

The background of the cover is a vibrant, multi-colored cosmic scene. At the top left, a bright yellow sun or star is partially obscured by a purple nebula. The sky is filled with numerous stars and colorful nebulae in shades of blue, purple, and red. In the center, a bright, multi-colored light source (possibly a star or a nebula) emits several beams of light that converge towards a small, green planet with a cityscape on its surface. The planet is situated in the lower middle of the frame. The overall atmosphere is one of divine illumination and cosmic grandeur.

# Beams of Illumination from the Divine Revelation

A Commentary on *Juz 'Ammā*,  
the Last Section of the Qur'an  
by **Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri**



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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Acknowledged as a master of self-knowledge and a spiritual philosopher, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri's role as a teacher grew naturally out of his own quest for self-fulfillment.

He travelled extensively on a spiritual quest which led to his eventual rediscovery of the pure and original Islamic heritage of his birth, and the discovery of the truth that reconciles the past with the present, the East with the West, the worldly with the spiritual – a link between the ancient wisdom teachings and our present time.

A descendant of five generations of well-known and revered spiritual leaders, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri has taught students throughout the world for over 30 years.

He is a gifted exponent of how the self relates to the soul, humankind's link with the Divine, and how consciousness can be groomed to reflect our higher nature.

The unifying scope of his perspective emphasizes practical, actionable knowledge that leads to self-transformation, and provides a natural bridge between seemingly different Eastern and Western approaches to spirituality, as well as offering a common ground of higher knowledge for various religions, sects and secular outlooks.

He is a prolific author of more than thirty books relating to the universal principles of Islam, the Qur'an, and its core purpose of enlightenment.

## FOREWORD

The original edition of this commentary (*tafsir*) was published some twenty years ago.<sup>1</sup> It was a result of teachings and talks with the objective of exploring the deeper meanings of the Divine revelations. The emphasis had been on the key Qur'anic terms and the subtle facets and connotations of Arabic words. The response by the readers was most encouraging.

The new millennium opens in an age of great complexities, chaos and constant change in values and the way of life. Therefore, what is needed nowadays is the re-discovery of Allah's patterns as revealed in the Qur'anic message so that we can act appropriately in this world.

The message of the Qur'an emanates from the original Divine blueprint which also lies latent in the human heart. All of us seek the path of ease, knowledge, security, love and contentment. No happiness lasts unless it is based on the knowledge of Allah and submission to His intended purpose and ways. The Qur'an is the key to this awakening.

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

White River, 1999

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<sup>1</sup> Kindly note that since the eReader devices and apps do not render Arabic text very well, the Qur'anic verses in the original Arabic language have been removed from this eBook. It is recommended that you refer to the Qur'an in its original Arabic while reading this commentary as Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri elucidates on the Arabic words and phrases.

## INTRODUCTION

As part of the Zahra Publications series of commentaries on the Qur`an, we present Beams of Illumination from the Divine Revelation, a commentary on the last part (*juz`*) of the Qur`an. *Juz` `Amma* begins with Surat an-Naba (Chapter 78) and ends with Surat an-Nas (Chapter 114) and it contains the greatest number of surahs (37) of any *juz`*. Except for a few *ayats* which were revealed later in Medina, these surahs were revealed in Mecca and contain some of the earliest revelations.

These early surahs are concerned primarily with the aspects of *haqiqah* (the inner reality of creation), the outer reality, the laws governing existence, the destruction of this world, and the Next life. They are extremely potent and served as the fuel of the early Islamic movement which burst forth in Mecca and was established later in Medina.

Following the pattern of the earlier volumes in this series, the specific reasons for these revelations and the historical context in which they descended will not be discussed at length, for these points are well covered and document in many other available commentaries.

The volumes in this series are based on the teachings provided at the American Institute of Qur`anic Studies in San Antonio, Texas. Their main goal is to bring out the immediate efficacy of the Qur`an in purification of the self and in the unfolding of higher qualities within the individual, after which one can then wholeheartedly follow the *shari`ah* and accept the divine laws by which a just and humane society can be established upon this earth.

The roots of key Arabic words are examined and discussed, thus enabling the student to derive the full benefit of the original language of the Qur`an and its unparalleled ability to communicate what is most difficult to transmit by words. At their root levels, Arabic words have many different meanings, and these meanings are sometimes the opposite of each other. This aspect of the Arabic language reflects a very important dimension of the ancient Arabic culture, a dimension which enabled the Arabs to be extremely sensitive to their environment and therefore susceptible to the message of *tawhid* (divine unity). Although the Arabs were worldly, their language and ecology were well-suited to describing and communicating the unworldly and the Divine.

These revelations offer support and help for the true seeker in his passage through life. To remember these surahs in times of difficulty, uncertainty, weakness, or doubt is to gain considerable strength, because one is reminded of the Ever-Witnessing, the All-Seeing, the Ever-Present – the Creator, Allah, *subhanahu wa ta`ala*.



## ***SURAT AN-NABA' – THE NEWS (78)***

(Meccan Surah)

### **In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful**

This phrase is the very first of the Qur'an and reappears at the beginning of all the chapters except one. It is said that the entire Qur'an is contained in this phrase. 'In the Name of' indicates what is impossible to name or describe, that is, Allah. The entire creation is 'in the Name of Allah'.

The Attributes 'the Beneficent' and the 'Merciful' are from the same Arabic verbal root. 'The Beneficent' indicates the general mercy and compassion extended indiscriminately to all creation, while 'the Merciful' indicates specific mercy channeled to those who have surrendered to the stream of the One Transcendent Reality.

**1. Of what do they ask one another?**

**2. About the awesome news,**

**3. Of which they differ?**

*`Amma* is an abbreviation of *`an madha* which means "about what?" What is it that causes them to ask? This is an early Meccan surah. All those who denied the truth, the *kuffar* (those who cover up, who are ungrateful), that is those who objected to the message of the Prophet Muhammad, *salla-llahu `alayhi wa alihi wa salam* (peace and blessing be upon him and his family), those who could not bear the light of the message or could not comprehend the depth of it, those who could not yield themselves to the meaning of *tawhid* (divine unity), those who considered the life of this world to be the only one and believed that there would be nothing after it – those deniers would naturally deny the ultimate, final event, object to it, and question it.

What is it that impels them to ask? The fact that they are able to ask is due to the spark of life in them, and where there is life there must also be death, for in this existence everything has its

opposite. By reflecting on this fact, one can see that since life and death exist in this consciousness, then it is likely that there is life in another form at another level of consciousness, or life after death, which will be inaugurated by the Day of Rising. Therefore, how dare they question this fact! The absolute, undebatable fact is that whatever has begun will come to an end. Upon further thought, it is obvious that He Who brought this creation into being can also easily bring into being its mirror image as well.

