

Al-Tur [The Mount] **Makkan Period**

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

[1] By the Mount,

[2] and the Book inscribed

[3] on fine parchment;

[4] by the much-frequented House,

[5] by the elevated canopy;

[6] and by the swelling sea:

[7] verily your Lord's Chastisement shall come to pass,

[8] none can avert that.¹

[9] (It shall come to pass) on the Day when the heaven will convulse in a great convulsion,

1. "... Your Lord's chastisement" here denotes chastisement in the Hereafter. This because the occurrence of the Hereafter itself is tantamount to the visitation of chastisement on the deniers of the Truth.

Five oaths accompany the statement that the Hereafter will surely come to pass, the implication being that each of these five testifies that the Hereafter is bound to occur. These oaths are as follows: (1) By Mount Sinai where it was decided to exalt an oppressed nation and bring about the downfall of another nation that was immersed in evil-doing. This decision clearly indicates that God's realm is not one of lawlessness and injustice. (2) By the scriptures. These are inscribed on fine parchment from ancient times and testify that the Prophets who came during different epochs stressed on God's behalf the certainty of the Hereafter. (3) "By the much-frequented House," alludes to the Ka'bah, originally built in the sandy desolation of Makkah. However, far from being desolate, God has made it bustle with people, so much so that it excels every shrine on earth in terms of the number of people it attracts. This proves that Prophets do not engage in loose, baseless talk. After having erected this great shrine in the midst of barren hills, the Prophet Abraham (peace be on him) invited people to proceed to it for Pilgrimage. No one could then have imagined that for thousands of years the world would witness such huge crowds of people pressing forward to this one spot. (4) "By the elevated canopy," here refers to the sky. (5) "By the swelling sea." All these are Clear Signs of God's power, Signs that clearly show that their Creator certainly has the power to make the Hereafter come about.

[10] and the mountains shall violently fly about.

[11] Woe, then, on that Day to those who give the lie (to this Message)

[12] and amuse themselves with vain argumentation.

[13] On the Day when they shall be thrust into Hell with a violent thrust (and shall be told):

[14] "This is the Hell which you used to give the lie to."

[15] Is this, then, any feat of magic or are you unable to see?

[16] Go now and burn in it. It is all the same Whether you bear it patiently or do not bear it with patience. You are only being recompensed for your deeds."

[17] Surely the God-fearing shall be in Gardens and bliss,

[18] enjoying what Allah will have endowed them with; and their Lord will have saved them from the torment of the Blazing Fire.

[19] (They will be told): "Eat and drink to your hearts' content as a reward for your deeds."

[20] The God-fearing shall be reclining on couches facing each other, and We shall wed them to maidens with large, beautiful eyes.

[21] We shall unite the believers with those descendants of theirs who followed them in their faith, and shall not deny them any part of the reward for their good deeds. Every person is pledged to what he did.²

[22] We shall provide them in abundance with all kinds of fruit and meat, whatever they may desire.

[23] They shall pass on to one another a cup that will incite neither levity nor sin.³

[24] Youths as fair as hidden pearls will be set apart to wait upon them; they will be running to and fro to serve them.

[25] They will turn to one another and ask (regarding the past events).

[26] They will say: "When we were living before among our kinsfolk we lived in constant fear (of Allah's displeasure).⁴

[27] Then Allah graced us with His favour and saved us from the chastisement of the scorching wind.

2. *A person cannot redeem a pledge unless he pays off the debt he owes. In like manner, a person cannot redeem himself from accountability before God unless he discharges the duty he owes Him. Even parents will be unable to redeem their children if the latter are not righteous. In essence, then, the good deeds of the parents will not secure the release of their children from the pledge.*

3. *This statement is about the wine that will be served in Paradise. This wine will not cause intoxication. Those who drink it will not become drunk, will not lose control over themselves and will not burst into senseless and vulgar babble. Nor will they resort to abusive invectives and obscene expressions or pick a row with others or behave indecently in the manner of drunkards.*

4. *The believers will describe their life as one lived with the consciousness of being answerable to God. Far from being immersed in hedonistic pursuits and unfettered self-indulgence, they were constantly vigilant lest they did anything that would bring God's wrath upon them. Significantly, it is said that they lived before "among their kinsfolk in constant fear (of Allah's displeasure)". Living with their kinsfolk is mentioned here for a specific reason. The main reason someone lives a life of sin is that they are driven by the desire to provide ample means of ease and comfort to their immediate dependents.*

[28] Formerly we had always prayed to Him. Surely He is Most Benign, Most Compassionate."

[29] So exhort (them, O Prophet), for by your Lord 's Grace, you are neither a soothsayer nor a madman.⁵

[30] Or do they say: "He is a poet for whom we await an adverse turn of fortune."

