# SAMPLE

## Ashab al-Ukhduud: The People of the

Ditch The Story of the People of the Ditch ( اﺧﺪود ) in the Quran

Aira Aurora

Free sample: Introduction & Chapter 1

putrabooks.github.io

**Buy the full book:**

Carousell carousell.sg/p/ashab-al-ukhduud-the-people-of-the-ditch-1465880581

Gumroad

Ko-fi

ElevenReader

Payhip

# Contents

Disclaimer

Introduction: The Fire and the Ditch

Chapter 1: The Surah — Al-Buruj and the Story of the Ditch

Chapter 2: The Setting — The Persecution of the Believers

Chapter 3: The Ditch — The Trench of Fire

Chapter 4: The Test — The Believers and the Choice

Chapter 5: The Boy and the King — The Story Behind the Surah

Chapter 6: The Fury — The King and His Army

Chapter 7: The Martyrdom — The Believers Who Would Not Bend

Chapter 8: The Judgment — Cursed Are the People of the Ditch

Chapter 9: The Lesson — The Faith That Survives the Fire

Frequently Asked Questions

Glossary

This free sample contains the Introduction and Chapter 1. The complete book contains the full contents above.

# Introduction: The Fire and the Ditch

The Quran tells of a people who dug a ditch, filled it with fire, and offered the believers a choice: renounce your faith or burn. The believers chose the fire. The Quran curses the ones who lit it: "Cursed were the companions of the trench, containing the fire with fuel, when they were sitting near it, witnessing what they were doing to the believers" (85:4-7).

The story of Ashab al-Ukhduud — the People of the Ditch — is a story of persecution and steadfastness, of tyranny and faith, of fire and the refusal to burn the truth out of the heart. It is a story that the Quran tells in Surah al-Buruj, a surah of 22 verses that opens with an oath on the stars and closes with a promise of victory for the believers.

This book — the twelfth in the Nations and Peoples of the Quran sub-series — explores the story of Ashab al-Ukhduud as the Quran tells it and as the tradition transmits it. It examines the surah itself, the setting of the persecution, the ditch and its fire, the test that the believers faced, the story of the boy and the king that tradition connects to the surah, the fury of the tyrant, the martyrdom of the believers who would not bend, the judgment that the Quran pronounces on the perpetrators, and the lesson of the faith that survives the fire.

The Quran's treatment of this event reveals a pattern that runs through the entire scripture: the pattern of the tyrant who persecutes the believer, the pattern of the believer who chooses death over apostasy, and the pattern of the divine justice that curses the persecutor and promises the paradise to the persecuted. The story is a warning to the oppressor and a comfort to the oppressed — the warning that the fire of the ditch will be answered by the fire of hell, and the comfort that the believer who dies in the fire is alive with the Lord.

The first chapter begins with the surah itself — the verses of al-Buruj and what they reveal about the event and its meaning.

# Chapter 1: The Surah — Al-Buruj and the Story of the Ditch

The surah opens with an oath: "By the sky containing the great stars, and by the promised Day, and by the witness and the witnessed" (85:1-3). The oath is on the heavens and the Day of Judgment — the two scales of the cosmic order. The sky with its stars is the scale of the creation, the vast and the ordered, the signs of the power of the Creator. The promised Day is the scale of the justice, the certain and the inevitable, the day when every wrong will be answered and every right will be rewarded.

The witness and the witnessed are the two parties of the story. The witness is the one who sees — the believer who witnesses the persecution, the believer who witnesses the truth, the believer who witnesses the fire. The witnessed is the one who is seen — the persecutor who is witnessed by the heaven and the earth, the tyrant who is witnessed by the angels, the oppressor who is witnessed by the One who sees everything. The oath is the frame — the frame of the story, the frame of the justice, the frame of the witness and the witnessed.

The surah says: "Cursed were the companions of the trench" (85:4). The curse is the judgment — the judgment of the Quran on the perpetrators. The companions of the trench are the ones who dug the ditch, the ones who filled it with fire, the ones who offered the believers the choice of apostasy or the fire. The curse is the condemnation — the condemnation of the act, the condemnation of the actors, the condemnation of the system that made the act possible.

The curse is not a wish. The curse is a statement — a statement of the divine judgment, a statement of the spiritual reality, a statement that the ones who are cursed are separated from the mercy, separated from the blessing, separated from the guidance. The curse is the consequence — the consequence of the act, the consequence of the persecution, the consequence of the fire that was lit to burn the believers.

