

Al-Qiyamah [The Resurrection]

Makkan Period

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

[1] Nay, ¹ I swear by the Day of Resurrection; ²

[2] and nay, I swear by the self-reproaching soul! ³

[3] Does man imagine that We will not be able to bring his bones together again?

[4] Yes indeed; We have the power to remould even his finger-tips.

*1. To open a discourse with "nay" itself indicates that this **surah** was revealed in order to refute something. "Nay" in the present context signifies that the unbelievers' notions about Resurrection are altogether false. This is followed by a sworn statement enunciating what the Truth really is.*

2. Ironically, the occurrence of the Resurrection is being affirmed here by recourse to swearing by the Day of Resurrection itself. This swearing emphasises that it is beyond every doubt that Resurrection is bound to occur. The entire Universe testifies that it has neither always been in existence nor will it always remain so. It came into existence at a given moment of time from nothingness and a time will come when it will come to an end.

3. "The self-reproaching soul" here means conscience, for conscience reproaches man whenever he commits evil deeds. The very existence of conscience bears testimony to the fact that man is answerable for his deeds.

[5] But man desires to persist in his evil ways. ⁴

[6] He asks: "When will the Day of Resurrection be?"

[7] When the sight is dazed,

[8] and the moon is eclipsed,

[9] and the sun and the moon are joined together,

[10] on that Day will man say: "Whither the refuge?"

[11] No, there is no refuge,

[12] With your Lord alone will be the retreat that Day.

[13] On that Day will man be apprised of his deeds, both the earlier and the later.

[14] But lo, man is well aware of himself,

[15] even though he might make up excuses.⁵

[16] (O Prophet)⁶ do not stir your tongue hastily (to commit the Revelation to memory).

[17] Surely it is for Us to have you commit it to memory and to recite it.

[18] And so when We recite it, follow its recitation attentively;

[19] then it will be for Us to explain it.

4. The true reason for a person's denial of Resurrection is not that he really has rational or scientific proof establishing that it is beyond the range of the possible; instead, the true reason for this denial is his proclivity to engage in evil.

5. Man's Record will be placed before him on the Judgement-Day. This will be done not in order that the evil-doers become acquainted with their evil deeds, for each person is already aware of the evil deeds he has committed. The Record will, nevertheless, be brought forward so as to fulfil the requirements of justice which demand that proof of a culprit's offence be placed before the court.

*6. The whole passage from here to "then it will be for Us to explain it" (vv. 16-19) is a parenthetical statement which interrupts the discourse to bring an important matter to the Prophet's attention. The need to do so arose because when Gabriel was communicating this **surah** to the Prophet (peace be on him), the latter kept repeating it so that he could firmly commit it to his memory.*

[20] Nay;⁷ the truth is that you love ardently (the good of this world) that can be obtained hastily,

[21] and are oblivious of the Hereafter.

[22] Some faces on that Day will be fresh and resplendent,

[23] and will be looking towards their Lord;

[24] and some faces on that Day will be gloomy,

[25] believing that a crushing calamity is about to strike them.

[26] Nay;⁸ when a man's soul reaches up to the throat,

[27] and it is said: "Is there any enchanter who can step forward and help (by his chanting)?"

[28] and he realises that the hour of parting is come,

[29] and calf is inter-twined with calf.

[30] On that Day you will be driven to your Lord.

[31] But he did not verify the Truth, nor did he observe Prayer;

[32] on the contrary, he gave the lie to the Truth and turned his back upon it,

[33] then he went back to his kinsfolk, elated with pride.

[34] This (attitude) is worthy of you, altogether worthy;

[35] again, it is worthy of you, altogether worthy.

7. This marks the resumption of the original subject that was interrupted by the parenthetical statement. The word "nay" here emphasises that the true reason for denying the Hereafter was not that they were truly convinced that it was beyond God's power to raise the dead to life, The true reason, instead, was that they ardently loved this world (and denial of Resurrection came handy for if there were no Resurrection and After-Life, they could pursue their worldly interests with full impunity).

8. This "nay" relates to the basic subject under discussion. It underlines that they were mistaken in fancying that death would bring about their final extinction and that they would not return to their Lord for His reckoning.

[36] Does man think that he will be left alone, unquestioned?⁹

[37] Was he not a drop of ejaculated semen,

[38] then he became a clot, and then Allah made it into a living body and proportioned its parts,

[39] and then He made of him a pair, male and female?

[40] Does He, then, not have the power to bring back the dead to life?

*9. The word used here is **suda**. When this word is used about a camel it denotes the camel that wanders about aimlessly, grazing at will, one whom there is none to oversee.*