{Recitation and prayers}

We will begin our study of Surat Lahab, number 111 of the Qur’an. We are reaching the end of the Mus’haf, 3 more Surats to go after this one.

And Surat Lahab as you all know is one of the shortest Surat of the Qur’an and it is dedicated to the historical accounts of one particular enemy of Islam, one particular kafir: **Abu Lahab and his wife**.

There are few questions to be asked that are of importance. Allah (Swt) has not dedicated a particular Surat to a particular enemy anywhere else. This is a very unique case in the Qur’an. There is no particular Surat dedicated by name to **Abu Jahl** or to **Akhrash Ibn Suraysh** or to **Utbah Ibn Rabiha**.

All those enemies of Islam, there are no Surats dedicated to them in this way.

* So the question to be asked is why this special emphasis given to this particular enemy of Islam? That’s one question we’re going to try to answer.
* Other questions we will have to deal with as the darss goes on, is of course, the placement of this Surat. It comes after “*Iza Gua a nasrulahi wal fath*” in the Mus’haf, and it is before Surat Al Ikhlass. So we will look at some benefits at where it is placed in the Mus’haf and how that teaches us some lessons.

But we begin in sha Allah with some historical background before we get into the textual background today and the coherence of this Surat, we will deal with some things regarding the historical of Abu Lahab himself:

* Who is this man and who is his spouse?

First thing is that, this is one of the most famous people in Makkah, even before Islam, he is one of the most famous, wealthiest people in Makkah. By some accounts, in Seerat traditions, he is also the treasurer, so he is basically the treasure secretary if you will, of that time. Very famous, politically powerful, also young guy and he is also good looking. His original name is **Abdul Huza** but his nickname is **Abu Lahab** and *Lahab* is actually a *flame that flickers* and gives off light. And it is red in texture and this was the symbol of beauty to the Arabs. And they would call him Abu Lahab. Abu by the way does not literally mean *father* in Arabic necessarily. When someone is affiliated with something or associated to something you can put “Abu” next to their name. Like ‘Ali (RA) who was lying on the dust and covered up in dust. So the Messenger (PBH) comes to him and he says: “Yaa Aba turrab”, literally meaning “*the father of the dust*”, which means that Ali (RA) was covered in dust. So similarly, a famous Sahabi you may know, probably you do know, by the name of Abu Hureira, because he has a cat and he loved it a lot. Since he is always with the cat, he is called “the father of cat”. He is not really the father of the cat but the idea is associated with the cat. Now Abu Lahab is given this nickname because he had a reddish complexion in his skin and was considered exceptionally good looking, like a flame that sticks out in the night. So he was given this nickname because of his good look. On one hand, you have to appreciate that he is a very wealthy man, very politically powerful man. And he is also considered good looking, kind of like a celebrity of our times. That’s his status. Plus, his lineage is very powerful. You know there are two main big tribes: there is the “***Hashimi***” tribe and the “***Humaya***” tribe. Abu Lahab is the Grandson of Hashim. So he actually got a pretty high status in terms of his family background also. And that is important to the Arabs: where you come from? What tribe you belong to? What background you have? That is also very important.

Now who is the other person mentioned in this Surat? His wife.

His wife original name was ‘Urwa. She is actually the Granddaughter of ***Humaya***. So Abu Lahab is the Grandson of one of the great tribe leaders ***Hashim***, and his wife, ‘Urwa is the Granddaughter of ***Humaya***. So she is also a high celebrity from her tribe. So these two high profile celebrities are married to each other. So this is like a power couple, both of them are very famous, very politically influential. She actually goes around and when somebody messes with her, she says “*know that I am the daughter of the leader of the tribe*”. So she flaunts her status, her family background in people’s face. And she actually did that with the Messenger (PBH) too. Also her nickname was “***Oumm Jamil***”. The word “Jamil” means beautiful. “Oumm” means of course “mother”, but just like “father” is not literally understood as father, the word “mother” is not literally understood like “mother”.

***Oumm Jamil*** was her nickname because she was known among the city as being exceptionally a beautiful. So this couple, the city looks up to them not only for their power, their status and their family nobility but also for their good look. This is your class A celebrity couple and they enjoyed this status in the society.

Now Abu Lahab happens to be a particularly vicious enemy of Islam and we will study what makes him so vicious later on I am going to give you some hints of it for now.

