

Background and Meaning

Al-Nas closes the Qur'an with a prayer for protection. It is paired with al-Falaq as one of al-Mu'awwidhatayn, the two surahs of seeking refuge. Ibn Kathir explains its opening through three attributes of Allah: His lordship, sovereignty and divinity. The person seeking refuge turns to the One who possesses all three. The surah then identifies the harm of whispering and its sources. It teaches the parent about the need for Allah's protection in the heart, alongside the protection sought in al-Falaq.

Tafsir of the Surah

Ayat 1-3: Lord, King and God of humankind. Ibn Kathir explains that Allah is the Lord, owner and God of everything. All things are His creation and belong to Him. The person seeking refuge is commanded to turn to Allah through these attributes. These opening ayat establish why protection is sought with Him: He has complete authority over His creation and is the One whom they must worship.

Ayah 4: The retreating whisperer. Ibn Kathir explains al-waswas al-khannas through the whispering of Shaytan and his retreat when Allah is remembered. He records the explanation of Ibn 'Abbas and other early commentators that heedlessness gives room for whispering, while remembrance causes the whisperer to draw back. The ayah teaches the believer to seek refuge from this attempt to draw the heart towards wrongdoing.

Ayah 5: Whispering in the hearts of people. The surah identifies where this temptation is directed. Ibn Kathir's commentary describes Shaytan's effort to make evil appear attractive and records the Prophet's ﷺ warning about suggestions cast into people's hearts. The parent should recognise the need for Allah's help in guarding thoughts, intentions and choices. The prayer asks for protection from the source of harmful whispering.

Ayah 6: From jinn and humankind. Ibn Kathir discusses the interpretation that whispering can come from both jinn and human beings. He connects it with Qur'an 6:112, which describes devils among humankind and jinn passing deceptive, attractive speech to one another. Harmful influence can therefore include suggestions heard from people as well as unseen whispering. The final ayah completes the request for protection from both.

The message of the whole surah. Ibn Kathir draws attention to remembrance of Allah as a means by which Shaytan is overcome and diminished. The opening names the One who protects; the closing ayat describe the danger from which protection is sought. Together they teach dependence on Allah and vigilance about influences on the heart. Reciting these words with understanding joins a clear belief in Allah's authority to a direct request for His help.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ

١

Memorised

Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind.

مَلِكِ النَّاسِ

٢

Memorised

The King of mankind.

إِلَهِ النَّاسِ

٣

Memorised

The God of mankind.

مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ

٤

Memorised

From the evil of the sneaky whisperer.

الَّذِي يُوسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ

٥

Memorised

Who whispers into the hearts of people.

مِنْ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ

٦

Memorised

From among jinn and among people."

Parent tafsir: adapted from Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, 114:1-6.

Arabic commentary: quran.ksu.edu.sa/tafseer/katheer/sura114-aya1.html

Paired surahs and their recitation: see Ibn Kathir's introduction to al-Falaq.

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