**بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم**

**Prologue**

There are ups and downs in life from which we learn a lot. Every change can be a lesson and each event can guide us towards some truth. In fact, fortunes and misfortunes are intended to teach us the Truth. When there comes a fortune after a period of misfortune, it is the best time for learning; because then we are ready to accept the Truth and be grateful for it.

**Studying Surat An-Naşr (The Divine Support) - سورة النصر**

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

[110:1](http://quran.com/110/1)



When the victory of Allah comes and the conquest,

[110:2](http://quran.com/110/2)



And you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes,

[110:3](http://quran.com/110/3)



Then exalt [Him] with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever Accepting of repentance.

# **The first step: thinking about the events and subjects in the Surah**

As mentioned earlier, the first step in studying a surah and thinking about it is studying its words and developing vivid images of them. If this initial thinking is in line with the main intention of the surah, it would lead to more reflection and contemplation on the surah. So, we begin with studying the words and visualizing them in order to get closer to the main intention of the surah.

## **Studying the words**

In the following chart the meaning of the words are given based on Al-Tahghigh[[1]](#footnote-1):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Word  | Meaning  |
| Nasr (support) | It is supporting, aiding, assisting and helping someone against opponents which leads to victory |
| Fat’h (opening, conquest) | Fat’h is the opposite of closure, it is removal of obstacles. It can be applied physically or spiritually (when the obstacles are removed, victory follows) |
| Ra’a (seeing) | Ra’s is Seeing by whatever means possible |
| Din (religion) | Din means submission and commitment to some plan or certain regulations |
| Fowj (pl. afwaj) multitude, flock | It is a part of something in which flowing is visible |
| Sabaha (sabbeh) exalt | Sabaha means moving and walking in the path of Truth without deviation or weakness. Tasbih (n.) means exalting someone who is impeccable. (two noteworthy factors in tasbih (exaltation): 1. Movement in the path of truth, and 2. Impeccability) |
| Hamd (praise) | Hamd is the opposite of blame and it means praising the beauty of someone’s deeds which have been done voluntarily. Hamd is accompanied with tasbih.  |
| Ghafara (istaghfer) ask for forgiveness, seek forgiveness  | Effacing the effect of something |
| Tawaba (tawwab) penitent (mankind), ever Accepting of Repentance (Allah) | It is withdrawing returning from sins and seeking forgiveness from God. (this meaning is applied to mankind; when applied to Almighty God, it means He accepts man’s penitence with open arms and forgives him)  |

## **Visualizing the words**

There are two ways to visualize the words; either we naturally have an image of the word in our mind or we need to rely on the relationship between the words of the surah to develop a concept of a given word. For instance, think of the word “nasr” (support), we can understand this word by bringing to mind the helps and supports we get on a daily basis. But, when we think of “tasbih” or “Istighfar”, we need to relate it to other words in the surah to get its meaning.

So, one way to visualize the words of surah is paying attention to the way they are applied or to their usages in everyday life. Doing so, study some of these examples and provide some others and write them on the third column below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Word | image | Other examples |
| Nasr (support) | Helping someone doing something |  |
| Fat’h (opening, conquest) | When in war, an army defeats the other  |  |
| Ra’a (seeing) | Understanding by seeing |  |
| Din (religion) | Abiding by the dos and don’ts in your plan |  |
| Fowj (multitude) | A flock of birds flying southward |  |
| Sabaha (exalt, moving quickly without deviation)  | Swiftly passing by |  |
| Hamada (praise) | Praising someone for some quality which has been purposefully chosen by that person |  |
| Ghafara (effacing the defects) | Covering and hiding |  |
| Tawaba (turning back, withdrawing from sins) | Going back and returning |  |

## **Relationships between the words**

### Parts of speech of the words in verses

### **Visualizing the words in combination**

We can visualize words of the surah together and in different combinations for different purposes. One way is to categorize the words in two categories:

We put words like Nasr, Fat’h, Ra’a, Fowj, and Din, for which we have vivid images in our mind, in one category.

And words like Tasbih, Hamd, Istighfar, and Towba, for which we may not have clear images in mind, are in the second category. We need to go over these words several times to be able to understand their relevance to other words in the first category.

To combine the images of these two categories and discover their relevance, we divide them into ‘*internal events’* and ‘*external events’* and study them. Issues related to victory, conquest, support and help are in the external events category. How individuals or society encounters this victorious event is studied in the internal events category. So, by dividing the events into external and internal we can relate words of the surah to each other in a more manageable and better way.

Victorious events area

* Shortages which are dealt with quickly
* Numerous ways for development and expansion
* Unquestionable conquest
* Widespread and comprehensive dominance over the opponents
* A tradition which is about to get widespread
* Group Worship and group movement of people
* A group fighting its opponents
* A plan which leads to victory, and the continuation of this victory
* A victory which is the beginning of new attempts
* A victory which should be maintained
* …..
* …..

The victorious group’s reactions area

* Extreme happiness because of victory
* Thinking about how to benefit from this victory
* Telling others about nice things which have been done, along with fixing flaws
* Constantly heeding the ultimate goal and acting accordingly
* …..
* …..
* …..

