

# (Tafsir Surat al-Fil (The Elephant

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.The sura e fil is descended at Mecca and it is consisted of 5 ayaat

## سورة الفيل - (Surat Al-Fi-I (The Elephant

The contents and virtues of Sura e Fil

The sura e fil, as it is evident from its content indicates towards the famous historical event happened in the year when the prophet was born. The Almighty God saved 'Kaaba' the house of Allah from the large army of unbelievers who arrived at Mecca from the land of Yemen.

The sura a fil reminds the mysterious episode that most of the people of Mecca were remembering it as it was happened for them in very near past.

To remind this occurrence is a warning to the arrogant and adamant unbelievers and make them aware that before the divine power they are totally powerless. The All-Powerful God crushed down the great army of elephants with the help of small birds and the half lumped pebbles, like this manner he had the power and strength to punish the immovable and proud nonbelievers.

The unbelievers of Mecca were not more powerful in comparison to the might of Abraha nor in their army and number, their power could never reach to that extent of Abraha. It means that you who witnessed the event of abraha's army, why do not you come down from the chariot of arrogance?

About the virtues of the reciting this sura e fil as it is mentioned in a hadis by imam Jafar e Sadiq alahis salam: anybody who recites the sura e fil in the compulsory namaz (wajib) on the judgment day equal to the pebbles of the mountains and the plains give witness that he was among those who observed the namaz. The announcer proclaims: you expressed correctly about my honourable man. We will accept your witness for him. And give entrance to my honourable virtues man without taking any interpretation and account from him, he is the one whom I love him and his deeds.

It is evident that all these excessive virtues and rewards are for the person, who by reciting the ayaat of this sura must descend from the chariot of pride and arrogance and drive ahead to gain the divine pleasure

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ (105:1)

*?Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with the army of the elephant*

أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ (105:2)

*?Did He not make their plan into misguidance*

وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ (105:3)

*,And He sent against them birds in flocks*

تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ (105:4)

*.Striking them with stones of hard clay, Sijjil*

فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ (105:5)

*.And He made them ( army) like eaten straw*

### **All about its descent**

In a hadis by Ali ibn al-Husain Zainul Abedin alaihis salam we read: Abu Talib was perpetually engaged in the jihad (holy war) with his sword by the side of the prophet Muhammad peace be upon him to defend him, to that extent that Abu Talib expressed: Are you sent as a prophet upon your own people or the entire humanity?

The prophet peace be upon him, replied: I am sent as a prophet upon the entire humanity, from black people to white skinned nations and from Arab to non-Arabs. I swear by the one in whose hand is my life. I invite the entire nations whether they are black or white towards my religion Islam those who are living upon the mountaintops and who are living in the oceans, I will call them towards this religion, Islam. I invite the people of all the languages whether it is Persian or Roman.

When these words of Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him reached the people of Quraish, they wondered and said: Are you not hearing what your nephew (brother's son) is expressing? We swear by God if the people of Fars and Rome hear these words they will throw us away from our lands. They will break into pieces (ma'azallah) the brick stones of the Ka'ba (the house of Allah). At this moment this ayat 57 from sura e Qasas descended: Al-Qasas (The

وَقَالُوا إِن تَتَّبِعِ الْهْدَىٰ مَعَكَ نُنْخَطِفُ مِنْ أَرْضِنَا أَوْ لَمْ نُمَكِّنْ لَهُمْ حَرَمًا آمِنًا يُجْبَىٰ إِلَيْهِ ثَمَرَاتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رِّزْقًا مِنْ لَدُنَّا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (28:57)

*And they say, "If we were to follow the guidance with you, we would be swept from our land." Have we not established for them a safe sanctuary to which are brought the fruits of all things as provision from us? But most of them do not know.*

And upon their statement that the house of Allah will be dismantled the sura e fil descended.  
.And made them alert that not a single person have the power to do this act

### **The Event of the army of elephant**

The interpreters and the historians narrated this story in different ways. And they have diverse opinions for the year in which it occurred. But the real story as it is famous that mentioned continuously in the chronicle. It is summarized according to the famous descriptions from the books "Sira e Ibn Hisham" "Bulughul Arb" "Biharul Anwaar" "Majma'ul Bayan".

Zunavas the king of Yemen tortured dreadfully the Christians who were dwelling near his kingdom and to make them return to the religion of Christianity, the noble Quran brought this story by the title As'hab e Akhdud" in the sura of Buruj and we explained it too.

After that extreme heinous event, a man known as Doos among them escaped and reached to the Kaiser of Rome who was the follower of the Christianity and explained the whole incident to him.

