it was covered by what Allah willed of His command, it changed. No one among Allah’s creation could describe how beautiful it was. Then Allah revealed to me whatever He revealed, and He prescribed fifty prayers for me every day and night. [Muslim]

{مَا رَأَىٰ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَعَىٰ} – **“The sight did not swerve”**. The sight of the Prophet ﷺ did not wander right or left away from what he saw.

{وَمَا طَغَىٰ} – **“Nor did it transgress”**. It did not go beyond the limit by looking at more than he had been permitted to see. This demonstrates the completeness of his manners, for it is known that a person who arrives at an unfamiliar place naturally looks in every direction. Instead, the Prophet ﷺ stood where Allah wanted him to stand, and he did not fall short or go beyond it, or drift away from it

{لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ} – **“Indeed, he saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord”**. On the night of *al-Isrā wal-Mi’rāj*, the Prophet ﷺ saw many of Allah's great signs, such as Paradise and the Hellfire

and other great things. This includes seeing Jibrīl in his original form having six hundred wings, as narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas’ūd in his interpretation of this *āyah*. As for the Prophet ﷺ seeing Jibrīl in a form other than his original form, this occurred many times. He would see him in the form of a man of normal build, such as Dihya al-Kalbi and others.

● **Points of benefit and rulings**

1. Allah swears by whatever He wills of His creation. Here He swore by the star that descends when it is used to drive away the eavesdropping devils.
2. Deviation and error are denied from the Prophet ﷺ and their opposites - guidance and right conduct - are affirmed for him.
3. All of the speech of the Prophet ﷺ concerning what he conveys about Allah is revelation from Allah.
4. The one who taught the Prophet ﷺ the Qurān and the Sunnah is Jibrīl. This refutes the polytheists who claim that it was a human who taught him.
5. Jibrīl is mighty in strength, and he possesses a good appearance and good character.
6. The closeness of Jibrīl to the Prophet ﷺ when he saw him the first time was estimated as two bow lengths or closer.
7. Jibrīl is the angel entrusted with the revelation, as the *ayāt* and *aḥādīth* indicate.
8. The Prophet ﷺ saw Jibrīl twice in his true form, once on earth and once in the heavens. When he saw him, he understood what he saw with his heart and was certain of it.
9. The Prophet ﷺ informed the *mushrikūn* of what he had seen and they disputed with him about it.
10. When the Prophet ﷺ saw Jibrīl in the heavens, it was at *Sidratul Muntahā*. At that time the Lot Tree was covered by things that none but Allah can encompass.
11. Paradise is near *Sidratul Muntahā*.
12. The Prophet's ﷺ sight when he saw Jibrīl was fixed upon what he was seeing. It did not stray left or right nor did it go beyond.
13. The Prophet ﷺ saw on that occasion signs from the greatest signs of Allah.

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﴿أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ ۖ وَمَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰ ۚ أَلَكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَىٰ ۚ تِلْكَ إِذًا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَىٰ ۚ إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَءَابَاؤُكُمْ مَّا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ ۚ إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ الْهُدَىٰ ۚ أَمْ لِلْإِنسَانِ مَا تَمَنَّى ۚ فَلِلَّهِ الْآخِرَةُ وَالْأُولَىٰ﴾

(19) - Have you considered al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā? (20) - And Manāt, the third - the other one? (21) - Is the male for you and for Him the female? (22) – That would then be an unjust division. (23) - They are nothing but names which you have named, you and your forefathers, for which Allah has sent down no authority. They follow nothing but assumption and what the souls desire, and there has already come to them from their Lord guidance. (24) - Or is there for man whatever he wishes? (25) - Rather, to Allah belongs the Hereafter and the first life.

- **General meaning:** These *ayāt* condemn the *mushrikūn* (polytheists) for belittling Allah by taking al-Lāt, al-‘Uzzā, and Manāt as deities worshiped besides Allah and for attributing offspring to Him, while assigning to Him the lesser share according to them, which is female, and keeping for themselves the

better of the two, which is the male. Allah then makes clear that what they call deities is nothing but fabrication for which Allah has sent down no authority. They are nothing but names with no reality behind them. In all of this, they follow assumptions and the desires of their souls, even though Allah has made the path of guidance clear to them and established the proof against them through the guidance brought by His Messenger ﷺ. In the end, all matters belong to Allah, and to Him belongs this world and the Hereafter; the first and the last.

- **Tafseer:**

{أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ وَمَنَاةَ} – ***“Have you considered al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā?”***. These were idols that the Arabs used to worship besides Allah. al-Lāt was the idol of Thaqīf in aṭ-Ṭā’if. It was a white stone with inscriptions on it, and Quraysh and all the Arabs revered and venerated it. It had custodians, and it was only demolished after Thaqīf accepted Islam. The Prophet ﷺ sent al-Mughīrah ibn Shu’ba to destroy it, which he did by burning it with fire and demolishing it. As for al-‘Uzzā, it was a tree in the valley of Nakhlah between Makkah and aṭ-Ṭā’if. Most of the Arabs worshipped it, especially Quraysh. When the Prophet ﷺ conquered Makkah, he sent Khālīd ibn al-Walīd to cut it down. As for Manāt, it was an idol belonging to Khuzā’ah, al-Aws and al-Khazraj. They revered it and would begin their pilgrimage to the Ka’bah from it. It was located at al-Mushallal near Qudayd between Makkah and Madinah. The Arabs had other idols which they venerated besides these idols mentioned in the *ayah*, however, these three are specifically mentioned because they were more famous than the others.