In the total picture of existence, the subtle aspects of this life will be the manifest aspects of the next life, and the gross aspects of this life will appear as only subsidiary or lesser manifestations; for example, the shape of the body, which is of primary importance now, will be only subsidiary in the next experience. The fact that the *kuffar* question the next life is proof of their uncertainty and confusion. On the other hand, the *mu'min* (the believer, who has trust), has complete certainty about his next abode.

*Naba'* means "news, tidings, information, announcement," here referring to the news about the end of this creation. Those who deny the message of reality as expounded by the Book of *tawhid*, the Qur'an, wonder about the end and assume that the end of this experience will be the end of all experiences. They question it because they are in disagreement among themselves because and have no idea at all about its nature. They imagine that they can escape the tribulations and turmoil of the last day in one way or another. They do not recognize that on that day Allah's justice will be definitive and absolute, and that all they will bring with them will be the fruits of their own actions.

Man thinks he can overcome the laws that govern existence in this life. He thinks he can escape the fact that his ultimate reward is only according to his actions which, in turn, stem from his intentions. His life in the next level of consciousness will be based upon his actions and intentions; he will be re-created according to the overall make-up of his actions and intentions at the point of his departure from this life.

**4. Nay, they will come to know.**

**5. Again, nay, they will come to know!**

*Kalla* is a rebuke, a positive reprimand to those who differ. Each person will, through his death, experience the end of creation as far as his own life is concerned and will later also experience the end of the entire creation and resurrection. The lesser death, the lesser *qiyamah*, is the death of the person, of the microcosm. At that point those who deny will no longer have any doubt about the news, the tremendous event, which is the end of this existence.

**6. Have We not made the earth an even expanse,**

**7. And the mountains as supports?**

The *ayat* (signs; Qur'anic verses, plural of *ayah*; we will continue to use the Anglicized plural, *ayats*, in the remainder of the text) from six to sixteen constitute a single meaning. Allah is presenting the proof to us of the perfection of creation and its cyclical nature. Is the earth not made expansive for our ease of movement so that we may gain a livelihood, and are the mountains not its support? Gravitationally and geologically, mountains are like pillars sunk deeply and connected tectonically, holding the thin crust of the earth together so that we have a semblance of security and stability.

**8. And We have created you in pairs,**

This refers to the pairs of human beings, male and female, man and wife, and the doubles or opposites in every other aspect of creation, such as good and bad, healthy and unhealthy, the lower *nafs* (the self) and the higher *nafs*. It refers to all the opposites and pairs throughout creation.

**9. And We have made your sleep as a rest,**

**10. And We have made the night as a covering,**

The root of *subat* is *sabata*, which means "to hibernate, to rest, to stop action." *Sabat* means "Saturday, the Sabbath," the day when the Jews were not supposed to fish or do any work in the worldly sense. The Sabbath was called *sabt*, meaning that all outer action was forbidden so that the people might replenish themselves inwardly. *Subat* is "hibernation, repose," and that is what

sleep is, a kind of death. Sleep actually recreates one's vitality, serves to re-center one after the troubles of the day, and allows one's physical ecology to realign itself.

The night is *libas*, from *labisa*, which means "to slip something over something, to cloak something, to dress." *Libas* refers to whatever we are wearing, to clothing. Here it describes how the night engulfs us, comes over us like a cloak and hides us.

### **11. And We have made the day for seeking livelihood,**

*Ma`ash*, comes from *`asha*, which means "to live, to be alive." *Ma`ash* also means "a way of living or lifestyle" and also "livelihood, income." The day is the time for outer action because there is light. Then by the law of opposites, when there is no light, as at night, it is the time for inward light.

### **12. And We have built above you seven strong ones**

*Sab`an shidadan* means "the seven heavens." *Shidad* is the plural of *shadid*, which means "strong" from the root *shadda*, which means "to be firm, solid, strong, fortified", and "to saddle." This means that the heavens are firmly interlinked and intertwined. There are seven layers of higher physical realities, but it is only the lowest one of these which we can discern, the one wherein the stars exist which we can see and measure.

*Bana* means "to construct, to erect, to build, to set up." The heavens are held together and constructed by subtle forces and powers. The physical parts of the heavens above are in a way less significant than the myriad unseen forces which hold them in balance during their course of expansion.

### **13. And We have made a blazing lamp,**

This is a description of the sun, depicted as it often is, as *siraj wahhaj* (a blazing lamp). The light of the moon is described in the Qur'an as *nur*, which means "light, ray of light, a lamp." *Wahhaj* means "blazing, incandescent, white-hot, bursting forth in flames, brilliant." The nature of the sun is to emanate light, whereas the nature of the moon is to reflect light.

**14. And We have sent down from the rain-clouds water flowing copiously,**

*Mu`sirat* is from *`asara*, which means “to squeeze, to press out.” *`Asir* means “juice.” *Mu`sirat* are clouds from which rain will descend, pressed out like juice. *Ma’an thajjajan* means “water, rain,” which pours down abundantly.

**15. That We may bring forth by it grain and plants,**

**16. And gardens of thick foliage.**

Through the agitation that is caused by the rain’s descent and the earth’s throbbing, the grain and new plants spring forth and the gardens that are folded up within themselves open out and produce thick foliage.

**17. Surely the Day of Decision is an appointed time –**

Then there is a sudden shift. The day of division and segregation is the Day of Reckoning, the day of clarity, when everything is clearly apportioned and put where it belongs, the good with the good and the bad with the bad. On this day there will be no uncertainties. Specifically, *yawm al-fasl* means “the Day of Resurrection.” *Fasala* means “to separate, to segregate, to clearly distinguish between opposites.” It denotes complete discrimination with no possibility of doubt, no gray areas. *Fasala* also means “to wean,” because the act of weaning separates a baby from its mother. *Faysal* means both “a judge” and “a dividing sword.” This form of the word also means “decisive criterion, arbitrator.”

This ayah implies that today is not *yawm al-fasl*, but rather, today is a day of confusion when we do not know whether something is right or wrong or whether we are truly in *iman* (faith, trust, belief). At best, there is some wisdom in this day, and there is at least an attempt to discriminate by *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah). But on that day, after death, there will be no possibility of confusion. The people of the Fire shall be in the Fire, the people of the Garden shall be in the Garden, and everything shall be seen clearly through the eye of a just Creator.

*Miqatan* comes from *waqt*, which means “a fixed or appointed time, deadline” or “meeting point.” We will all meet on the Day of Appointment which is also called the Day of Gathering, when everyone will be gathered together for the final reckoning.