It is one thing to be a mushrik, which is a high enough crime to lead you in hellfire. That is a bad enough crime. On top of that, to be a mushrik and a kafir and to be an enemy of the Messenger (PBH), you are already in a whole that you are digging even deeper. But even to be an enemy of the Messenger (PBH), to go out of your way in hating and showing animosity to the Messenger (PBH) of Allah (Swt), nobody went as far as Abu Lahab. No one. There is no other enemy of Islam that goes as far as Abu Lahab. And we should learn something about his character. He was the next door neighbor of the Prophet (PBH). They shared a wall. And in the ancient days it is a wall but there is no roof. So he would throw stuff over into the other person’s yard. When he would know that the Messenger (PBH) was reciting Qur’an or praying, he would throw trash, dead animal’s skin, and filth over to his Neighbor’s, to hurt Him and cause Him pain. The Messenger (PBH) would cry out sometimes in desperation “this is the rights of your neighbors you fulfill”. Even in the Arabs, there was some sense of chivalry, nobility and dignity that you do not do this to your neighbors. Abu Lahab would even cross that line. Also you should know that he is the uncle of the Messenger (PBH) of Allah (Swt), a direct relationship. Not only is he the uncle, he is also his father in law. Two of his sons are married to two of the daughters of the Messenger (PBH). So he got a lot of relationship family ties to the Messenger (PBH) of Allah. By the way, when the Messenger (PBL) of Allah declared His status as a Messenger and He declared the message of Islam, he had his sons divorced the daughters of the Messengers (PBH). One of the sons ***‘Utayba*** actually comes to the Messenger (PBH) and spits towards Him. The spit did not reach the Prophet (PBH), but his was a symbol of great disrespect that you come to someone and spit in front of them, towards their feet. This is what he has done after he divorced the daughter of the Messenger (PBH). So when he did so, when his son spited like that, the Messenger (PBH) of Allah had made Du’a against him. Now understand he had done two crimes: one of them is not just against the dignity of the Messenger (PBH), he had hurt the family of the Messenger (PBH) too. So when he does so, the Messengers (PBH) made Du’a against him and Abu Lahab heard of this Du’a and he got paranoid. He knew that something bad will happen to his son. What does that tell you? It tells that Abu Lahab, as much as he hates the Messengers (PBH), is still afraid of his Du’a. Somewhere deep down inside he knows that the Prophet (PBH) is speaking the truth and Allah (Swt) is on his side. Because who will accept the Du’a except Allah (Swt)?

So what happen is that they are travelling on a journey and he put special guards around the tent of his son and he put horses outside and stuff so there would be enough warnings, because the Du’a specifically had to do with: “*O Allah, have him killed by one of your dog that you have created*”. The Messengers (PBH) made Du’a that he be killed by an animal. A lion comes in the middle of the night, passes through other animals. When a lion passes through other animals what do those animals do? They cry out, they make noise, they warn. No animals make a sound. The lion makes it all the way into the tent and devoured the son of Abu Lahad. This is part of the fulfilment of the Du’a of Messengers (PBH). This is a little bit of background. Even going further, you should know something else about Abu Lahad, something that we mentioned before. The Messenger (PBH) lost a couple of sons early in their age. And one of them is Qassim (RA). When the Messenger (PBH) loses Qassim (RA), Abu Lahab hears the news and and comes out of his house screaming and dancing. And he goes to the Majliss gathering the leaders of the Quaraysh and says “ *Batarra Muhamadun*”. You know the Surat Kauthar “*Ina shaani aka huwal abtar*”, “Batara” means to have your lineage cut off, to have no one save your name after you. Because the only way your name can be repeated in the Arab tradition and culture was that your have sons that carry your name. Of course daughters go to somebody else’s family and the children carry their name. So your name can be carried by sons. So when the Messenger (PBH) loses his son, Abu Lahab goes and celebrates. Now think about it for a moment. First of all, all animosity aside, he sis his uncle. This is the death of a child in his own family. Forget everything else. What kind of disgusting human being would do that and by the way, even when enemies fight each other, enemies are at each other’s throats, when an enemy loses a child, you do not celebrate. You might even stop the battle and say “I feel for you”. This is part of nobility in battle. Nobody celebrates the death of a child. How despicable must you be? And to do that to the Messenger (PBH) of Allah, is vicious upon vicious upon vicious. It is a layer after layer of animosity. This is something special. This kind of hatred is not shared by any other enemy of the Messenger (PBH). And this, on top of the fact that, he happens to be family. This is the last place where you would expect this kind of intense hatred. This is why Abu Lahab has been given this special mention, and a special punishment dedicated to him. When Allah mentioned disbelievers will burn in the hellfire, Abu Lahab is included but then Allah include him specially, specially dedicating a Surat to him shows you the special anger Allah has towards this wretched human being and his spouse. We will get to his spouse in Sha Allah a little bit later on. So this is some background and going further in this background, I want to tell you that earlier on the Messenger (PBH), when he was told to invite the people, he invites the leader of Quaraysh to a dinner. He feeds them and as He is feeding them, he tries to introduce to them the Message. When he introduces his Message (you may have experience with dealing with roughly guests), he is giving them dinner and he is trying to talk to them but what do they do? They make a lot of noise, they do not really listen, they kind of disperse and they don’t give the chance to the Messenger (PBH) the chance to speak. A little bit later on, the Messenger (PBH) instructs ‘Ali (RA) who is a child at the time, to go invite the same leaders again for a dinner another time. So this is the second invitation. At the second invitation these leaders of Quaraysh they feel bad as saying : *last time we didn’t listen to Him, we ate His food and we did not listen to Him. This time around, we are eating His food and give Him a chance to speak*. So the Messenger (PBH) speaks and gives them an invitation to this Deen. And who speaks up? Abu Lahab. And he asks a question: *“ If i accept this religion what do I get ?* “ . The Messenger (PBH) informs him that he will have what everybody else has in this religion. You will be included among the believers and you will be in the Paradise and the Messenger (PBH) explains all that to him. And he says “ *This religion should be destroyed, I curse this religion !* “. He says that because he thinks that he would be equal with the other people of Quaraysh, in another words, he thinks of himself as being so high and so up there that he cannot think of anybody next to him. And this was enough for him to curse the religion that the Messenger (PBH) was inviting him to come into. This is one incident.