## **Paying attention to the background of revelation**

In order to visualize the words better and understand surah’s intention, sometimes we need to focus on its background of revelation; since Quran had been revealed to the prophet (PBUH) over a period of 23 years and in different events. As a result, knowing these events can help us discover the meanings of the surah. In addition to the backgrounds mentioned for the revelation of the surah, studying the overall atmosphere of the society is much helpful in analyzing the surah. This overall atmosphere is referred to as “revelation atmosphere”. In the following, some pieces of Hadith about the atmosphere of revelation are mentioned from Tafsir Al- Mizan:

* It has been narrated in Majma Al-Bayan from Maghatil: when this surah was revealed and the prophet (pbuh) recited it, his companions became happy and gave glad tidings to each other; but, when Ibn Abbas heard it he broke out into cry. The prophet (pbuh) ask him why he cried. He said he believed this surah was announcing the prophet’s death. And the prophet (pbuh) agreed with what he thought about the surah. After the revelation of this surah the prophet lived only for two more years and no one saw him laughing in those two years.
* Some have commented on the announcement of the prophet’s death as: the surah acknowledges that the prophet had fulfilled his prophecy, and he has accomplished what he intended to, and his period of great attempts and endeavor has come to an end, and as the famous saying goes around, whatever reached its perfection would decline.
* In the same book, it has been narrated from Om-E-Salame: At the end of his life, the prophet (pbuh) wouldn’t stand, sit down, come and go unless he said “Alleluia, praise is but for Allah, I seek forgiveness from Him and I return back to him”. When we asked him why he did so, the prophet would say: I had been commanded to do so. And he would recite this verse: “when comes the victory of Allah and the Conquest”.
* It has been narrated in Uyun from Husain Inb Khaled from Imam Reza: I heard from my Fat’her narrating from his Fat’her that the first verse revealed to the prophet (pbuh) was “recite in the name of your lord who created-” and the last verse revealed was “when comes the victory of Allah”.

According to the above Ahadith about the background of revelation we can say:

1. This surah has been revealed at the end of the prophet’s life (pbuh) and it encompasses all the benefits of the prophet’s rise and of the religion he brought which has been practiced by him during his lifetime.
2. The surah depicts that although practicing this religion has been accomplished successfully, some other plans are needed to make it widespread. In fact, the surah can be referred to as extending and deepening factors of religion.
3. Through stories narrated from the time of revelation of the surah we can conclude it mentions the flaws of the Muslim of that time. These flaws are the ones which distanced Imamate system from Divine Revelation. Therefore, lack of Tasbih and Istighfar in this surah leads to ignoring and spoiling the Right of Imamate. And keeping this point in mind in this surah is very important and it can be the answer to many hidden questions about that era.

# **Second step: writing logical statements**

This step takes us further towards reflection on the surah in order to get its main intention, and it enables us to obtain some contemplative statements based on the surah. Knowledge and certainty about these logical statements help us understand the surah more deeply and act based on it. To do so, we think about the concepts of the surah and write some contemplative statements from the literal meanings of the verses.

## Logical statements from the surah

Before extracting the statements it is important to notice that:

This surah’s text comprises of a conditional sentence, a ‘main clause’ and an ‘if clause’. Therefore, they should both be taken into account while extracting sentences. This grammatical form is full of interesting points which should be taken into account for contemplation and reflection.

Condition clause: when the victory of Allah comes and the conquest, and you see people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes

Main clause: then exalt your lord with praise and seek his forgiveness

Reasoning clause (argument): Indeed, He is ever Accepting of repentance.

Study and complete the following statements:

The Messenger (pbuh) in the surah:

* The main axis and the addressed in the surah is the prophet (pbuh)
* Divine support and the conquest are two special blessings from Allah to His messenger to help him spread the religion of Allah qualitatively and quantitatively.
* The Messenger as the axis of the surah is like the lmamate system as the axis of the society. Therefore, every individual should do these duties. In this case, they would be given Divine support and victory.
* Imam is the teacher of Tasbih and Istighfar. (Referring back to the supplications (Dua) are the best instructions for moving in the path of truth and getting closer to Allah and benefiting from true Support and Victory.)
* ……
* ……

 Divine Support and conquest

* Divine support and conquest is perfect when it is realized; it is also irreversible.
* In return for Divine support and victory, the prophet is given two duties of doing tasbih and isttighfar.
* Nasr which here means Divine Support and Help, is an onset for Fat’h (removing obstacles and achieving victory), which in turn is an onset for the next Nasr and so on. In other words, Fat’h is realized by Nasr, and it becomes a Nasr for other stages and further Fat’h. (Every victory is realized by a Divine support, which becomes a Divine Support for the next victory and so on.)
* …..
* …..

 A general tendency towards religion

* A general tendency towards religion is an example of Divine Support and Victory; it is a realized promise and no one can reverse it.
* Tasbih and Istighfar are among pillars of religiosity; because after you see and understand something you must express and acknowledge it.
* For the universal Rule of Pure Devotion to Allah which is achieved through Tasbih and Istighfar, keeping faith and developing the religion is essential.
* …..
* …..

