

Al-Dhariyat [The Winds] **Makkan Period**

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

- [1] By the winds which scatter dust,
[2] which carry clouds laden with water,
[3] which then smoothly speed along,
[4] and execute the great task of apportioning (rainfall):
[5] surely what you are being warned against is true,
[6] and the Judgement shall doubtlessly take place.¹

1. "Surely what you are being warned against is true, and the Judgement shall doubtlessly take place." This is the point which is being emphasised by stating it on oath. Here attention is especially drawn to the exquisitely ordered and wonderfully functioning phenomenon of rainfall. This system and the wisdom and beneficence underlying it are for anyone to see. All this establishes that this world is not an aimless and absurd play-house; that it is not the stage of a senseless drama being randomly played out over millions of years. On the contrary it is an immaculate System permeated with wisdom of the highest order, a system through which everything is tied with a purpose and is accompanied by beneficent considerations. Is it at all conceivable, then, that man, who is living under such a system, will first be endowed with authority on earth and then not be called to account for the use he has made of that authority?

- [7] By the heaven with its numerous forms:
[8] surely you are at variance (about the Hereafter);²
[9] though only those who are averse to the Truth will turn away from (believing in it).
[10] Doomed are the conjecturers
[11] who are steeped in ignorance and heedlessness.³
[12] They ask: "When will the Day of judgement be?"
[13] It will be the Day when they shall be scourged by the Fire
[14] (and be told): "Taste your ordeal! This is what you were seeking to hasten."⁴
[15] As for the God-fearing, they shall be in the midst of gardens and fountains,

[16] joyously receiving what their Lord will have granted them. Verily they did good works before (the coming of this Day):

[17] they used to sleep but little by night,

2. Just as the clouds and the various galaxies in the sky vary in their shape and form, so do the views of people about the Hereafter, each being vastly different from the other. This difference of views is, in itself, an evidence of the fact that the opinions man has formed about his own and the world's end, independently of God's Revelation and Prophecy, are not rooted in true knowledge. For had there been direct access to true knowledge, there would have been no occasion for the rise of numerous and mutually contradictory opinions to emerge.

3. Being devoid of true knowledge and basing themselves merely on conjecture, the unbelievers are unwittingly heading towards a calamitous end. For if one's ideas regarding the Hereafter are flawed, any path that one takes is bound to lead to one's doom.

4. The unbelievers enquired: "When will the Day of Judgement be?" (see v, 12 above). The question is itself suggestive of another query: "If the Day of Judgement is bound to visit us, why is it not visiting us straight away? We have denied the possibility of its occurrence, so why is it not visiting us with all the horrors that are said to be a part of it?"

[18] and would ask for forgiveness at dawn,

[19] and in their wealth there was a rightful share for him who would ask and for the destitute.⁵

[20] There are many Signs on earth for those of sure faith,

[21] and also in your own selves. Do you not see?

[22] And in heaven is your provision and also what you are being promised.⁶

[23] So, by the Lord of the heaven and the earth, this is certainly true, as true as the fact of your speaking.

[24] (O Prophet), did the story of Abraham's honoured guests reach you?

[25] When they came to him, they said: "Peace"; he said: "Peace also be to you; (you seem to be) a group of strangers."⁷

5. This describes the believers. Their behaviour has a two-fold characteristic. On the one hand, they recognise the claims of their Lord against them. On the other hand, they fully realise that whatever has been bestowed upon them by God, whether little or much, does not simply belong to them and their family. Instead, they feel that the needy too have a rightful claim on their wealth.

6. The word "heaven" here denotes the higher realm, and "provision" means all that is given to man to enable him to live and function in the world. As for the words "what you are being promised," they refer to the Resurrection, the Gathering, the Unfolding of the Scrolls, the Accounting, the Reward and Punishment, and Heaven and Hell. These things, according to all heavenly scriptures, and finally according to the *Quran*, are bound to take place. The present verse thus tells us that the decision regarding the provision we receive in the world is made in the higher realm. Likewise, the decision as to when a person should be recalled to render an account of his deeds to God is also made in the same realm.

7. Hearing in mind the context in which this sentence occurs, it might carry either of the following two meanings. First, that the Prophet Abraham (peace be on him) himself told the guests that he had never seen them before, so they were probably newcomers to the area. Second, that after responding to their greeting, Abraham said either to himself, or went inside and told his servants, to arrange a meal for his guests. He said in effect: "These people seem to be strangers for people bearing their demeanour have not been seen around before."

[26] Then he went back to his family and brought a fat roasted calf

[27] and laid it before them, saying: "Will you not eat?"

[28] Then he became afraid of them. They said: "Fear not," and announced to him the good news of (the birth of) a boy endowed with knowledge.⁸

[29] So hearing his wife went forth shouting. She struck her face and exclaimed: "A barren old woman am I."⁹

[30] They said: "So has your Lord said (that you shall have a boy). Surely He is Most Wise, All-Knowing,"

[31] Abraham said: "Envoys (of Allah), what is your errand?"

[32] They replied: "Behold, we have been sent to a wicked People¹⁰

[33] that we may unleash a shower of clay-stones

8. According to **Surah Hud** 11:71, it is specifically said that this was the good news of the birth of the Prophet Isaac (peace be on him).