Then a little bit later on the Messenger (PBH) makes a public invitation. He climbs the mountain and he says *“ Waa sabaakha*” . The Arabs would go up to mountains and they would take all of their clothes off and would scream “*waa sabaakha*” which means “ *Oh what a terrible morning is coming tomorrow*”. That would mean emergency. Now why would they take their clothes off? Maybe somebody can hear them screaming but if they can’t hear them from further away, what can you at least see? Guys got his clothes off must be an emergency. This was their way of declaring a state of emergency. This was their mass communication. The Messenger (PBH) uses the exact same means of communication that was already there but does not do what part? He does not do the shameless part. In other words, what we are learning is using mass communication is ok but you remove from it the elements that are unappropriated, the elements that are shameless, vulgar. Look at the parallel we have to that today. Earlier on, mass communication were born with radio then moved on to television we have television, and now we have web and all kinds of means of communication. And in all these means of communication there are elements of shamelessness. In every single one of them, there are very strong elements of shamelessness. But that, in and of itself does not negate the value of these means of communication. The internet does not become evil because it is being used for evil, it can also be used for good. Our job is to separate the good from the evil. Our job is to send the message of good without letting it mixed with the evil. This is what we learn from the strategy of the Messenger (PBH). Anyhow He invites them saying *“ Waa sabaakha*”. When He invites them, He says to them: “*If I told that right behind this mountain there are battle horses waiting to attack, there is another tribe waiting to attack you, would you believe Me, would you accept what I am saying to be true?*” They said: “*Yes, of course because we know you to be truthful* “. This is how much they trusted the Messenger (PBH). Then He makes an open invitation to them as a Messenger, and He gives them an invitation, and tells them “You *are going to die just like you go to sleep every night. You are going to be rise again just like you wake up every morning. There is a resurrection and you will be judged for every one of your deeds*”. The Messenger (PBH) delivers this profound monologue and of course, we know that it is at this famous incident with ‘Ali (RA) accepts Islam. After that Abu Lahab gets up and says: “*Tabalak, we should curse you*”. “*Tabal”* meaning “you should die a slow and painful death”. We will come to the linguistic meaning a little bit later. He curses the Messenger (PBH) in this language and says “you gathered us for this? You wasted my time with this I thought it was a real emergency”. The Messenger (PBH) is describing the Day of Judgment as a real emergency as something we better get ready for. When He describes an emergency of a battle horse behind the mountains that is a serious emergency to the kafir. But when He describes the Day of Judgment as an emergency they are like what you are talking about. That is a joke to them. It is a waste of time for them. The word *Tab* has been used in multiple occasions by Abu Lahab now. Once cursing the religion itself, now cursing the Messenger (PBH). And in response to these two occasions, when Allah respond how many times does He use the word Tab for Abu Lahab? “*Tabat yaada abi lahabin wa tab*”, Allah (Swt) uses the word twice. The response is equal. The response is justified. And when this Ayat came down, Abu Lahab would make fun of it because this guy was very sharp with his tongue too. And so was his wife who was actually a poet. She uses to make a lot of sarcastic poetry. She even made sarcastic poetry against the Messenger (PBH) after this Surat was revealed and we will share what she has said. But before that, Abu Lahad used to go into public gatherings and used to take out his hands because Allah (Swt) says “*May his hands be destroyed, may both of his hands be destroyed”.* So he used to take out his hands and stare at them in public, and sarcastically say “*May you be destroyed (starring at his hands) …euhh….I do not see anything in my hands, I do not see anything in you too. I do not see any sign of what Muhammad (PBH) said. I do not see how my hands will be destroyed”*. Of course Abu Lahab did not mention the praying on the Messenger (PBH) back then, we add it. And he will trash talk like this in public despite the fact that Allah (Swt) has revealed the worst warning, one of the scariest warning in the Qur’an, that Allah (Swt) would dedicate a Surat directly to the worst enemy of the Messenger (PBH). The extreme opposite of that is a Surat dedicated to Allah’s (Swt) mercy to the Messenger (PBH) himself which is the **Surat Kauthar**. And Abu Lahab takes the extreme opposite of Allah’s mercy as a joke. That gives an idea of how much he deserves this kind of accurse from Allah (Swt).

Allah says “*Tabbat yadaa abi lahabin wa tab*” we have to explore the language a little bit more. The word *Tab* is a past tense verb: *Tabba*. This is the feminine form. The feminine is used because *hands* in Arabic are considered as feminine. In Arabic there is only He and She. Even nouns that we consider as” It” in English, is given a feminine or a masculine gender. When in English there are *He*, *she* and *it*, in Arabic there are only *He* and *She*. Kind of like Spanish because of the Arabic influence on Spanish. Nonetheless, the Feminine is used because body parts which are in twos like: eyes, ears, feet and hands are considered feminine in Arabic language. Body part that are singular like head, heart and things like that, are considered masculine. That is the reason why *Tabbat* is used.

The past tense is used, which could be translated”*both hands of Abu Lahab were destroyed or broke apart”*. The Arabs used past tense for several reasons.