### **18. The Day when the trumpet is blown you will come forth in groups,**

This refers to the Day when the angelic entity of Esrafil will blow into the horn of light to extinguish all other lights except the one and only Light. One that day there will be no other way of seeing things except by the pure Light of Allah, and the second sounding of the trumpet will be heard, signaling the Resurrection. There will be nothing other than the Light of the Creator, and no interference can take place. Nations will rise in with all the tribes, families and households, and will come in groups. They will come in waves and according to a rhythm, and within these groups will be the souls who led them – prophets and messengers. The Qur’an says that that day, according to the measure of Allah, will be 50,000 years of our normal reckoning. The closer one is to Allah, the Timeless, the clearer becomes the relativity of time. An instant of Allah’s time could be nearly infinite to us.

### **19. And Heaven will be opened, and be as doors,**

And heaven will be opened up; none of the forces that now hold it together will be present any longer. There is space in which there are doors, and when the readjustment of all things comes about, all the energies of creation will slip through these doors which will open in heaven. Heaven will no longer be held together as one single structure (*bina*’), but will be subject to a new trend, which is its destruction, and will return to its original state, its annihilation in the Creator. It will be as though it were all moving backwards in time. There will no longer be seven strong layers; rather, they will have become channels.

### **20. And the mountains will be set in motion as if they were a mere mirage.**

The mountains which now appear to us as solid will be made to move. The common translation of *sarab* is “mirage.” Its root is *sariba*, which means “slip away, slither away, to disappear before one’s eyes, to slip away unnoticed.” *Tasarraba al-ma’u fi’r-raml* means “the water found its way into the sand,” that is, secretly.

The mountains will recede and disappear like a mirage. The closer one gets to a mirage, the further away it appears – it is elusive and always escapes us. This implies that there is another level of consciousness, that matter and energy will interchange and exchange. Mountains as such will not become a mirage, but they will be transformed. They will take a course that cannot be understood, a course that is secret, and the secret is that they will dissolve back into their subtle reality, back again into a subtler and subtler energy form, back to the nothingness from which they originally sprang.

The collapse of creation will be a transformative and will be the reversal of creational processes. From nothingness came the subtlest matter, followed by the manifestation of gas, which then liquefied and became molten. After it cooled and solidified, the water cycle started. Next came plants and the constant, creational cycle which we, in our lives, have been able to witness for a moment. Later, however, that process will be reversed, and step by step, manifestation will return to its source.

## **21. Surely Hell lies in wait.**

*Jahannam* (hell) is one of the names used in the Qur'an to designate the opposite of *jannah* (the Garden), and it means "hell." The word is connected to the root *jahuma*, which means "to frown" and *jahm*, which means "grim, gloomy, sullen, morose." *Jahnim* means "a bottomless pit" that has no resting place, no place of stability, no peace. *Jahannam* is a name for this hellish state because it is man's nature to seek security as well as certain knowledge, and the worst uncertainty that a man can experience is being flung into a bottomless pit to flounder helplessly forever.

*Mirsad* means "an ambush," from *rasada*, which means "to watch something intently," as a cat watches a mouse waiting in ambush for it at the mouse hole. *Mirsad*, in modern Arabic, means "telescope," for by the use of a telescope we ambush a star, corner it in our field of vision. Thus this ayah is saying that the bottomless pit, that state which will cause us trouble, is in fact looking for us, scanning the landscape to catch those who qualify in its "field of vision."

## **22. A place of return for the transgressors,**

*Tagha* means “to transgress, to go beyond the boundaries.” Every system has a boundary. If in our system we do not keep within the bounds, we will eventually be destroyed. *Jahannam*, the final stage, perpetual bottomlessness, is the state to which *at-taghin* (those who transgress) will return. This implies that they were in *Jahannam* already, that they were already on their way towards that final abode in this life. By their wrong actions and intentions, they were moving into the field of fire and confusion.

The Qur’an defines the ultimate Fire as the *nar al-Kubra* (the great Fire, the permanent one). The implication is that small fires are the ones we taste in this existence because of our ignorance and injustice. Many other ayat tell us that the man who has transgressed is already in a mini-*Jahannam* within this realm of existence. He may not be aware of it himself, but he is fueling it with his anger, insecurity and hate. If a person can truly reflect upon his state, he will see that he is moving towards the state of either of *Jahannam* or of *Jannah*. The ayah says: *Li’t-taghina ma’aban*. They return to *Jahannam* in the next experience as if taking refuge in it. The same is true of *ahl al-jannah* (the people of *Jannah*). The Qur’an tells us that when they find themselves in the Garden in the next life, they will say, “We remember this!” This means that they have already experienced aspects of the Garden.

In this life we are preparing for the state or condition that will engulf us in the next consciousness. The next life, therefore, is the fruition and continuum of our state in this life and is the outcome of our intentions and actions at the point of death.

**23. Living in it for ages.**

**24. They will not taste in it any coolness or drink,**

**25. But boiling water and a paralyzing cold,**

People whose intentions and actions have not been unified, who have lived a life of disconnectedness and dispersion, end up in extreme agitation and conditions not conducive to peace and centeredness. They will remain in *Jahannam* for ages because the next consciousness is in a timeless zone that seems to go on forever.



The condition of *Jahannam* is extreme heat and cold and agitation; it is a perpetual fall, neither life nor death, the opposite of the love of connectedness, fusion, and certainty ingrained in man's spirit. If a soul has lived a life of confusion, then its natural progression will be to an abode wherein that dreadful state reaches its perfection. The same is true for a soul that has lived in harmony: its natural progression is toward the Garden. This life and the next are not disconnected, but rather, they form a continuum; what differs is the level of consciousness and the clarity and purity of experience. This can be illustrated by the example of a dreamer who, upon awakening from dreadful nightmares, sees clearly pure dreadfulness, or a dreamer who, upon awakening from joyful, satisfying dreams, finds himself in an absolute joyful reality.

#### **26. A fitting recompense.**

This is the appropriate reaction to a life of covering-up and the appropriate reward, *jaza'*, which means "outcome, reward, recompense." This is the perfect end corresponding to that which came before. Allah's creation and decree are in perfect harmony.

#### **27. Surely, they did not anticipate an account,**

Those people, those nations, expected neither a final account nor a reaction to their actions, nor did they think that they would ultimately meet the reflection of what they had themselves created by their actions and thoughts.

#### **28. And they called Our signs lies with strong denial.**

And they denied. *Kadhaba* means "to lie." *Kadhdhaba* means "to accuse someone else of lying" or "to deny." This means they have denied the truth which is within themselves, the truth of the news that Allah is the One Lord, that the creation's purpose is *tawhid* (divine unity), and that the *nubuwah* (the prophecy) and *risalah* (the message) speak of the necessity of acceptance of *tawhid*. By denying this, they have deluded themselves.

#### **29. And We have recorded everything in a Book.**

Everything in this existence is gathered in the one and only Book that contains everything. Everything *is* the Book, and the Book contains everything. All creation is contained therein and

everything in existence is interconnected and is ultimately brought to its conclusion from one point. Nothing is separate. Those who transgress against themselves have denied all this, yet everything has been considered and is included in the Book of reality, the Book of manifestation, the comprehensive Book of *qada' wa qadar* (fate and divine decree). The Qur'an is the clear manifestation of that Book.