In their explanation of Allah’s saying: *‘And to Allah belong the Most Beautiful Names, so call upon Him by them. And leave those who deviate concerning His Names’* [al-A’rāf: 180], some scholars of *tafseer* mentioned that among the ways the *mushrikūn* deviated regarding Allah’s names was their deriving the name al-Lāt from the name Allah, al-‘Uzzā from the name al-Azīz, and Manāt from the name al-Mannān.

The question form is to condemn and rebuke the *mushrikūn*. It addresses them by saying: ‘Have you considered these idols you worship? Tell me, do they possess any of the power and greatness that would make them deserving of worship besides Allah?’

{وَمَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ} – ***“And Manāt, the third?”***. The third in relation to the two before it. It is described as the third for emphasis.

{الْأُخْرَىٰ} – ***“The other one?”***. This is to show that it is lower in rank and inferior in status, although all the idols are blameworthy and deserving of criticism.

{أَلَكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَىٰ} – ***“Is the male for you and for Him the female?”***. Meaning, do you ascribe daughters to Allah, as you claim, and want sons for yourselves? The *mushrikūn* falsely believed that their idols were the daughters of Allah. Allah condemns them by asking: Do you have the kind that you love and consider desirable (sons) while He has the kind that you regard as undesirable (daughters)?

{تِلْكَ إِذًا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَىٰ} – ***“That would then be an unjust division”***. It would be an unjust division because they assign to Allah what they themselves dislike. It would be an unjust division even if it was between the creation according to their own view. How much more so when it concerns the Creator, who is far above having a parent or a child. This is speaking to them according to their own false assumptions and beliefs by way of argument, otherwise the very idea of attributing offspring to Allah is false.

{إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ} – ***“They are nothing but names”***. The idols that the *mushrikūn* worship are nothing but names. They do not possess any of the qualities of divinity (*ulūhiyyah*). They are simply names applied to lifeless objects, with no reality behind them. A name without a thing it refers to counts for nothing. It is meaningless and empty.

{سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا} – ***“Which you have named”***. Meaning, you assigned them these names and claimed for them what you have claimed, based on your false desires.

{أَنْتُمْ وَأَبَاؤُكُمْ} – “**You and your forefathers**”. Your misguided forefathers, whom you have followed in their misguidance.

{مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ} – “**For which Allah has sent down no authority**”. Allah has sent down no proof or evidence for worshipping them. Anything for which Allah has not sent down any authority is false and corrupt and is not to be taken as a religion.

{إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ} – “**They follow nothing but assumption**”. They follow nothing but conjectures and illusions in their worship of the idols.

{وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ} – “**And what the souls desire**”. Their inclination towards *shirk* was in accordance with their whims and desires. Allah did not say ‘their souls’ to indicate that they follow the desires of their souls and also the souls of their forefathers. There was nothing to make them follow conjecture and their own desire (such as lack of knowledge and guidance) which is why Allah says:

{وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ الْهُدَى} – “**And there has already come to them from their Lord guidance**”. Meaning, that the clear truth containing their guidance had already come to them through the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The *ayah* therefore rebukes them for continuing to follow their desires despite the presence of clear guidance. This is worse than following their desires when there is no guide to the truth.

{أَمْ لِلْإِنْسَانِ مَا تَمَنَّى} – “**Or is there for man whatever he wishes?**”. Meaning, a person does not always have everything they wish for. This refutes the *mushrikūn*, who despite their disbelief and association of partners with Allah still indulged in wishful thinking. For example, they falsely believed that their idols would intercede for them before Allah and that they were truly guided. Not everyone who claims to be guided is truly guided, and not everyone gets what they wish for, especially the disbelievers who are attachment to false wishes. This is why Allah subsequently refutes them by saying:

{فِ اللَّهِ الْآخِرَةُ وَالْأُولَى} – “**Rather, to Allah belongs the Hereafter and the first life**”. Meaning, Allah alone controls all affairs of this world and the Hereafter. He gives to whom He wills and withholds from whom He wills. The outcome, therefore, is not in accordance with the wishes of the *mushrikūn* or with their whims and desires. The Hereafter is mentioned first because Allah’s sovereignty and authority is more apparent and manifest there than in this world. This *ayah* also extinguishes any hope that the disbelievers might have of obtaining any good through the worship of their idols.

Points of benefit and rulings

1. Among the most famous idols of the *mushrikūn* were the three mentioned here: al-Lāt , al-‘Uzzā, and Manāt.
2. The foolishness of the *mushrikūn* is evident in taking trees and stones as objects of worship, when they are the most deficient of all deficient things.
3. The *mushrikūn* of the Arabs attributed offspring to Allah. Their great foolishness included attributing to Allah what they themselves considered inferior (daughters) while choosing for themselves what they regarded as superior (sons).
4. This division is unjust in every respect: rationally, legally, and according to custom.
5. The objects worshipped by the *mushrikūn* possess none of the qualities of divinity. They are merely names with no reality behind them.
6. The importance of proof and evidence is so great that the absence of proof itself is evidence of the falsehood of what the *mushrikūn* worship of false deities.
7. What the *mushrikūn* relied upon in their polytheism was nothing but the following of assumptions and desires.
8. The *mushrikūn* have no valid excuse for persisting in their polytheism given that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came to them with clear guidance from their Lord.

9. Salvation and success in attaining Paradise are not achieved through wishful thinking.
10. Allah is the One who gives and the One who withholds because He is the Owner of this world and the Hereafter.