One of them is when something is guaranteed. Nothing is as guaranteed as the past. The future is uncertain: I do not know what’s going to happen tomorrow, but I know for sure what happened yesterday. The past is associated with certainty. So when you talk about something that will happen in the future but it is guaranteed, there is no doubt about it*, it is done deal*, and even the word *done* is in past tense here. When you talk about something that is done deal you use past tense. So Allah (Swt) is basically saying that his (Abu Lahab) both hands being destroyed is a done deal. It is guaranteed that they will be destroyed.

The second is that past tense is used by the Arabs, in ancient Arabic, even today actually, to refer to a Du’a, to a prayer. Which is why in some translation you will find “*May both Hands of Abu Lahad be destroyed”* for instance. May is used in a form of a prayer or a curse. You can pray for someone or pray against someone. In modern and even contemporary Muslim culture, one may know a few catch phrases. When somebody do something good for you, you say “*Jazak Allah hou Khairan*”, commonly translated as “*May Allah (Swt) reward you”*. But “*Jaza”* is past tense. We do not say “*Yagh jik Allah hou khairan*” because it is understood as a Du’a. Similarly “*Tabbat Yadaa”* is Allah (Swt) saying May they be cursed. Meaning Allah Swt is placing a curse upon Abu Lahab, guarantying it also. The word *Tabb* is translated as destroyed but it literally means to break apart slowly or to collapse. Other words used in the Qur’an that are similar are *In Fassama*, *In Khada*, *In Takhat’a*. These are different words used for destruction or breaking apart, or collapsing or falling apart. But *Tabbaab*, this word specifically *Tabb*, is used when something falls apart little by little and is just kept getting progressively worse and worse until it is completely destroyed. That kind of destruction is called *Tabbaab*. From it we get the verb *Tabb*. It means that Allah (Swt) is talking about Abu Lahab not dying an immediate death but a slow and painful and painful and painful death. Heading slowly and slowly towards the worse and worse death. In opposition to an immediate death which may occur in a car accident, getting shot or spire back in the days in battle fields.

Tabb were also used interestingly by the ancient Arabs in the following. They would go to a woman and say “*A chaaba an Taabba*”. *Chaaba* stands for: *are you young woman* and an *Taabba* stands for: *or are you being destroyed*. They did not say *old woman* but being destroyed because they affiliated old age with one deteriorating slowly and slowly towards your destruction. The poet says: “*Kuntou chaaban fassirtu taabban*” meaning: “I *used to be young and now I am being destroyed, I am breaking apart*”. He does not mean he is breaking apart literally but he is getting old instead. So this idea of the human body deteriorating and falling apart and the limbs do not function the way they used to and the back bents and the eyes do not work the same way anymore, you can’t run anymore, you can’t climb anymore and your physical ability is collapsing slowly and slowly, heading towards your demise, all this process is also call *Tabbaab*. And Allah (Swt) uses that word as a curse against Abu Lahab but we still do not understood why both of his hands.