9. It was hard for Abraham's wife to believe the news for she was both age-stricken and barren. How, then, could any child be born to her? According to the Bible, Abraham was then a hundred years old and Sarah was 90 (Gen. 17: 17).

10. The people referred to here were so wicked that instead of specifically naming them, the angels considered it enough to refer to them as "a wicked people".

[34] marked by your Lord upon those who go beyond the limits."¹¹

[35] Then We¹² evacuated there from all the believers

[36] - and We did not find there any, apart from a single house of Muslims –

[37] and We left therein a Sign for those who fear the grievous chastisement.¹³

[38] There is also a Sign for you in the story of Moses when We sent him with a clear authority to Pharaoh.¹⁴

[39] But Pharaoh turned away, showing arrogance on account of his power, and said (about Moses): "He is either a sorcerer or a madman."

[40] So We seized him and his hosts, and cast them into the sea. He became an object of much blame.

[41] There is also a Sign for you in (the story of) 'Ad, when We let loose upon them an ominous wind

[42] that left nothing that it came upon without reducing it to rubble.

[43] There is also a Sign for you in (the story of) Thamud. They were told: "Enjoy yourselves for a while."

11. Each stone was marked, under God's command, specifically indicating the culprit who would be struck down by it.

12. As to how the angels came to the Prophet Lot (peace be on him) after their meeting with the Prophet Abraham (peace be on him) and what transpired between them and the people of Lot is left unsaid.

13. The word "Sign" here refers to the Dead Sea, the southern part of which still retains vestiges of a great disaster.

14. The words "clear authority" signify those miracles and clear proofs which made it absolutely clear that Moses had been designated by the Lord of the heavens and the earth as His Messenger.

[44] But they brazenly disobeyed their Lord's command, and then a sudden chastisement overtook them while they looked on.

[45] They were unable even to stand up or protect themselves.

[46] Before all these We destroyed the people of Noah: they were a wicked people.

[47] And heaven - We made it with Our Own Power and We have the Power to do so.¹⁵

[48] And the earth – We spread it out, and how well have We smoothed it!

[49] And of everything We have created pairs;¹⁶ perhaps you will take heed.¹⁷

15. The word musi' (pl. Musi'un) signifies one who possesses abundant power and might. It can, however, also signify: "he who causes expansion". According to the first interpretation, the verse means: "We have built this heaven with Our Own Power and for so doing We did not have to depend on anyone's help, for the task was well within Our power. Since We built this heaven, why should anyone believe that the resurrection of human beings after death is beyond Our power and ability?" According to the second interpretation, the verse means: "We created this immense Universe, but that does not mark the end of Our task of creation. We are constantly expanding the Universe and ever new wonders of Our creation are visible almost every moment. What, then, makes you think that a great Creator such as Us would be unable to resurrect human beings?"

16. Everything in the world has been created on the principle of pairs. The whole universal system runs on the principle that everything matches another with which it is united and this brings into existence a wide variety of forms and combinations. There is nothing in the world that is totally unrelated to everything else and is devoid of a match. For it is by uniting a thing with its matching partner that it becomes productive.

17. If one reflects and pays heed, it is clear that the matching partner of the world is the Hereafter. Without the Hereafter the world would be utterly meaningless.

[50] Flee, therefore, to Allah. Surely I am a clear warner to you from Him;

[51] and do not set up any deity with Allah. Surely I am a clear warner to you from Him.¹⁸

[52] Thus has it been (in the past): never did a Messenger come to the nations that preceded them but they said: "(He is) a sorcerer, or a mad-man."

[53] Have they arrived at a common understanding concerning this? No; but they are a people given to transgression.¹⁹

[54] So turn your attention away from them; you shall incur no blame.

[55] Do, however, keep exhorting them; for exhortation benefits those endowed with faith.

18. Though these sentences are a part of God's speech, the actual speaker here is not God but the Prophet (peace be on him). In other words, it is through the Prophet (peace be on him) that God conveys to human beings the message: "Flee, therefore, to Allah. Surely I am a clear warner to you from Him."

19. *It is significant that for thousands of years people of different countries and nations continued to respond to the call of the Prophets in one and the same manner. Obviously, this uniformity did not ensue from mutual deliberation. Instead, such uniformity of response arose from the fact that all those who rejected the call did so out of defiance and transgression. These characteristics are their common denominator.*

[56] I created the *jinn* and humans for nothing else but that they may serve Me;²⁰

[57] I desire from them no provision, nor do I want them to feed Me.

[58] Surely Allah is the Bestower of all provision, the Lord of all power, the Strong.

[59] The wrong-doers²¹ shall receive a portion of the chastisements as their fellows (of yore). So let them not rush Me.

[60] Woe, then, betide those who disbelieved in that Day of theirs which they are being asked to hold in dread.

20. *The point stressed here is that God created man to serve Him to the exclusion of everyone else. Man should serve God by virtue of the fact that He is man's Creator. Now, since God alone is his Creator, what justification can there be for serving others?*

21. *"The wrong-doers" are those who commit offence against reality as well as their own nature.*