As the distance between Rome and Yemen was, to a great extent far-off, Kaiser of Rome wrote a letter to the Najjashi, the Sultan of Habasha to take the revenge of Christians of Najran from Zunavas. And send the message through the same person (Doos) to the Najjashi.

Najjashi sent a great army of almost seventy thousand people under the command of a person named Arbat sent towards Yemen. Abraha too was one of the commanders of this army. Zunavas was defeated and Arbat became the ruler of Yemen. After a period of time Abraha waged a war against him, defeated and fled him away and sat at its place.

The news of this event reached the Najjashi, he decided to suppress him. Abraha for his safety shaved his head and some of the sand of Yemen as the sign of complete submission sent to Najjashi and announced his loyalty to him.

Najjashi when observed this he pardoned Abraha and made him to remain at his post. At that time Abraha to prove his righteous service built a beautiful and important church that was matchless of that period. And then decided to establish it as a place of pilgrimage upon

the earth like the Mecca of Arabian peninsula and call the people towards it instead of Kaa'ba.

He wanted to transfer the important centrality of Mecca towards that church. For that cause send most of their preachers among the tribes of Arab and Hijaz. As the Arabs were very much fond of Mecca and Kaaba and believed it the memorial of the prophet hazrat

Ibrahim khaleelullah alaihis salam, they felt alarmed.

According to some narrations a group of people came and burnt the church secretly and to the conformity of another description some polluted it in secret and they extremely reacted upon it

and made the church of Abraha worthless.

Abraha got tremendously angry and to take the revenge, decided to destroy completely the house of Kaaba and divert the Arabs towards their new place of worship. He moved towards

Mecca with a gigantic army in which a large number of elephants were present as well.

When he reached near Mecca he sent his men to plunder the camels and wealth of the people

of Mecca among them were the 200 camels of Abdul Muttalib.

Abraha send someone inside the Mecca and told him to find out the chief of Mecca and give him the message that: the king of Yemen conveys you a message: I did not came to attack you. I just came to destroy the Kaaba and if you do not fight a war with me I feel there is not

any need to shed the blood of you people.

The envoy of Abraha entered Mecca and searched for the chief and the sheriff of Mecca. All of them pointed towards the Abdul Muttalib and defined the terms and conditions of Abraha to him. He too replied: We too do not have the strength to fight a war with you and the Almighty

God himself will protect the house of Kaaba.

The envoy of Abraha stated to Abdul Muttalib: You must come with me to meet Abraha. When Abdul Muttalib reached to meet Abraha, he got impressed by his charismatic temperament, tall height and attractive personality. It made him awesome and amazing. He stood in his respect and sat on the floor and presented Abdul Muttalib a place near him to sit. As he does not want to seat him on his throne and turned towards his translator and said: ask him what does he needs?

Abdul Muttalib replied: My Need is that you give an order to return me back my 200 camels

and all my other possessions as well that you captured.

Abraha got extremely astonished and expressed his translator: tell him, my heart got overwhelmed the moment I viewed your greatness. But the words spoken by you made you small in my sight, are you talking about your 200 camels and you did not expressed any thing about the house of Kaaba which is your as well as your forefathers religion and I came to destroy it and you are not stating any feeling about it?

Abdul Muttalib replied: I am the possessor of my camels and this house Kaaba has its owner and He will surely defend his own house. These words moved Abraha and he got immersed into the thoughts.

Abdul Muttalib came back to Mecca and informed the people to take refuge in the mountains around and he too with a group of people came near the house of Kaaba for performing prayers and seeking help from the Merciful God. He caught hold the door ring and recited his famous verses.

O Benevolent God! Everybody protect his house you too defend your own house. I pray to the Dominant God that day must never come when their cross and power rule and overcome your supremacy. They brought here their entire force from their lands to arrest the inhabitants of your sanctuary.

O the Protector God everybody guards and defends his family you too safeguard the dwellers of your sanctuary.

And today support the dwellers of your sanctuary upon the people of cross and its worshipers. Then he went to one of the valleys around Mecca and took shelter there with a group of the people of Quraish. And ordered one of his sons, to climb of the mountain of Abu Qaes and watch out what is happening around.

His son came to him in hurry and said: a dark cloud from the direction of red sea is observable which is proceeding towards them. Abdul Muttalib got delighted and said: O people of Quraish go towards your dwellings; the help of your Guardian Lord is reaching soon. This happened from one side.

From the other side, Abraha mounted upon his famous camel named Mahmood with a large army, to demolish and crush down the house of Kaaba and descended from the mountains all around. But as much as he was pressurising his elephant it was not proceeding but as he was bringing his head towards the direction of Yemen, he was proceeding in extraordinary swiftness. By this incident Abraha got surprised to great extent and plunged into amazement. In that moment the birds reached them from the sea side, they were like the sparrows; each of them was carrying three pebbles, one in their beak and two in their both claws, to the size of the chickpeas. They began to throw these pebbles upon the heads of the Abraha's army. As soon as it was hitting, each soldier of the army was falling down dead. Some defined: As the pebble was hitting at any part of their body, I was making a hole in it and piercing out from the opposite side. They were falling dead.