Let’s look at some classical commentary of the meaning of the word *Tabb. “Taabbat ay khassirat”*, meaning to lose, to suffer a loss. And that is a kind of loss that goes progressively towards ultimate destruction. Now we are going to look at a couple of Ayat of the Qur’an that are just absolutely amazing. There are two other Ayats of Qur’an in which a same word for destruction, deterioration or collapse is used from the same root as *Tabb*. One of them is the word *Taatbiib*, which is from the same root as *Tabb*. In that Ayat Allah (Swt) is talking about the mushrikune: “we did not wrong them, they wronged themselves. Their false gods did not benefit them at all”. Is there any mention of *benefit* in this Surat (*Massad)* also? We find in it “Ma *ahna hanhu maaluhu wa maa kassab*”, meaning his wealth did not benefit him at all, and also not anything that he earned. In two Ayats, the same root is used: *Tabb* and *Taatbiib*. In these both contexts*, not coming to benefit* is mentioned. But in one of them, false gods are not coming to benefit. In the other Surat what is not benefiting is “*Maaluhu wa ma kassab”*, his wealth or everything that he earns, so worldly acquisitions, assets. Which of these is more comprehensive: when somebody turns to their wealth for benefits instead of turning to Allah (Swt)? Wealth is one false god but the other Ayat where Allah (Swt) says *Alihatuhu* which can includes idols, people believing in prophets to be the son of Allah (Swt), they can include all kinds of beliefs. So the word *Aliha* is more comprehensive than the just *Maal* (assets). *Maal* is also one kind of false god but Aliha is more comprehensive. Now appreciate the precision and perfection of words in the Qur’an. *Tabba* in Arabic is the based form because in Arabic you have base form and powerful forms of a word. The word that comes from *Tabba* is *Tabbaab*, which is the based form. Now if I speak contemporary and give to the word “steroids”, if you muscle it up and beef it up then the word would become *Tatbiib*. *Tabbaba* instead of *Tabb*, the “b” will double up and become *Tabbaba*. That is even worse, if *Tabba* is bad, *Tabbaba* is really bad. In Surat Lahab Allah (Swt) mentions one false god which is *Maal*. In Surat Hud Allah (Swt) mentions all false gods. Which Ayat is talking about the worse scenario? The one in Surat Hud. And so at the end the destruction is also worst so Allah (Swt) says *Tattbiib*, “*It did not increase them in anything except a worst kind of destruction*”. Precision of language in the Qur’an: *Taatbiib* is more powerful in Surat Hud because it is more than just *Maal* involved, this is *Aliha*, false gods are involved instead. Another place in the Qur’an where we find these intricate intertextual relationships and this is very powerful: “*Wama kaydou Phir’aun illa fii Tabbaab* “: the planning of Phir’aun fell into nothing but slow and steady destruction. Even though this is not a lesson on Phir’aun, let’s see something about what this Ayat is saying. His first plan is to kill all the children in Egypt, every other year, all the boys. That came to a fail because Musa (As) is being raised in his own house. Phir’aun is slowly raising his own death, in his house. When Musa (As) comes back, Phir’aun does not kill him, he challenges him and Musa (As) defeats him in his court, in the palace, Musa (AS) humiliates him in the palace. Phir’aun is sowly reaching his own destruction. Then he gives Musa a few weeks, eventually they would have a debate in the public sphere. Inside the court they were embarrassing but to bring it out in the public sphere and people were forced to come out and watch the final battle between Musa (AS) and the magicians. And people were being told to listen to the magicians, they were trained, they collaborated with each other, trying to defeat Musa (As) and the entire campaign was “listen to the magicians”. Slowly Phir’aun is building for what he thinks is his victory but what he is actually building for is his own destruction. Everybody in the nation is told that the heroes are the magicians, but what happen to those magicians when they get the biggest stage of all? They take *Shahada* and tell on the “*national television*” if you will we have come to believe in the master of all nations, all people and all generations, the Master of Musa (AS) and Harun (AS). Musa (AS) could not have found a larger audience to speak to. And you gave to Musa (AS) that stage and set up the conference for him and gave him the main platform? Phir’aun, he set the stage for his own destruction, slowly but surely headed in that direction. There is something really incredible in this Ayat of Surat Ghafir: “*Wa sudat ‘ani sabiil*” meaning “*he was kept from the right path*”. Allah (Swt) cursed Phir’aun in a way that he was no longer able to come to the straight path. This Tabbabb (*Wama kaydu Phir’aun illa fii Tabbabb*) same Ayat at the end, one Tabb comes for Abu Lahab and the other Tabb is coming for Phir’aun. And Allah (Swt) says about Phir’aun that he was kept from coming to Islam, and until the end we will appreciate a miracle of Qur’an just in this Ayat, the way Allah (Swt) gives us a challenge in His book that Abu Bakr Bakri Lani (RA) spoke about in great details. We will get to that towards the end.

We dealt with the parallel of Phir’aun and Abu Lahab and we will go further and look at some more linguistic meaning of the word *Tabbatt*. One the meaning is also”*Tabbatt ‘Alakhat*” to die violently. “*Khala makhaatil khassiratt*” to suffer a loss, so now we are combining all these meanings, “*Wa khila khaabat*” to go bad like food goes bad, it gets sour and deteriorates, gets like smelly, that is also “*Khaabat*”. It also means to be completely void and devoid, empty doubt from any good whatsoever. And Allah (Swt) specified both hands and said “*May both of his hands be destroyed*”, attributing them to destruction because most actions are done with hands. Allah (Swt) is saying that everything that he does is going to end up in destruction. Everything he does in life will bring him no good and will end in destruction. By saying both hands, it is an Arabic figure of speech, it means himself: May Abu Lahab himself be destroyed. Him and everything he does. The figurative meaning would be, may he be destroyed slowly and may everything he does be also put to waste, put to destruction. By the way, Abu Lahab tries to destroy the mission of the Messenger (PBH), that plan failed and then he himself also is destroyed and we will see how he comes to his death and how Allah (Swt) fulfills His promise. It may be implied that by saying hands you mean the person, and Allah (Swt) does this Himself when He says: “*because of what your hands sent forward*”. Allah (Swt) speaks to the person on the day of judgments and says: “*this is because of what your hands sent forward*”, meaning what you, yourself sent forward, and the deeds you invested in that you can reap the benefit from in the next life. These are expressions used in the Qur’an for what a person does. So the Two hands have that benefit.

Other words that are used for flame are flicker in the Qur’an. We said that *Lahab* is a beautiful red flame. Other words like *Shu’ave*, *nukhaass* and *Ma’aridj*, are used to describe flame but this is not the place for them.

Another implication of why both hands of Abu Lahab are mentioned is because it is narrated that Abu Lahab grabbed a rock to hit the Messenger (PBH), so his hands was committing an act against the Messenger (Swt), so Allah (Swt) cursed his hands. That is one of the narrations we find, this is commented on by the Mahshary Al kashaf.

Both hands imply also his deen and his dunya and the first thing he does and the outcomes of them. The Arabs would say that your right hand is a weapon to attack and your left hand is there to defend. You can imagine a warrior right hand sword, left hand shield. So when Allah (Swt) says may both of his hands be destroyed, it means that, one Abu Lahab will not be able to attack, two he will not be able to defend. How good is a soldier on a battlefield if he has no capability for offense and no capability for defense? Both of these have been removed from Abu Lahab. Why did Allah (Swt) give him a nickname? The original name of Abu Lahad is *Abdul Huza* and in Arabic literature, when you give somebody a nickname, it is considered an act of respect, an act of nobility to give somebody a tittle other than the one they own. **Abu Jahl** was given that nickname as an insult because his original name was **Abu al-Hakam** i.e. the father of wisdom but because of his behavior, he ends up getting called the father of ignorance, the super ignorant. But Abu Lahab is actually a complimentary because it expressed his good looks. Others even says that he was called like that because he had a hard temper, like a flame is heated, so he is good look and hard tempered. But nonetheless it was a sort of a compliment that was given to him. The question is how come the Qur’an uses a compliment to describe him? There are benefits from it.

