

Al-Tariq [The Night Visitor] **Makkan Period**

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

[1] By the heaven, and the night-visitor,

[2] what do you know what the night-visitor is?

[3] It is the piercing star.

[4] There is no living being but there is a protector over it.¹

[5] So let man consider of what he was created.

[6] He was created of a gushing fluid,

[7] emanating from between the loins and the ribs.²

[8] Surely He (the Creator) has the power to bring him back (to life).

[9] On the Day when man's deepest secrets shall put to the test be³

1. The word "protector" here signifies God Himself Who is looking after and protecting all the creatures of the earth and the heavens, be they large or small. The thrust of the verse is that the countless stars and planets that glisten in the sky at night bear witness that there certainly is a Being Who created them, illuminated them, suspended them in space, and Who protects them in such manner that they neither fall from their locations nor collide with the other countless stars in the course of their movement, nor do any other stars and planets collide with them. In like manner, God looks after and protects each and every object in the Universe.

2. The life-generating fluid of both men and women issues from that part of their body that lies between the back and the breast. It is being said, therefore, that man was created of a "gushing fluid emanating from between the loins and the ribs."

3. "Man's deepest secrets" signify those actions that are unknown to others. They also signify those matters about whom some people might know about, but whose underlying intent and motive are hidden from others.

[10] he shall have no power, and no helper.

[11] By the heaven with its recurring cycle of rain,

[12] and by the earth ever bursting with verdure,

[13] this (Qur'an) is surely a decisive Word,

[14] not a flippant jest.⁴

[15] They are devising a guile,

[16] and I too am devising a guile.

[17] So leave the unbelievers to themselves; respite them awhile.

4. Just as the downpour from the heaven and the vegetation that pierces through the earth's crust is a serious reality rather than a jest, so is the Qur'an's teaching that man is bound to return to his Lord.