



مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ



No profit to him from all his wealth, and all his gains!

Quran English Translation & Commentary

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Introduction and Summary

This very early Makkan Surah, though it referred in the first instance to a particular incidence in a cruel and relentless persecution, carries the general lesson that cruelty ultimately ruins itself. The man who rages against holy things is burned up in his own rage. His hands, which are the instruments of his actions, perish, and he perishes himself. No boasted wealth or position will save him.

The woman, who are made for nobler emotions, may, if they go wrong, feed unholy rage with fiercer feel---to their own loss. For they may twist the torturing rope round their own neck. It is a

common experience that people perish by the very means by which they seek to destroy others.

C.291 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

*The chosen One of Allah, in his earnest
Desire to proclaim the Message, gathered
His kin together to hear and judge
With open minds between error and truth.
Behold, the fiery "Father of Flames"
Blazed up with foul abuse and curses,
And said to the holy one: "Perish thou!"
With his hands he took stones and cast them
At the holy one's head. Purse-proud he headed
Relentless persecution. His wife
Laid snares, tied thorns with twisted ropes
Of prickly palm-leaf fibre, and strewed them
In the holy one's path on darkest nights,
For cruel sport! But lo! the curses,
Insults, spite, harmed not that Innocent,
But hit the wrongdoers themselves
And branded them with eternal infamy!*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ (١)

1. Perish the hands of the Father of Flame! Perish he!

C6294. Abu Lahab, "Father of Flame", was the nickname of an uncle of the Holy Prophet, from his fiery hot temper and his ruddy complexion.

He was one of the most inveterate enemies of early Islam. When the holy Prophet called together the Quraish and his own kith and kin to come and listen to his preaching and his warning against the sins of his people, the "Father of Flame" flared up and cursed the Holy Prophet, saying "Perdition to thee!"

According to the English saying, "the causeless curse will not come".

His words were futile, but his power and strength were equally futile.

The star of Islam rose higher and higher every day, and its persecutors dwindled in strength and power. Many of the leaders of persecution perished at Badr, and Abu Lahab himself perished a week after Badr, consumed with grief and his own fiery passions.

Verse 3 was prophetic of his end in this very life, though it also refers to the Hereafter.

مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ (٢)

2. No profit to him from all his wealth, and all his gains!

سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ (٣)

3. Burnt soon will he be in a Fire of blazing Flame!

وَأْمْرًا تُهْدِيهِ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ (٤)

4. His wife shall carry the (crackling) wood -- as fuel! --

C6295. Abu Lahab's wife was a woman of equally passionate spite and cruelty against the sacred person of the Holy Prophet.

She used to tie bundles of thorns with ropes of twisted palm-leaf fibre and carry them and strew them about on dark nights in the paths which the Prophet was expected to take, in order to cause him bodily injury.

"To carry firewood" may also be symbolical for carrying tales between people to embroil them. This was also one of her vices. But she was laying up for herself another

kind of Fire and another kind of Rope, the Fire of Punishment, and the Rope of Slavery to Evil.

Thus does Evil prepare its own fate. This is the general lesson of sustained craft and cruel wrong-doing recoiling on the wrong-doer's head.

See also [Introduction](#) to this Surah.

فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ (٥)

5. A twisted rope of palm-leaf fibre round her (own) neck!
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