### **30. So taste! For We shall not add to you anything but punishment.**

“So taste!” means “connect!” We will taste, in the sense of knowing full what our intention was. He who has denied, therefore, will be denied. If he denies that there is only oneness, that he has come into existence by the grace of that oneness, that through oneness man is sustained, and to this oneness he will return; and if he denies the fact that there were prophets and messengers who confirmed this truth leaving behind the document, the song itself, in the form of the *kitab* (the Book), then he is in dispersion, separation, and delusion. It will be these which he will fully taste in the hereafter. He is blind now and moreover refuses to be conscious of his blindness, but in the next consciousness he will live only in blindness.

### **31. Surely, for those who have fearful awareness is achievement,**

The *muttaqin* guard themselves and are fearfully aware of the boundaries. They live as if between two sheer cliffs in terms of what lies beyond those boundaries, and thus move straight. *Iman* (faith, belief, trust), enhances *taqwa* (fearful awareness – of exceeding the boundaries, thereby causing harm to oneself).

### **32. Enclosed gardens and vineyards,**

### **33. And companions with freshness of youth, equal in age,**

Here the argument of the surah comes down to the level of our understanding, our human needs, and our expectations in this world. Our expectations are lush gardens and companions who are compatible, compassionate, of the right age and who give us solace. *Kawa'iba atraban* means “women,” or “companions of the appropriate age,” of the appropriate understanding.

### **34. And a full cup.**

Their cups are full: thus there is no need, no anxiety. Desires and expectations are completely neutralized.

**35. They will not hear in it any foolish chatter or falsehood,**

*Laghw* means “foolish talk, nonsense, ineffectual, null.” *Lagha* means “to speak, to be null, to cancel.” *Lughah* means “language.” When a person speaks, he nullifies and cancels out the silence; the energy of linguistic communication by its very grossness overrides what was there before, that is, the world of silence. The condition described here is a very high state of the Garden; there is no distraction or break in a most sublime and tranquil consciousness of peace.

**36. A reward from your Lord, a gift according to a reckoning.**

This is the reward and natural outcome. *Rabb* means “Lord, Sustainer,” the attribute that brings our growth in knowledge to its full potential and causes us to realize that in this life we will be rewarded according to our actions and intentions, and in the next life we will also be re-created according to our actions and intentions. This process of action and reaction is in perfect balance, and it comes about according to a just measure. This balance is so intricate that it encompasses both meaning and form; for example, a physical action in this world may have its reward at the mental or intellectual level, or in the same way a good intention may result in a physical reward.

**37. The Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, the All-Merciful, they are not able to address Him.**

Here Allah refers to Himself as the Lord of the heavens and the earth. The Sustainer of the heavens, of all that is in the heavens, is the Container and Holder of the forces in the heavens, of all that is on earth, and of the interspace between them. It specifies the interspace between different systems and emphasizes the fact that physical and energy subsystems, obeying the laws of measurement and predictability, are bonded together by another aspect of reality. What governs the earthly realm is often discernable and measurable. What governs celestial entities is also reasonably measurable by human beings because these two systems are not separate. That no-man’s land, the interspace, whose nature may escape us when we shift our attention from Newtonian physics to quantum mechanics, is under the same Lordship. In our modern world, in

so-called “science,” we have studied various systems and have found laws that are not applicable to all. Between these systems there are interspaces which we do not understand. Each module makes sense, but the interrelationship between them does not. Newtonian physics makes sense, but only to a certain point. Quantum mechanics applies to a zone where Newtonian physics is nonsense. One can also consider subatomic physics, which is different from both. Each science has its self-contained laws. In the interspace, in between *as-samawati wa’l-ard* (sky and earth) are also heavens or zones, and they are all under the sustainership of the Lord.

*Khitab* comes from *khataba*, which means “to speak to a group of people,” and also “to ask for a woman’s hand in marriage.” *Khitab* means “speech, letter,” or “communication,” while *khutubah* means “courtship, engagement,” All of these imply connection and unification. The transgressors were disconnected from what governed physical reality in this life; thus they can only taste even greater disconnectedness in the next life.

**38. The Day when the spirit and the angels will stand in ranks – none will speak except he whom the All-Merciful gives permission, and who speaks words that hit the mark.**

The Day of Reckoning, the day when action stops, is the day when a new set of laws which have existed from the beginning will take hold. Our bodies are complex systems made up of the subtle interaction of subsystems and forces involving chemical, electrical, magnetic, mechanical and other physical, as well as more subtle, systems, each subject to its own laws. The laws that apply in the next realm, after the end of this existence, are of another nature. Now we are experiencing everything in a certain direction of time; the collapse of creation will occur as if creation has been in reversed time. We can only intellectualize and theorize about it since we have but a very limited comprehension of it.

We are told that in that situation we as individuals will no longer have the power to act – we will be completely and utterly under the control and at the mercy of the new dominion. It will be like the end of a play; it will be sealed. It will be the time for the evaluation of each player’s performance.

*Ruh* comes from the same root as *raha*. It is also related to *rih*, which means “wind,” *mirwahah*, which means “fan,” and *istirwah*, which means “respiration.” It is the subtle element

that is blown into us in the form of the soul, as we call it. The *ruh* issues from the command of the Sustainer and is the subtlest manifestation which covers itself with the body, rendering it sentient and capable of vast, conflicting and diverse possibilities. The process of death is that of the *ruh* slipping out, leaving the body behind where it belongs: in the earth.

*La yatakallamuna* is from the verb *takallama*, which means “to speak,” *Kalimah* means “spoken word,” or “words.” *Kalam* is the act of making sound, speaking, discussion, expression. It is an action. We generally take for granted our ability to act and speak, but on the Day of Resurrection no action or verbal interference can take place. Only the Merciful and the Perfect in every way will prevail. There will no longer be any possibility for anybody to perform harmful acts. We can transgress only in this realm of existence, in this dimension, along this direction of time. The only choice we have here is to recognize that in reality we have no choice. Choice is really ignorance, and the knowledge of having no choice is wisdom. If we know what the best action is in each new situation, we have no choice; it is clear to us what action we must take.

### **39. That is the true Day – so whosoever desires should seek refuge with his Lord.**

On that day, in that new state of affairs, justice is perfect: *haqq* (truth) will prevail in every way, with absolute certainty. It also prevails in every way in this existence, but as limited beings we are often uncertain about this fact. From the point of view of Allah or of *haqiqah* (the truth), there is never injustice; everything is absolutely just. It is only our ignorance which results in seeing injustice in this life. Allah says, “I created them for the Fire and I do not care.” Allah has created everything in justice, *bi'l-haqq*. It is only man who transgresses the balance and thereby creates the climate or appearance of injustice.