At that moment a wave of shock spread over the entire army. Those who remained alive escaped to save their life and enquiring the people about the direction of the Yemen's highway,

to return back. But perpetually they were falling down on the ground like autumn leaves. Abraha himself was hit by the pebble and got wounded he returned to San'aa the capital of Yemen and there he closed his eyes forever. As told by some of historians: It was the same year, for the first time the typhoid and small pox was seen in the land of Arabia. Regarding the number of elephants they mentioned: Abraha brought with him the same elephant Mahmood and some supposed they were eight elephants and specific number of people assumed ten and several believed twelve elephants. And in this same year according to the famous quotation, the prophet peace be upon him was born; the world was brightened with the light (noor) of his existence. Hence a group of people believe there is a relation between these two occurrences. Any way the importance of this great event was in such a manner, that year was called aamil fil .which means the year of elephant

### The definition

Tell Abraha he must not sort out in haste!

In the first ayat of this sura the great prophet peace be upon him was addressed and said: have .not you seen how your Provider Lord treated with the people of elephant

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ

They came with that large army and power to demolish the house of the Mighty God. And the All-powerful God by the army which was in appearance very much small and valueless, crushed them down. And made the elephants helpless by the advanced weapon of that period, a very small pebble called sijjil to show the arrogant and egoistic man how he is helpless .before the divine power

أَلَمْ تَرَ

The above terms means, Did not you observed? While at that period the prophet Muhammad peace be upon him was not yet born. But as this event happened was quite near to his birth or the era of the prophet peace be upon him. Apart from that it is so much famous and constantly spoken by the people about it, as if the prophet was seeing it with his own eyes. A group of the people of prophet's period certainly observed that episode with their own eyes. The term as'habil fil is used for the presence of some of the elephants they brought with them from Yemen to give surprise and influence the opponents and to frighten the camels and

horses in the war and to fled them away from the battle field.  
?Then it adds: Did not the Sovereign Lord end up their plans in the meanness and destruction

أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ

Their aim was to destroy the house of Kaaba in a hope to give the central status to the church of Yemen and gain the attention of the entire Arab population. They not only did not reached their goal on the other hand the details of this event reached the entire Arabian Peninsula and increased the sanctity and greatness of Mecca and the house of Kaaba. It attracted more and .more hearts of the divine lovers and made that land the most peaceful upon the earth

تَضْلِيلٍ

The above term means, to make astray and bring a person at wrong track and to never allow them to reach their goal.  
And then defined this event more and said: The strong and exalted God send upon their heads groups and multitudes of birds

وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ

أَبَابِيلَ

Contrary to what it is well-known among the people's opinions, the above term was not the name of bird but it was the definition of birds. Some mentioned they were the dispersed groups of birds who gathered from all around and advanced towards the armed forces of elephant. They were the birds similar to sparrows that rose from the Red Sea and proceeded towards the army of elephant.  
In the next ayat it said: these birds made targets that army with sijjil, small hard-edged .pebbles

تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ

For instance the birds were throwing the pebbles which they were holding in their beaks and claws and as these pebbles were falling upon anybody, that person was crushing down.  
.Hence in the next ayat it said: They were transformed like the chewed straw

فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ

عَصْفٍ

They were like the leaves on the branches of field that are dried and crushed down, in other words it was like straw

مَأْكُولٍ

The above term indicates the straw which is chewed and totally ground under the jaws of the beasts. And then the stomach of the beast grind it more. It is indicating that as soon as the pebbles were falling upon anybody they were getting crushed down. Another significant thing is that they were transforming into the weak, powerless and valueless creatures

### The points:

#### 1- The matchless miracle (this house possess an owner).

It is interesting that this story was defined eloquently in a very short manner that pounded the hearts. In fact it placed the finger upon the fact which helps the aim of noble Quran to stir up the cruel and arrogant people and make them aware the weakness of man before the great power of Almighty God.

This event illustrates that the unusual and supernatural miracles contrary to their thinking is not necessary to arise by the hands of the prophets and spiritual leaders (aimma) only. But in the condition whenever the God wills, the aim is to make the people aware of the greatness and truth of majestic God's religion.

This strange and marvellous divine punishment is obviously different from the punishments of other cruel nations as the chastisements like the floods and terrifying downpour of Prophet Noah peace be upon him, the earth quake and stone storm upon the people of prophet Lut peace be upon him, the storm on the people of Aad, thunderbolts upon the nation of Samud, these were a chain of the natural incidents their appearance on that specific conditions was a miracle.