[31] Tell them: "Wait; I too am waiting with you."

[32] Do their minds prompt them to say such things, or are they a people immersed in transgression?"⁶

5. *The earlier verses depict a scene of the Hereafter. From here on the discourse turns to berating the intense obduracy with which the Makkan unbelievers resisted the Prophet's Message. Apparently the present verse is addressed to the Prophet (peace be on him), but in fact its true purpose is to disabuse the unbelievers' minds of all false, pre-conceived notions about him, viz. that he was a soothsayer or madman. The unbelievers are in effect being told not to apply these categories to the Prophet (peace be on him) for they do not apply to him.*

6. *Through these few sentences the hollowness of the opponents' propaganda is fully brought out. The Quraysh notables pretended to be a bunch of smart people. But what was that wisdom that made them dub someone a poet when he was not a poet; to characterise someone as a madman when the entire community acknowledged him to be outstandingly wise; to brand someone a soothsayer when he was not even remotely related to soothsaying? Had they really made use of rational criteria to judge him, they would have arrived at one and the same judgement. But in this case, the Prophet (peace be on him) was declared many*

things at the same time. Notwithstanding the contradiction involved, he was simultaneously declared a poet, a madman, and a sorcerer.

[33] Do they say: "He has himself fabricated the Qur'an?" No; the truth is that they are altogether averse to believing.

[34] (If they are truthful in this), then let them produce a discourse of similar splendour.

[35] Did they come into being without any creator? Or were they their own creators?

[36] Or is it they who created the heavens and the earth? No; the truth is that they lack sure faith.⁷

[37] Or do they have your Lord's treasures in their keeping? Or have absolute authority over them?⁸

[38] Or do they have a ladder whereon they can climb and attempt to listen (to what is transpiring in the Higher Realm)? Then, let any of them who has listened to it produce a clear proof of it.

7. The unbelievers verbally admit that God is their Creator as well as the Creator of the whole Universe. But when they are asked to worship only the One True God, they are infuriated to the point of coming to blows about it. This contradiction demonstrates that they simply lack "sure faith".

8. This has been said in response to the objection of the Makkan unbelievers who wondered why, of all people, Muhammad, son of 'Abd Allah, was designated God's Messenger? The response suggests that, after all, someone had to be appointed God's Messenger in order to rescue people from the error in which they were wallowing. And if it was necessary to do so, who else was the best judge to decide who should be designated as His Messenger? Now if the Makkans refused to believe that the Messenger had been designated by God Himself, this could only mean one of the two things: either they considered themselves to be invested with Godhead, or that while they accepted God as the Lord of His realm, they nevertheless believed that He should carry out their edicts.

[39] Or does Allah have daughters whereas you have sons?⁹

[40] Or is it that you ask of them any recompense so that they should fear to be weighed down under the burden of debt?

[41] Or is it that they have access to (the Truths in) the realm beyond sense-perception which they are writing down?¹⁰

[42] Or are they contriving a stratagem against you? If so, that stratagem will rebound against the unbelievers.

[43] Do they have any god other than Allah? Exalted be Allah above whatever they associate (with Him in His Divinity).

9. *The opponents who denied the Prophet's teaching are being asked if they themselves had any dependable means of knowing the reality. Had any of them travelled to the higher realms and come to know from God, at first hand, that their beliefs on which their religion rested were wholly true? And if such was their claim, let them consider the odd fact that they assigned daughters to God, even though they regarded daughters as a mark of disgrace for themselves.*

10. *How could the unbelievers feel so sure in denying the Prophet's statements about facts beyond the ken of sense-perception? Had they investigated all this and observed that what the Prophet (peace be on him) said was contrary to the Truth?*

[44] (So obstinate are they that) even if they were to see some fragments of the sky falling down they would still say: "It is only a mass of cloud."

[45] So leave them alone until they encounter that Day of theirs when they shall be struck down,

[46] when their stratagem shall be of no avail to them, nor shall they be succoured.

[47] Surely a chastisement awaits the wrong-doers even before the coming of that Day; but most of them do not know.

[48] Be patient, then, (O Prophet), until the judgement of your Lord comes. For surely you are before Our eyes, And celebrate the praise of your Lord when you rise,¹¹

[49] and also celebrate His praise at night, and at the retreat of the stars.¹²

11. *The believers are told that when they commence their Prayers they should glorify God. In compliance with this the Prophet (peace be on him) directed that the following words be recited after saying "Allah Akbar" to signal the commencement of the Prayer: "Glory and Praise be to You, O Allah, Blessed be Your name, and exalted be Your honour. There is no god apart from You."*

12. *This signifies the **Fajr** Prayer.*