*Fa man sha'a't-takhadha ila rabbihi ma'aban* means, “So whosoever should seek refuge with his Lord.” This indicates that Allah is talking to people who are not aware of the fact that they are sustained and contained by the Lord. The warning conveyed is, “Those of you who now heed, or wish, return there – find a way back! You have transgressed; you have acted wrongly, so return back to the only reality in which you have been given freedom to rebel.”

*Huwa-t-tawwab*, “He is the Often-Returning,” He accepts our return over and over, as does a loving father who knows his child is so rebellious that he will constantly leave. Whenever the

child returns, the father says, “This is the last time I will take him back.” The father welcomes him, knowing full well that in the next moment he will be off again.

The Creator knows that we are full of nothing but doubt and bickering. From the point of view of someone who trusts in the absolute mercy of Allah and so submits to it, doubts cannot arise, because he accepts what comes to him as being the best for him, and from that very acceptance the knowledge that it is the best arises.

This ayah says that on the Day of Judgment, the Day of Truth, all doubt and questioning will stop. He who wants to return to that state of unity, which is his true heritage and is already contained in his essence, will have to find a way, and that way lies in the recognition of all that is not the way. The way towards knowledge of the Lord is through knowledge of the *nafs*, the experiencing self; that is, being able to recognize the lower *nafs*, the animal *nafs*, the commanding *nafs*, the doubting *nafs*, the whimsical or inspired *nafs*, and the trouble caused by all of these aspects of the lower *nafs*. Recognizing all of these traits, men of reason will be able to avoid them in future situations, and the higher aspects of the *nafs* will spontaneously begin to predominate and become nourished.

The secure and contented self, the *nafs* that is purified, is at ease and at peace in the hands of its Lord, serenely allowing the Lord to do with it what He wills according to perfect destiny. The path to the Lord, therefore, lies in recognizing and avoiding all that is going to cause us harm and confusion. By avoiding what is clearly wrong we will move toward that which is right.

**40. Surely We warn you of a punishment near at hand: The Day when man will see what his hands have sent ahead, and the one who covers up will say: O, would that I were dust!**

The Prophet, *salla-llahu `alayhi wa alihi wa salam*, said, “I am only a warner. I am warning you where the Fire begins, where tranquility ends, and where loss begins – it is when you do not accept that there is only the decree; and the decree is just.”

The inner meaning of this ayah is that we bring affliction upon ourselves right now, but we may not notice it because we cover our selves up with all kinds of excuses and justifications. As an all-encompassing *nafs* which has within it the meaning of *Rahman* (Allah, the All-Merciful), as

well as the meaning of *Shaytan* (Satan), a person can justify any action, high or low, good or bad. Justification is in fact just connecting one thing to another and is an aspect of *tawhid* (divine unity). By uniting his intention with his action, everyone is actually in a state of worship. It could be at the altar of the high, which results in knowledge of the Almighty Lord, or at the altar of the low, which is that of delusion and illusion.

The condition or state of the Day of Resurrection, in which everything is exposed and nothing is hidden, can be partially tasted now by each one of us if we are willing and able to stop our minds and actions and to take complete stock of ourselves. If we have the ability and bravery to face our intentions and can recognize the degree of the self's purification, we will catch a glimpse of the meaning of the Day of Requital and the meaning of balance.

On the Day of Judgment we will be reconstructed according to our intentions and actions in this world. If we want to know the condition of our hearts in the next life, all we need to do is look at the condition of our hearts in this life. If the condition of the heart is pure, our home in the next life will be close to the pure Source of creation. If not, it will be somewhere along a spectrum, at one end of which is eternal Fire and at the other end of which are the highest Gardens. If we live totally in the present, remaining aware and taking account of ourselves, then we are living *yawm al-qiyamah* now.

“And the one who covers up will say: O, would that I were dust!” He who has denied in the past, who has been disconnected and who suddenly sees that he has wasted the treasure of his time and life, will say, “I wish I were nothing – I wish I were dust, forgotten!” Unfortunately for such a one, nothing is forgotten. Every person, every *ruh*, will be fully brought to life and will totally recognize his full significance. He cannot hide; he cannot be like dust lost in the desert. Allah says that if a man has done one iota of good, it will appear before him. No more recesses of the *nafs* will be allowed; all the corridors will be opened. That is why if a person faces himself totally right now, this act is his personal *yawm al-qiyamah*. That is the meaning of the saying, “If you know yourself, you know your Lord,” because that is the business of Lordship – to show everything openly, in every way.

We seek permanency in everything in this life, in relationships and knowledge, and that is why we distinguish between true knowledge and mere information. Information about things changes,

such as when new medicines are developed which cure certain diseases. True knowledge does not change, however. It is absolute, and for this reason we seek it. All of us are seeking absolute knowledge and absolute knowledge is the news, is the *naba'*. What are they asking about? What news do they want? What higher information or news do they want other than that there is Allah, and by His Grace we have been created. When we abandon ourselves to Allah and follow the men of Allah, we will enter this sought after realm of absolute knowledge.



## ***SURAT AN-NAZI`AT – THOSE WHO TEAR OUT (79)***

(Meccan Surah)

### **In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful**

This is a late Meccan surah concerning this life and life in the next phase and which also gives a description of the occurrences on the Day of Judgment.

#### **1. By those who tear out violently,**

The surah begins by describing various forces of which everyone is aware. A very common interpretation is that it refers to the angelic powers, those myriad forces which perform various functions throughout the creation.

*An-nazi`at* comes from *naza`a*, which means “to take away, to strip off, to quarrel,” implying two forces opposing each other.

*Ghariqa* the root verb of *gharqan*, means “to go under, to be drowned.” There is an ambiguity here whose explanation only Allah knows for certain. This could be a reference to the moment of death, when the angels of death forcefully strip life away. It could also be a reference to the souls of the people who do not want to depart from this life, who are not prepared for the next experience and whose souls have to be forcibly stripped out of their bodies in order for them to continue the course of destiny. It could also refer to the cosmos. The first five ayat could equally refer to the different types of planets and stars since they are all energy centers which keep the cosmos in a state of constant motion.

#### **2. And by those who draw out gently,**

This might refer to those souls which become *nashit* (vigorous and active, healthy and dynamic). Imam `Ali Zayn al-`Abidin, *`alayhi-s-salam* (peace be upon him) said, “Death for the *mu`min* (believer, one who trusts Reality) is like the stripping off of a filthy, smelly, garment.” That soul looks forward to the next experience because he knows that the next life does not contain the

turmoil and tribulation of this world. Clearly, under the guidance of the one-and-only direction of Allah, no interference can take place there; we cannot intervene or interject. We will be actionless, at peace.