The surah says: "containing the fire with fuel" (85:5). The ditch was not an accident. The fire was not spontaneous. The fuel was prepared. The persecution was planned, organized, and executed with deliberation. The fire was contained — contained in the ditch, contained by the walls of the trench, contained so that it would burn with intensity and focus. The fuel was supplied — supplied to keep the fire burning, supplied to keep the fire hot, supplied to make the fire a weapon of terror and death.

The detail is the horror. The horror is not only that the fire was lit. The horror is that the fire was prepared — prepared with fuel, prepared with a ditch, prepared with a plan. The persecution was not the act of a moment. The persecution was the act of a system — a system that built the ditch, that gathered the fuel, that lit the fire, and that brought the believers to the edge of the flames. The detail is the lesson — the lesson that the persecution of the believers is not a random act but a planned operation, and the lesson that the ones who plan the persecution are the ones who are cursed.

The surah says: "when they were sitting near it, witnessing what they were doing to the believers" (85:6-7). The perpetrators were not passive. They were sitting. They were watching. They were witnessing. They sat by the fire and watched the believers burn. The sitting is the cruelty — the cruelty of the spectator, the cruelty of the one who watches the suffering and does nothing, the cruelty of the one who has made the suffering into a spectacle.

The witnessing is the irony. The perpetrators "witnessed" what they were doing. But they themselves were "witnessed" — witnessed by the sky and the stars, witnessed by the promised Day, witnessed by the witness and the witnessed. The perpetrators thought they were the ones watching. The Quran says they were the ones being watched. The perpetrators thought they were the judges. The Quran says they were the ones being judged. The irony is the justice — the justice that the watcher is watched, the justice that the judge is judged, and the justice that the one who sits by the fire will face the fire.

The surah says: "And they resented them not except that they believed in Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy" (85:8). The reason for the persecution was the faith. The believers were persecuted not for what they did but for what they believed. They were persecuted not for a crime but for a conviction. They were persecuted not for harm but for the faith — the faith in Allah, the faith in the One who is Exalted in Might, the faith in the One who is Praiseworthy.

The reason is the lesson — the lesson that the persecution of the believers is not about what the believers have done but about what the believers represent. The believers represent the truth, and the truth is a threat to the tyranny. The believers represent the faith, and the faith is a challenge to the power. The believers represent the worship of the One, and the worship of the One is a rejection of the worship of the tyrant. The persecution is the response of the tyrant to the threat — the threat that the faith poses to the power, the threat that the truth poses to the lie, and the threat that the worship of the One poses to the worship of the many.

The surah says: "His is the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is

over all things a Witness" (85:9). The sovereignty is the answer — the answer to the tyranny, the answer to the persecution, the answer to the fire. The tyrant may have power on the earth. The tyrant may have the ditch and the fire. The tyrant may have the army and the fuel. But the dominion — the dominion of the heavens and the earth — belongs to Allah. The tyrant's power is temporary. The tyrant's fire is temporary. The tyrant's ditch is temporary. The dominion is permanent, and the dominion belongs to the One who is the Witness of everything.

The sovereignty is the comfort — the comfort that the believers are not alone, the comfort that the persecution is seen, the comfort that the fire is temporary and the dominion is permanent. The believers burn in the ditch, but the One who owns the heavens and the earth is their Witness. The believers die in the fire, but the One who has the dominion is their Judge. The believers are persecuted by the tyrant, but the One who is over all things is their Protector.

The surah continues with a promise: "Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds will have gardens beneath which rivers flow. That is the great attainment" (85:11). The promise is the paradise — the paradise that is the answer to the fire, the paradise that is the reward of the faith, the paradise that is the destination of the believers who chose the fire over the apostasy.

The promise is the justice — the justice that the fire is answered by the paradise, the justice that the persecution is answered by the reward, and the justice that the ditch is answered by the gardens. The promise is the balance — the balance of the Quran, the balance that does not leave the believer in the fire without the hope of the paradise, the balance that does not leave the persecutor in the power without the warning of the curse.

End of free sample. The full book is available at putrabooks.github.io

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aira Aurora is an independent researcher and writer specializing in Quranic studies. Her work focuses on close reading of the Quranic text, exploring its themes, narratives, and moral framework with attention to both the original Arabic and the broader human context.

The NurOne master series is her primary project -- a multi-sub-series exploration of the Quran covering prophets, people, places, events, lessons, commands, signs, the unseen, the hereafter, and everyday life. Each book is a close reading of the Quranic verses on a specific topic, presented in clear, accessible language.

Her work is published under the pen name Aira Aurora.

# Read the rest

## ASHAB AL-UKHDUUD: THE PEOPLE OF THE DITCH

The full book continues past this sample.

Get it here:
https://ko-fi.com/s/f5bda4a831

Pay what you want, S$1.90 or more. No account needed. Instant PDF + EPUB.