The first one is linked to his real name. His real name is *Abdul Huzu*, the slave of Huza. Al Huza is a false god. Allah (Swt) does not dignify him by mentioning the false god that he worships. Why Allah (Swt) should mentions his false god and call him his salve because he is not really his slave, which is a false idea. His name itself is a lie, nobody is the slave of Huza, that is not true, that does not exist. So the first benefit is not even acknowledging the false belief that he carries.

The second benefit is because Abu Lahab is from the people of fire and Allah is going to put him in a flame that is also flickering red. Why not call him by his name because now his name has been given a new meaning. From now on, when he is called Abu Lahab, he is not called like that because he had reddish skin or looks good, but because he is going to be in a fire forever. The connotation of the nickname that is being used, Allah (Swt) changed it forever. We know that Allah (Swt) changed it because He says: “*Sa yaslaa naaran thaata Lahab*”. “*Sayaslaa naaran*” (He will be thrown in a fire) only would be enough, but Allah (Swt) says “*Sayaslaa naaran thaata Lahab*” which means “He *will be thrown in a fire that possesses a red flame*”. It is as if Allah (Swt) is saying to Abu Lahab: you like to be called by *red flames*, you know what? You will be known for it forever! This is Allah (Swt) issuing sarcasm against this man. Like we said in Arabic, *Abu* before something is an affiliation. *Abu Sharr*: the father of evil, the guy must be truly evil. *Abu Kharir*: the father of good, it means a really good person. The same way, when Allah also says Abu Lahab, it means that this guy will be known forever and always going to be known for a flickering hot red fire.

“*Tabbatt yadaa Abi lahabin*” we talk about it, what is missing is “*Wa tabb*” at the end. In the first part of the Surat part Allah (Swt) is issuing a curse against Abu Lahab: “*May his hands be destroyed* “. Like saying *May it happen*. Example: may you benefit, may you get better, and there is no guarantee if it will happen or not when one say *May*. In the next part “*Wa tabb*” and He was in fact destroyed, it is as good as it is done. In another word, first Allah (Swt) says “*May it happens*” then Allah (Swt) add that it is guaranteed “*Wa tabb*”, it will, it bonds to happen. It is as guaranteed as the past tense, as mentioned earlier.

Here is something about the character of Abu Lahab. This guy was scared to fight. Abu Jahl believes in the nobility of his tribe, he believes in the sanctity of Quraish. He wants to fight the Messenger (PBH) because he thinks he is fighting for a higher cause: the dignity of the tribe. He is even willing to go out to Badr and fight. Abu Lahab does not go to Badr. He is too scared. He is a wealthy guy and a lot of people owe him money. There was this mercenary, this warrior who owns him money. He tells him: “you *want to pay me back, go fight for me, go fight on my behalf!* “. The guy got killed too. He would not even fight himself. He is not only a wretched enemy; he is also a coward on top of that.

Now how Abu Lahab does come to his death? What is narrated about him is that he developed a very serious disease. He started developing the swellings all over his body, getting big bumps all over his body all over his body and he was considered contagious. So his sons, and his servants, family, everybody run away from him cause they are afraid of getting infected. He is dying in pain slowly, slowly and no one is there to help him. He dies this vicious death, with his skin popping and pus coming out. His corps is lying there and people are afraid to touch his corps because they are afraid to get sick. His sons finally hired some Abyssinians who got a bunch of wood, they dug a ditch and they got a whole bunch of woods and they pushed his corps with a log of wood to throw him into the ditch. They would not even touch it. Did Allah’s (Swt) words come to fulfil? He would die a slow and painful death, slow destruction: “*Tabbatt yaada abi lahabin wa Tabba*”. Even in this Dunya he suffered, even in this dunya Allah (Swt) fulfilled his promise.

“*Maa ahna an’u maaluhu wa ma kassaba*”: neither his wealth nor assets did not benefit him at all. *Maa* is translated here as *at all*. The word *Maa* is important. There are different kinds of negation in Arabic. First, the word *Maa* is strong, it is more emphatic and can be translated as *at all*. The second benefit it is always use to negate a countering idea. In other words the Quraish and of course Abu Lahab believed that wealth is the biggest thing they have in their advantage. Allah (Swt) refutes that idea and the word *ahna* here is a guarantee of the future because when the Surat was revealed this had not happened yet. So even though it is commonly translated his wealth and whatever he earned did not benefit him at all, what Allah (Swt) is saying in fact is it will not benefit him at all. Allah (Swt) is saying it in a guaranteed form so Allah (Swt) uses the past tense. The guarantee of the future used in a past tense is part of balagha (eloquence) in Arabic. Now it is as if, Abu Lahab is being publicly told: listen, you are going to die a slow painful death, it is guaranteed and I do not care how much money you have. And on top of the money you have, whatever you want to earn on top of that “*Wa maa kassab*”, none of it will come in handy to you. And in Arab tradition, “*wa maa kassab*”, al kassab, the earning includes the children. The status comes also from how many sons one has, sons who will carry the family name. Keeping that in mind, your money, nor your children will come to any benefit for you, none whatsoever, “*Maa ahna an’u maaluhu wa ma kassaba*”. By the way, there is the third person who is used: *did not benefit him* instead of *did not benefit you*, Allah (Swt) did not dignify Abu Lahab by addressing him. And this is the tradition of Allah (Swt) against the worse Kafir. Allah (Swt) does not address them directly. Not in this life not in the next. Allah (Swt) will not address them on the day of resurrection.