This ayah might also be a reference to distant stars whose light reaches us after hundreds and thousands of light years and which are ever increasing their speed in the cosmic expansion.

### **3. And by those who float in space,**

*Sabaha* means “to swim, to float, to drift.” The soul flows with destiny and moves along its course with no resistance. It could also refer to those entities whose substance is similar to energy wavebands, the angels, who make it easier for the souls who are willing to surrender. Again, this could also apply to the planets spinning along their orbital paths.

### **4. Then those who are foremost going ahead,**

These ayats can also be taken entirely on the level of the *mulk* (earthly dominion, having to do with worldly things). *Sabaqa* means “to go ahead of, to outdistance.” Often *sabiq* refers to horses, especially good racehorses. Some commentaries say that this ayah means “to see the thoroughbred, to see the winning horse.” The horse that has been true to its breeding is a winning horse. It may also mean planets that move faster than the others or stars or galaxies which move faster than others in their trajectory.

### **5. Then those who regulate the affair.**

This may refer to those forces, powers, planets, and energies whose objective is *tadbir*, which comes from *dabbara*, meaning, “to make arrangements, organize,” that is, to perform actions that interconnect the various happenings in this world, actions that eventually manifest as movement of wind, clouds, volcanoes, or human beings; in other words, a movement of the outward elements which hold all elements together. Anything which is *mudabbirat* is concerned with *tadbir* or arranging affairs.

This surah opens us up to begin reflecting on all the powers and forces from which we are not separate and which affect us outwardly and inwardly, such as the spirits within our bodies and

the surrounding environment. These first ayats are a prelude to the explanation of what will occur when this creation, with its cosmic expansion issuing from the initial explosion, comes to an end.

## **6. The Day when the quaking one will quake,**

This is the first occurrence heralding the end of the expansion. When that expansion stops, a major disturbance in the entire cosmic system will take place. As far as the earth is concerned, there will be a quaking and violent trembling: *rajifah*.

When a system follows its course, it moves smoothly. Once its course is changed and redirected, that break manifests in itself a resistance which takes the form of trembling. This first occurrence is repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'an. The Qur'an describes in detail how the world will come to an end. This ayah indicates the stopping of the first system. Systems always interact with one another; thus, when one stops another begins. What holds these systems together is beyond our intellectual comprehension.

## **7. What comes after will follow.**

The next quaking then will come, the next sounding of the trumpet, which will herald the new course in the *`alam al-arwah*, the world of subtle energies rather than the world of gross energies. *Radifah* comes from *radifa*, meaning "to follow," and *radif* means "the next one, what follows." The first quake, then, the first sounding, will be the rending apart of the existing system, its cessation, and the second quake will be the start of the next system.

## **8. Hearts on that day will throb,**

This statement implies that all that will remain of us then is what was implanted in our hearts, that which had been constructed by our actions and intentions in this life. The hearts of those who have denied this occurrence, who have denied the truth of the message that there is only one reality and one creator and that we are never separate from our decreed destiny, those hearts will be completely at odds. When the Resurrection begins, they will then feel the separation sharply and will feel that they are not flowing smoothly with the current, but struggling against it.

## **9. Their eyes cast down.**

Man's sight, his faculty of perception, will no longer function as it had before. Man's vision and the expectations in his heart will be low, subdued, disconnected from events. Rather, they will be cast aside.

## **10. They say: Will we indeed be restored to (our) first state?**

The state or situation of those hearts echoes a rebellion which is based on their doubt and questioning: "Are we going to return? Is there a return? Are we going to start all over again? Is there going to be a continuation? Is there going to be another cycle?"

## **11. What! When we are rotten bones?**

The questioning continues with a firmly voiced doubt: "How can that be? We never expected it!" Being gross, they were only judging it from the clumsy attitude of a physical point of view. They say, "How can these bones be restored after they, the hardest elements of our bodies, have decayed?" They must understand that this question is not concerned with flesh and bones but with the *ruh* (spirit) and what it has done during its passage through this world.

## **12. They say: This, then, would be a return with loss.**

As soon as they realize that they must enter into a new situation, they conclude that they have returned to a situation of loss, because their *ruh* is not ready for this next realm of existence. They already realize that it will be a loss to them and that in the next experience they will be completely bereft.

## **13. But it will be only a single cry –**

*Zajara*, the verbal root of *zajrah* (cry), means "to drive back, to drive away, to prevent, to rebuke." For those people who have been astray, the ones who have denied the truth of the message that there will be a return, an afterlife, there is but one shout, one major reminder. After the first movement, this life with all its varying facets will continue, but the awakening will come with the next cry. The first shout or jolt will stop this system, and the next jolt will begin the next

system. Instantaneously, with one jolt, the souls will realize that they are at a loss. They will recognize it and say it openly, for it is embedded within the soul.

#### **14. When behold! They will be awakened!**

The ordinary meaning of *sahirah* is “the surface of the earth.” The inner meaning is derived from the root of the word *sahira*, which means “to be sleepless, to stay awake (in some activity).” *Sahar* means “insomnia.” This all implies that the surface of the earth is always alive. Here the meaning is that once these souls have been awakened, they will then be awake to reality forever. They were asleep to the truth before, but suddenly they will awaken. The outer meaning of this ayah is that the dead bodies which had been previously hidden in their graves will be cast up to the surface of the earth. The inner meaning is that those souls will suddenly be fully awakened. There will be no more sleepiness of the kind we may experience in our consciousness in this life.

#### **15. Has the story of Musa not come to you?**

Now we are brought to this world, Allah asks, “Have you not heard the story of the prophet of Allah, Sayyidna Musa, *`alayhi-s-salam*, when his Lord, his Sustainer, called him to action, called him to move along the path of reality in this life?”

#### **16. When his Lord called upon him in the holy valley of Tuwa:**

Sayyidna Musa, *`alayhi-s-salam*, was brought into the sacred valley. His heart was held by *ar-ruh al-qudus*. The sanctity of the heart was caught and held by the *rububiyah* (Lordship). He had no option but to serve his Lord, and he was inspired by Him to strike at the top of the pyramid of corruption.

#### **17. Go to Fir`awn, he has certainly transgressed the bounds!**

When a man is a slave to the Highest, then his task will be the highest, his responsibility will be the highest, and his rewards will be the highest. Hence Sayyidna Musa, *`alayhi-s-salam*, was commissioned to direct his message of unity towards Fir`awn (Pharaoh) because Fir`awn had transgressed and, as a result of this transgression, the entire nation was brought into a state of loss.

## **18. Then say: Will you purify yourself?**

Allah commanded Sayyidna Musa: “Give him the message: Why have you not purified yourself? Why have you not given up your self in submission? Why do you not move along the path of self-abandonment? Why do you not leave off this garb that you have taken on, in which you are hiding, playing at being God?”