The rise of those small birds and their advancement towards the specific army and their catching the pebbles and targeting them in a particular manner and crushing the bodies of a great army with small pebbles was an extra ordinary miracle. It was not a natural calamity. The most high and sublime God created the atomic power inside these pebbles which had the capability to produce a great explosion. It is easy for the all-powerful Allah to create in them such a power to transform the army of Abraha into a chewed straw.

And if some of the interpreters said: the bodies of the Abraha's army was inflicted by the chickenpox and they developed blisters all over their body. It was not the reason for their infliction into the disease of chicken pox.

It is not needed to say: those pebbles were like small atoms bombs piercing the bodies as  
.soon they were come into contact with the bodies

### **The most harsh punishment with the help of tiniest object -2**

It is interesting that the Glorious God in this event showed his might before the egotistic and cruel people in his best manner. May be no punishment can be seen in the world grimmer than the chastisement of Abraha that transformed a massive group of his people suddenly into  
:chewed straw named as

عَصْفٍ مَّاكُولٍ

To destroy a powerful and magnificent army by small and valueless pebbles with the help of small and weak sparrows it is a warning to the entire harsh and cruel people of world to get  
aware that to what extent they are weak and feeble.

Sometime this important job is given to the most minute creatures such as microbes that cannot be seen by the naked eyes. It multiplies and reproduces very rapidly in a precise period of time and inflicts the powerful people by the dangerous epidemic disease for example plague  
and destroys them.

The magnificent dam of Ma'arib in the Yemen as it is defined in the interpretation of the Sura e Saba. The dam helped in establishing a great and powerful culture and population. The transgression of this nation began to increase. As it is mentioned in the narrations, one or some desert rats penetrated into that dam and created a hole into it. By gradual gushing out of the water from that hole it became bigger and wider and at last the dam collapsed. The water reservoir behind it destroyed the entire inhabitation, houses and palaces and that extravagant population shattered and dispersed into the other localities around and became shelter less  
.and this is the demonstration of the great divine power

### **The purpose of the event of elephants -3**

By the forthcoming sura of lailaafi quraishin it is clearly reminded the aim of the extravagant event of sura e elephant and the outstanding divine blessings to the tribe of Quraish to illustrate them, if the divine blessing was not prevailing upon them, there would have been no holy sanctuary standing there as well as the tribe of Quraish. To come down the carriage of the  
pride and self-glorification and bow before the invitation of the prophet peace be upon him.  
From other side this occurrence which was close to the blessed birth of the great prophet

peace be upon him in fact it was creating a path for the appearance of the magnanimous prophet Muhammad peace be upon him and conveying the greatness of this uprising. Thirdly it warns the cruel and unjust people of the world as well as Quraish and others to get well aware that they have no influence to stand before the divine power, it is better to take out from their heads this raw supposition and bow down before his command and submit before the Almighty and his justice. Fourthly this event presented the importance of the magnificent house of Allah, when the enemies of Kaaba were planning in their heads to demolish it. They wanted to extinguish the central importance of this land of prophet Ibrahim alaihis salam and convert it into another place. The Protector and Honourer God in such a manner created horror in their hearts and made it an example for the other nations and increased the sacredness of this house. Fifthly the Benevolent God who accepted the prayers of Prophet Ibrahim peace be upon him for the amity in the holy land of Mecca and guaranteed it. This event revealed that this is the will of Gracious God to establish forever the peace and amity in this sanctuary of worship and .unification of One and Only Allah

#### **A complete historical event -4**

It is amazing in the occurrence of elephant's masters; they were convinced in such a manner, that day converted into the beginning of historical dates. The noble Quran in a gracious term :said

أَلَمْ تَرَ

Do not you observe? That too, it addressed the great prophet Muhammad peace be upon him who was not present at that period by the terms: Do not you watched? It is another proof of being the certainty of this occurrence.

Apart from that when the great prophet peace be upon him recited these ayaat for the idol worshippers of Mecca, no one denied it. If in the case some of them were denying the matter obscure. And that denial used to be recorded in the history like their other rejections.

Specifically the noble Quran by the term

أَلَمْ تَرَ

Related the matter and proved the magnitude of this holy house with that certain miraculous history.

O Generous and All Powerful God! Bless us the capability to protect and guard this great

sanctuary of monotheism.

O Provider and Dominant God! Those who are merely satisfied to maintain and preserve the appearance of this divine sanctuary but they pay no heed to its true message, prove them  
fruitless and ineffective.

O Forgiver and Kind God! Bless those who are eager to visit that heavenly sanctuary with heart  
.full of complete divine love and awareness