The first thing was “*Maa luhu*” Allah (Swt) mentions two things: not his wealth, not what he earned. But usually, we think that wealth and what we earn are the same thing. Why separate the two? What is the benefit of that? There are several benefits.

One of them is *Maal* is something that Abu Lahab had because of his high noble lineage. If you have good money, you can invest to make even more money. So *Maa Luhu* is what he already had without putting any work in. And *Maa kassab* would be what he even worked for and acquired. Both of them, combined, still will have no benefit for him whatsoever. The hands of Abu Lahab was being used to spend money against the Messenger (PBH), not only was he not a beneficiary of his wealth, even his cause did not benefit, the cause of trying to harm the mission of the Messenger (PBH) did not come to any flourishing regardless.

The other thing that is mentioned is when Allah (Swt) says *ihna* meaning to benefit. Maybe Abu Lahab did do some good things. Quraish would give some charity sometimes to keep a public face. And when these people do such things, even if they do it to show off, in their hearts they think that at least they are doing some good thing. In the same way, Abu Lahab thinks he earns some deeds, and “*wa ma kassaba”* negates that: *whatever you think that is good, you got nothing*. Whatever good they did or think they have done will be turned into nothing. When you do not have emaan, do not think of good deeds. Good deeds come after emaan. They have no value if one negates emaan especially in the presence of the Messenger (PBH).

This Ayat, “*Wa* *maa ahna an’u maaluhu wa ma kassaba*” gave similar lessons before. For example Abu Lahab assumes that his wealth will give him eternal life. He took pride in two thinks: his wealth and his good look. And Allah (Swt) took two things away from him: no benefit from his wealth and the disease he got was a disease of the skin. Allah (Swt) took away from him what he took pride in: his good look. On the Day of Judgment, the kafir himself cries out: my wealth did not come to any benefit for me and all the authority I had destroyed me. Allah (Swt) says: “*sa yaslaa naaran*”, very soon, the tense is switch here. The past tense was used to talk about the future. “*Sa*” is to talk about the future but the difference is that the immediate future is used from the past tense. It will happen so soon that you can talk about it in the past tense. Meaning destruction in this world, but his destruction in the next world is not that soon, it is further away, when the Day of Judgment will come, when he will be casted in the hellfire. But that Day of Judgment as far as Allah (Swt) is concerned is not that far. Allah (Swt) says: *they see it far away but We see it very near*. Allah uses the word “*Sa*” very soon he (Abu Lahab) will be cast. He will come in contact with, he will be chucked into a flame (*Naaran*) with has the quality of a red flame and flicker in it (*thaata Lahab)*. This is again sarcasm and word play in the Qur’an, specifically an attack against Abu Lahab and his pride. When Phir’aun talked about, Allah (Swt) says that he was kept from accepting the path, from Islam when Tabbaab was mentioned to him. They were a curse on Phir’aun that he could never come to emaan.

Now were coming to Oum jamil and she is from the lineage of Oumeya, a sister of Abu Soufiane. And she comes from a very high noble lineage. This is a power house celebrity couple in Mecca. Both known for their good look, for their wealth and status. She used to like to show off her status. She uses to wear that really expensive necklace when she walks around the town. Showing very expensive jewels was their way showing superiority around town. Here are some backgrounds in regards to her.

She used to grab her necklace when she saw the Messenger (PBH) and says: “*I swear by laat and uza (the false god that they worshipped) I will for sure spend this necklace to complete my animosity against Muhammad (PBH)*”. She would swear that she would spend the most even precious possession she has just to fulfill her mission of animosity against the Messenger (PBH). There are several things in the Ayat that are remarkable.

The first one is “*Imra a* “. There are two words used for wife in the Qur’an: *Imra a* and the word *Zaoudj*. Sometimes Allah (Swt) uses *Imra-a* and sometimes He uses *Zaoudj*. For example when Allah (Swt) talks to the Messenger (PBH), He says “*Yaa ayuhal Nabi kuli azwadjig*”, He uses the word *Zaoudj* for the mothers of believers. When Allah (Swt) talks to Adam (As), He uses *Zaoudj* as well. You might start thinking that *Zaoudj* is used in good cases and *Imra-a* is used in bad cases. That is not the case. For example Allah (Swt) says “*Imaraatu* Phir’aun” i.e. the wife of Phir’aun. Allah (Swt) uses the word *Imra-a* for Assy (Ra), one of the greatest woman who ever lived. Zachariah (As), when he made du’a to Allah (Swt), he said my wife is not able to bear a child, and he uses the word *Imra-a* to refer to her. We see that sometime *Zaoudj* is used sometime *Imra-a* is used. This is not at a personal level but at a societal level. What are the two benefits of marriage?