## **19. And, I will guide you to your Lord so that you fear.**

The implication here is that Fir`awn had no fear of anything and no respect for anything; he had no knowledge of the boundaries of behavior. Guidance (*hidayah*; from *hada*) here implies fear (*khashyah*; from *khashiya*, to fear or dread something). The door to guidance is the fear of transgression, the fear of making mistakes and the fear of displeasing Allah by breaking His laws which govern both this existence and the next. This was the message of Sayyidna Musa, *`alayhi-s-salam*, to Pharaoh. He was saying, “If you are willing, if you want to purify yourself, if you want to live a life of pure existence in true preparation for the next world, I will show you the way, clearly indicating the boundaries, so that you will have *khashyah*. Then you will be guided to the one and only Truth. If you do not have fear, then you cannot receive guidance.”

## **20. So he showed him the great sign –**

Sayyidna Musa, *`alayhi-s-salam*, had many signs, and many of them were tangible in this world – his staff which became a serpent; his white, shining hand; the appearance of blood and frogs, and many others. These were the ordinary signs. Here the reference is to *al-ayat al-kubra* (the great sign), which is the knowledge of Allah. Sayyidna Musa said, “If you have fear, you will have guidance, and from that will come to you knowledge of the one and only Reality from which you are not separate!”

So the message of Sayyidna Musa to Fir`awn was a high message, not an ordinary one, because Fir`awn was not an ordinary king. He was a king involved in knowledge and sciences that were very sophisticated. He had innumerable powers but they were not in accordance with the *sunnah* (way) of Allah. He and his people used supernatural powers, such as the harnessing of the *jinn*. It is not correct for us to do these things. For a true man of Allah, such powers mean nothing – they

are just insignificant gifts. The highest of all signs is the knowledge of Allah, while the lowest signs are outer ones. There is only Allah, and we have come into this world to be baffled and tested and afflicted in order to surrender and submit to Him. The way is through *khashyah* (fear of transgression).

## **21. But he denied and disobeyed.**

Fir`awn, having invested all his life in his system of power-mongering and control, could not accept this message that he should be fearful of transgression. In his powerful arrogance, he could not receive it. His reaction to it – to the fearful sign that there is only Allah, and that he, Fir`awn, was of no significance – was to deny what was already truthful in himself, to deny the spark of truth that was in his heart.

Fir`awn denied – he said, “No!” *`Asa* means “to disobey, to resist, to defy, to oppose.” Then, after denying, he sought to be reconfirmed in his position. We all want confirmation in this life; we all seek security. We want confirmation that what we are doing is right. We are lovers of the One Reality and so, if our thoughts are perverted, we will want to be connected to people who are also perverted in their thinking.

At all times we worship and adore the divine attributes. Everything in creation is in perfection, and we are only witnesses of it. There is nothing we can add to it. Only those who have been chosen for a higher mission will have to come out and act, teach, and follow in the footsteps of the prophets, like Sayyidna Musa, *`alayhi-s-salam*. Fir`awn, quite naturally and understandably, did not comprehend this message. He veered off in his own perverted direction.

## **22. Then he went back hastily,**

Speedily he went to collect himself and to connect with his own system, the system of *kufr* (covering up), and of building power for himself.

## **23. So he gathered and proclaimed –**

He collected his supporters together because he felt vulnerable. He felt isolated in the illuminating beam of the message of Sayyidna Musa, *`alayhi-s-salam*, so he gathered all his supporters together in order to gain reassurance.

#### **24. Then he said: I am your Lord, the Most High!**

Again, he fell back into his old habits, safe and sound under the crown of leadership and lordship with which he had crowned himself. He was playing at being God, trying to set himself up in that most powerful, impossible position. This is a grave danger for all human beings. The higher we go, the more this danger becomes accentuated. People of insight and inward strength especially must be kept within the limits of the *shari`ah*, the parameters of the outward law, for the danger of self-delusion lies within all of us. We have seen it in this life, both among people of the *zahir* (outward), and people of the *batin* (inward). There is always a tendency to fall prey to this danger unless we continue the *suluk* (journey on the path of knowledge), within the *shari`ah*, through constant performance of the prayers and worship.

Fir`awn said, “I am your Lord, the Most High,” to his people. No man can exist in isolation because he is either connected to the one and only Reality and can only act as a slave, or he is connected to a perverted and distorted version of the truth, as in this case.

#### **25. So Allah seized him with the punishment of the hereafter and the first.**

The reaction of Reality to Fir`awn in his self-elevated position was punishment. *Nakal* means “punishment.” Fir`awn received a rebuttal from Reality for both his early deeds and his later deeds, both for those he had committed before Sayyidna Musa came to him and for those he was committing at that time. This ayah refers to the suffering with which he will be afflicted in this life and later. As we know, Fir`awn and his people were drowned crossing the Red Sea. But “last” and “first” could also mean “outer” and “inner;” outwardly he was challenged, and inwardly he was tormented. He could not do anything in the face of the outer actions of Sayyidna Musa, *`alayhi-s-salam*, and inwardly he was shattered as well, because he did not know how to react to the message.

#### **26. Most certainly there is in this a lesson for he who fears.**



*`Ibrah* means “admonition, example, lesson.” The root of it is *`abara*, which means “to cross, traverse, to interpret (a dream), to shed tears.” The word for “Hebrew” (*`Ibri*) comes from the same root, because they crossed to the safety of the other shore. It also implies crossing to the shore of knowledge for he who is wary, eager to know, and concerned about not remaining in ignorance. Such a person wants to have safe conduct, which is secured by correct behavior.

In these ayat we have been given the example of a man of reality, a man of Allah, in this case the prophet Musa, *`alayhi-s-salam*, and his polar opposite, a man of *bu`ud* (remoteness, separation), a man of *shaytan*, a man of loss. We are told in the Qur’an that the two systems cannot meet: “To you your way and to me my way.” (Qur’an, 109:6), One will be destroyed, and the other will prevail.

Reflecting on the power of Fir`awn and what happened to him and his people, we are asked in the next ayah, “Are you stronger than the heavens?”

### **27. Are you harder to create, or the heaven? He erected it.**

*Sama`* implies that which is holding our cosmos together. The root of the word means “high” – not just high in the vertical sense, but of a subtle height, elevated and lofty in meaning, anything that is *latif* (subtle, of exalted, subtle realms, sublime). *Rajulun samin* means “a man of high values, of high moral character.” To refer to an action as *samin* means that the action is of a high moral value.

The ayah is asking, “Are you stronger in creation, tougher and more permanent than all the heavens, both outer and inner?” This refers to the nearer heavens of the planetary systems and the outer heavens beyond them. In Qur’an those heavens of which we can conceive and perceive, which to us are unfathomable, are in fact the lowest heavens. Above these are six other heavens. It is the lower heaven which has been decorated with the planets and stars. As there are seven heavens, so there are seven layers, or phases, in the earth, the innermost being molten metal. There are also seven heavens of energy levels of electrons around the nucleus of the atom.