 Tasbih, Hamd, Istighfar

* As Nasr and Fat’h come together, essentially Tasbih and Hamd also come together; Tasbih and Istighfar also come together.
* The relevance of Tasbih and Hamd is like the relevance between Nasr and Fat’h. This relevance can also be seen between Istighfar and Tasbih. In this case, one who does Tasbih is asking Allah forgiveness, and this Istighfar is itself another Tasbih for him.
* Divine Support, Nasr, and Victory, Fat’h, are two blessings the gratitude for which is Tasbih and Istighfar.
* …..
* …..

 Allah being Ever Accepting of Repentance

* Allah being ever Accepting of Repentance is a good reason for man to do Istighfar.
* Since Istighfar and Tasbih accompany each other, Allah being ever Accepting of Repentance is also accompanied with Tasbih.
* Since Tasbih and Istighfar is an order after receiving Divine Support and Fat’h, Allah being ever Accepting of Repentance is also related to Divine Support and Fat’h.
* According to the meaning of “tawaba” which means turning back, Allah being tawwab means He is willing to bestow His especial Mercy and blessings on mankind. The way to enjoy these blessings is defined in a specific plan which is called religion and which is presented to man by Messengers.
* Allah being ever Accepting of Repentance is a reason and a factor for man being repentant. In this case man can truly exalt Allah from all flaws and can praise him.
* In fact, enjoying Allah’s Support and victory, as well as Tasbih and Istighfar, reflects Allah as being ever Accepting of Repentance.
* …………
* ………..
* ………..

# **Third step: reflection on surah, getting closer to its intention**

After studying the Surah and getting to know its meanings, we study the surah more thoroughly to extract some keys to guide us towards the main intention of the surah. Some of these key points come in the following:

1. To enjoy the special Mercy and Blessings of Allah (tawb), it is essential to pay attention to religion and the Messenger. In this case, man and society would have an understanding of Divine Support, and they would have the chance of doing Tasbih with Hamd and Istighfar.
2. The promise of spreading religion of Islam, is a decided and final promise. Keeping oneself in line with this definite promise would keep us in the path of perfection, and enables us to enjoy the Divine support and Fat’h. Having a change in doing Tasbih, Hamd, and Istighfar is a sign of enjoying Divine support and Fat’h by individuals and society.
3. This surah connects man to the imamate system and consistent divine support and Fat’h.
4. ……

To conclude the surah, answer the following questions and add some of your own:

1. Why we should do Tasbih and Istighfar once we are blessed with Divine Support and Fat’h? How are these duties related to Nasr and Fat’h?
2. What is the prophet’s role in enjoyment of man from Divine support and Fat’h? Is man able to enjoy these two by himself (without the prophet)? Why?
3. Can we make the grounds for the practice of religion in society? In this case, are we playing a role in continuation of divine support in society? If yes, how is it possible?
4. How can we see Allah as being ever Accepting of Repentance in every moment of life?
5. Can we claim whenever one succeeds to do Tasbih and Istighfar, he is enjoying divine support and Fat’h? If this is the case, those who are waiting for divine support to come in the future will procrastinate in their doing Tasbih and Istighfar, won’t they?
6. How is society troubled by not seeing divine support and Fat’h in each moment? Is superficiality one of its consequences?
7. What can be understood from relating Tasbih and Istighfar in one hand and Fat’h and Nasr on the other hand?
8. Is Nasr and Fat’h an onset for Tasbih and Istighfar? Or vice versa
9. …..
10. …..
11. ….

#  **Fourth step: purification for reflection (purifying ourselves based on some aspect of the surah)**

The final verse of the surah can act as axes for reflection on the surah. To do so, we have two axes: had along with Tasbih (one axis) and Istighfar (another axis).

To practice Istighfar, some examples of Istighfar and Tasbih in daily life are presented:

1. Doing your daily chores on a logical basis is an example of Istighfar.
2. Deciding not to commit sins and bad deeds and sticking to it, is another example of Istighfar.
3. Trying to make for the adverse effects of some wrong deeds is Istighfar.
4. Trying to compensate for other people’s wrong deeds in society (or in a group) is an example of group Istighfar (collective Istighfar).
5. Istighfar is an example of being grateful. Therefore, man can put himself in the path of Istighfar by using his blessings in the best way possible.
6. ….
7. …..
8. …..

The same can be done with Tasbih:

1. Exalting Allah from all flaws and defects is Tasbih.
2. Considering oneself as Allah’s khalif is a prerequisite for worshipping Allah and doing Tasbih. In this case, keeping oneself from committing any sing or doing anything wrong is the practical Tasbih for man.
3. Sabaha means moving in the axis of Truth without any flaws, therefore, Tasbih means choosing to move in such a way.
4. ….
5. ….

To achieve the purification intended by the surah we have to plan to do Tasbih and Istighfar in our lives. To do so, supplications from Imams are very useful.

1. التحقیق فی کلمات القران نوشته ی علامه مصطفوی/ A research on the words of Quran written by Allameh Mostafavi [↑](#footnote-ref-1)