The number one function is to increase good in society and decrease corruption. The purpose of marriage is to create more harmony. Two human beings come together in harmony, two families come together in harmony and it brings human being in harmony over all.

The second purpose is that this is the only legitimate means by which human beings can continue their stitches. One can have children by illegitimate means or by legitimate mean and the only legitimate mean is marriage. The two fundamental purposes of marriage are the harmony and children. Allah (Swt) uses the words *Imra a,* when a child and harmony are missing. When both of these are there Allah (Swt) uses the world *Zaoudj*. For the Mother of the believers because they are talked about collectively, Allah (Swt) uses the word *Azwadj*. Example with Adam (As), he is in Jannah and there is no issue of children because you yourself and eternal life and the harmony is one hundred per cent there. And regarding the wife of Phir’aun, there are no children and then no harmony, reason why she loved getting Musa (As). What about Zachariah (As)? There is harmony absolutely. And in the case of Abraham (As) when the angels come and tell him that he is going to have a son, Allah (Swt) uses the word *Imra a* when Sarah (As) laughed. *Imra-a* is not a bad word, it is a noble word actually. The word by itself means woman but when it is used as the wife of, it becomes a noble term nonetheless. But we are trying to make a point about sterility here. What word was used for the wife of Zachariah (As)? *Imra-a* d and she eventually has a child later on. So Allah (Swt) says when We give Yahya (As) to Zachariah (As), We better for him his *Zaoudj*. Allah (Swt) uses *Imra-a* before the coming of the child and uses *Zaoudj* after the coming of the child. This is not to say that there is something missing or inappropriate about a couple who cannot have a child or somehow something is not good or not highly rank. But we are talking about the purpose of marriage overall. And in the purpose of marriage there is no way denying it: these are the purposes why we get married. If human beings as a whole do not have children, there stitches will extinct and the only noble way of having children is by means of marriage.

In this Surat, the word *Imra-a* is used, still they have children, they have harmony, but it is not the kind of harmony that is intended. Two negatives do not make a positive and that is the case for this particular couple. You have an evil wife and an evil husband and they tag team very well with each other but that is not harmony. What is meant is an increase of good, not an increase of evil. These two coming together did not increase goodness in society, they increase evil instead. So this is not really the case of harmony that is intended.

Allah (Swt) says “*Wamra atuhu”*, he will be thrown in a fire and so will his wife. It is a grammatical continuation of the sentence. The benefit is that the fire has a Quality (*Thaata Lahab*) and that quality is describing Abu Lahab but as she is in sync with him, she shares with him that same quality of flame. They tag team in this dunya and they will tag team in the next life. Then Allah (Swt) says “*Hamaa lata”*, there is a *fatha* on it and this *fatha* is called Mansuub in Arabic grammar. In classical Arabic there are sixteen reasons why a word can have a *fatha* on it. One of those sixteen reasons is *Atham, Ashatam* i.e. condemnation, curse, anger. Allah (Swt) is so angry at her, that He does not say “*Hamaa latul khatab”* but He says *“Hamaa lata”.* This is a way of Allah (Swt) mentioning her with disgust and the disgust is captured in the *fatha*. This is way a careful study of Arabic is so important. These kinds of lessons are overlooked. It is translated as “the carrier of firewood” which completely miss what Allah (Swt) is saying. That carrier is described with such disgust and that disgust is manifest just in that fatha. Then there is the word *Hamaala*, not *Haamila*. *Haamila* stands for the carrier but *Hamaala* means the one who keeps on carrying and keeps on carrying. And by *Hamal* and *Fahal* in Arabic are used when it refers to someone who has a profession. Like Khabaz i.e. bread and the one who make breads is called khoubz i.e. baker. “*Hamaa latal khatab”* was actually used for slave women who used to carry firewood around. They are the one who were called “*Hamaa latal khatab”* in ancient Arabic. Abu Lahab’s wife thinks of herself as being way above that lower class of slave women who used to carry firewood. And Allah (Swt) degrades her with this phrase by calling her: *Wamra atuhu, Hamaa latal khatab.* Some Oulemas comments that Khatab is a dry wood that is used to make fire. They do not have heat system back in the days, the only way the get heat at home was to get fire wood delivered. And these slave women were used for that purpose. Now Allah (Swt) is calling her with that name saying to her I have no respect for your status in society, I do not care who you are. When you mess with the Messenger (PBH) you have no respect, you have no dignity, and you have no status. There are two additional benefits of using *Hamaa latal khatab*. Some Oulemas comments that that fire that is Lahab, that is red, the fuel that will give it that flame and redness is actually firewood. And one of her punishments of Abu Lahab’s wife in hellfire is that she is made to go carry firewood and bring it back, and burn the very fire that she and husband are roasting in. She will get to work and make her punishment herself worst. She is facilitating the fuel for her own fire. The second meaning is that *Hamaa latal khatab* is takenasa figure of speech. It implies that carrying fire means that she used to carry bad news from this one and take it to that one and spread rumors here and there, causing a fire between people, and giving them fuel for fire. So it is understood as a figure of speech, that this woman loves gossiping, controversy and trash talk.