It is true, however, that in Arabic the numbers seven or seventy imply a very large number. In ordinary speech, if we say that someone has told us something seven times, it does not

necessarily mean an actual seven times but could simply mean many times. The same is true for the number seventy. In many of the *hadith* (traditions) of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, we find these numbers mentioned, as for example when he said, “No day has passed without my making *istighfar* (asking pardon of Allah) seventy times.” Now, this does not necessarily mean that he used a *tasbeih* (Muslim rosary) or that he sat with date-pits, as was common at that time, counting out the number of times he said, “*astaghfiru 'llah*,” I ask God’s pardon. Rather, it means that he said this a great number of times, probably at least seventy.

## **28. He raised high its height, then put it in order.**

*Samk* means “roof” or “ceiling,” *sumk* means “thickness,” while *samik* means “thick.” *Rafa`a samkaha*, “He raised up its height,” means that the width of the heavens was increased to what in our perception was an unfathomable degree. In this ayah the word implies that the heavens are exploding. It is possible to read into this ayah the inner meaning of the Big Bang.

*Fa-sawwaha* is one of the earliest references to the word *sawa*, meaning to be equivalent, to even, to level, to smooth, to equalize, to regulate, to put in order.” *Sawa* and its derivatives overlap in meaning with *`adala*, which means “to act justly, to be equal, to equalize, to set in order,” From it comes the word *musawah*, which means “equality before the law,” and *taswiyah*, which means “arrangement, equalization.” So after the great explosion order was established.

## **29. And He made dark its night and brought out the light of its morning.**

This refers to the duality of existence: the night was rendered dark; the day, the early morning, was brought out and made more visible. *Akhraja* means “to bring out, to bring forth.” *Kharaja* means “to go out, to come out.” *Kharaj* is what we are supposed to pay from our wealth or whatever we have as our tax or *zakah*.

## **30. And the earth, He expanded it after that.**

The earth is part of the heavens, part of the total creational balance. Here the earth was stretched out flat and made usable. *Daha* means “to spread out, flatten level, unroll,” and *dahyah* means “egg.” This refers to the fact that the earth was created in an egg-shape, a fact that modern man

has known for only a few decades. This ayah is saying, therefore, that the earth was made small, usable and plain, and was shaped like an egg.

### **31. He brought forth from it its water and its pasturage –**

In the early stages of creation, the earth was made solid from what appeared to be molten or gaseous material. The fluid catalyst that was needed in order to transform solid matter into more usable, more sentient matter, and into plants, animals and human beings, was squeezed out of the earth.

*Mar`an* means “pasturage” or “a place for grazing.” *Ra`a* means “to graze,” and it also means “to tend a flock of animals” or, more generally, “to take care of someone or something.” *Ra`i* is “a shepherd.” *Ra`ini* means, “Take care of me.”

Thus, fluidity from the earth comes, a fluidity which both renders life possible and gives us the possibility to graze on it, letting our animal instincts express themselves, having as we do the earthly elements of bodies and robust health.

### **32. And the mountains, He made them firm –**

Here again we have an example of how the earth came about, settling into a solid form. *Arsaha* means “that He made them fast in a liquid medium, He anchored them,” and it comes from *rasa*, which means “to be firm,” and “to anchor.” This firmness exists in order for us to settle and seek provision and to give us the stability we need to help us go through life’s journey. The Qur’an told us 1400 years ago what modern geologists have only recently been able to describe about the original formation of the earth.

### **33. A provision for you and for your cattle.**

Thus, there is ease on this journey of ours on this earth which culminates in the great calamity, referred to as the *at-tammatu`l-kubra*.

### **34. But when the great calamity comes –**

Death is the great calamity for those who regard the experience of this world as the main objective of our existence, but it is only a prelude to the next.

**35. The Day on which man will recollect that for which he strove –**

It is on that day that a man will remember all that had gone before, and all that he strove for will unfold for him, revealing his intentions.

**36. And hell will be manifest to him who sees.**

The sight of all of us will be sharper then and *jahim*, which is another name for hell, will become vividly evident. Those who have been leading their lives in that direction will clearly descend into it.

**37. Then, as for him who has transgressed the bounds –**

**38. And prefers the life of this world –**

**39. Then certainly hell, that is the abode!**

For those who transgressed in this world, preferring the life of this world to the next, for those who have denied and been engulfed in their denial, certainly *jahim* is their final resting place.

**40. And as for him who fears to stand before his Lord, and forbids the self from low desires**

–

As for he who had *khashyah* (fear), who feared the overwhelming power and position of his Lord, who always stood as though he were in the hands of his Lord, who always acted as though he were an extension of that Lordship, he is someone who forbade his soul low desires, who stayed in remembrance and did not transgress. He who was always aware of the havoc the *nafs* can play by its whims, by its *hawa* (desire), always remained on the *sirat* (the Path).

**41. Then surely the Garden – that is the abode!**

For whoever had the fearful awareness of Allah's presence, naturally *jannah* is his final abode, since he had been preparing for it here and now and had already learned its condition and its state. He had already entered into a state of the Garden in this world in preparation for his final and perpetual state in the next world.

**42. They ask you about the Hour – when it will come.**

This is a reference to the Hour of Reckoning, the hour of complete and total unfolding, the hour in which action and reaction meet and are united, in which man's intentions, his deeds, and his own spirit, will be connected and unified. This is when man will see himself to be the result of his actions which are, in reality, the manifestations of his intentions. He will see nothing other than the subtle nature which was his all along, and it will be clear that he was always presented with the option of either polishing it or causing it to be increasingly covered by his *nafs*.

**43. About what! You are of its reminder.**

**44. To your Lord is the goal of it.**

How can you remind them of its goal, its end? All time stops with the Lord; the Lordship of Allah is beyond time. That Hour, that stoppage of time, that end or resting place, is with the Lord.

**45. You are only a warner to him who fears it.**

All we can do in this realm, which is subject to time, is to warn others, to make them aware that a situation will come about in which time will stop. All that we will have will be our capital, that which we have earned, and the knowledge which we have brought forth from the source of knowledge within us, by our *khashyah*, by our wariness, by our fearful awareness that this experience will come to an end.

**46. On the Day that they see it, it will be as though they had not tarried except for the latter part of a day, or the early part of it.**

The final hour can be tasted here, but in the absolute final hour time will stop. When we experience that, the long years of this life will seem like just one day, or part of a day and a night. Life will seem short and insignificant. When time comes to an end, and we look at it from the angle of that state of consciousness, our total existence in this world will look completely distorted. We will leave time to go into timelessness, which is the essential backdrop to time; and Allah is the Timeless.

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