

# **Al-Nazi'at** [The Soul Pluckers] **Makkan Period**

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

- [1] By those (angels) that pluck out the soul from depths,  
[2] and gently take it away;<sup>1</sup>  
[3] and by those that speedily glide along (the cosmos),<sup>2</sup>  
[4] and vie with the others<sup>3</sup> (in carrying out their Lord's behests);  
[5] and then manage the affairs of the Universe<sup>4</sup> (according to their Lord's commands).  
[6] The Day when the quaking will cause a violent convulsion,  
[7] and will be followed by another quaking.  
[8] On that Day some hearts shall tremble (with fright),  
[9] and their eyes shall be downcast with dread.

*1. Here the allusion is to the angels of death who descend to the depths of a person's being in order to draw out his soul from every fibre of his body.*

*2. The words "speedily glide along" portray the promptness and swiftness which characterise the actions of the angels in carrying out God's commands.*

*3. That is, as soon as the angels receive any indication of what God wants them to do, they begin to vie with one another in carrying out His commands.*

*4. This shows that the angels are God's functionaries who are appointed by Him to administer the affairs of the Universe according to His commands.*

- [10] They say: "Shall we indeed be restored to life,  
[11] even after we have been reduced to bones, hollow and rotten?"  
[12] They say: "That will then be a return with a great loss!"<sup>5</sup>  
[13] Surely they will need no more than a single stern blast,  
[14] and lo, they will all be in the open plain.  
[15] Has Moses' story reached you?  
[16] When his Lord called him in the sacred valley of Tuwa,

[17] and directed him: "Go to Pharaoh, he has rebelled,  
[18] and say to him: 'Are you willing to be purified,  
[19] that I may direct you to your Lord and then you hold Him in awe?' "

[20] Then Moses (went to Pharaoh and) showed him the Great Sign;<sup>6</sup>

[21] but he denied it as false and disobeyed,

[22] and then he turned back to have recourse to his craftiness,

[23] and gathered his people and declared:

[24] "I am the supreme lord of you all."

[25] Thereupon Allah seized him for the chastisement of the World to Come as well as of the present.

[26] Surely there is a great lesson in it for whoever would fear (Allah).<sup>7</sup>

*5. In response to the query from the deniers of the Hereafter (see vv.10-11 above), it was made clear that they would certainly be restored to life even "after they have been reduced to bones, hollow and rotten." On hearing this they gave full vent to jest and irony, saying to one another that such a return would mean courting a very substantial loss (for they would then be skeletons, simply rotten bones).*

*6. "The Great Sign" demonstrated by Moses consisted in his staff becoming a serpent. It is mentioned at several places in the Qur'an. See, for instance, **Ta' Ha'** 20: 19-20, **al-Naml**, 27: 10-13.*

*7. The lesson behind Pharaoh's story is that one should be fearful of the abhorrent consequences which stem from decrying God's Messengers as liars.*

[27] Is it harder to create you or the heaven? But Allah built it,

[28] and raised its vault high and proportioned it;

[29] and covered its night with darkness and brought forth from it its day;

[30] and thereafter spread out the earth,

[31] and brought out of it its water and its pasture,

[32] and firmly fixed in it mountains;

[33] all this as provision for you and your cattle,

[34] But when the great calamity will come about<sup>8</sup>

[35] on the Day when man will recall all his strivings,

[36] and Hell will be brought in sight for anyone to see:

[37] then he who transgressed

[38] and preferred the life of this world,

[39] most surely his abode shall be Hell.

[40] But he who feared to stand before his Lord, and restrained himself from evil desires,

[41] most surely his abode shall be Paradise.

[42] They ask you about the Hour: "When will it be?"

[43] What concern do you have to speak about that?

[44] Its knowledge rests with your Lord.

[45] You are only a warner to him who has a fear of it.

[46] On the Day they see it, they will feel as though they had stayed (in the grave) no more than one evening or one morning.

*8. That is, Resurrection.*