

Surah Mursalat, Chapter 77

(Those Sent Forth)

Number of Verses: 50

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah belongs to the early Meccan period and its name, Mursalat is taken from the first verse. After making some oaths, the text refers to the horrors of the Hereafter for those who reject the Truth.

The refrain,

“Ah woe, that Day to the Rejecters of Truth”

is repeated ten times in the Surah and every time follows a new topic.

In addition to the oaths, the Surah gives some information about the fervent Hereafter and its grievous events, and then repeats the same refrain:

“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth.”

In the second stage, we learn about the woeful story of the sinners of past generations.

In the third stage, it lets us know a little about the creation's specialities.

In the fourth stage, we are informed of some divine Blessings on the Earth.

In the fifth stage, there are some messages in which the rejecters are warned of their painful penalty.

In every stage there is also a hint to an enlightening point and then the refrain follows. Sometimes, the blessings of just men are mentioned to show that both rewards and penalties are found, but the former is used for justification and the latter is for warning.

The refrain, in this Surah, has an association with the refrain in Surah Rahman, No. 55, but with the difference that: Surah Rahman speaks about the Blessings, but Surah Mursalat describes the rejecters' punishments.

The Virtue of Studying this Surah

It is narrated from the Prophet (S) that:

“One who studies Surah Mursalat will be registered as a non-pagan”. 1

Another narration from Imam Sadiq (as) cites that:

“If one studies this Surah, Allah makes him familiar to Muhammad (S)”. 2

This reward is certainly for a person who studies it, thinks it over and acts accordingly. So, we see by a narration that some of the Prophet's close friends told him:

“Oh Muhammad, how soon you have grown old!”

He answered:

“Hud, Vaqiah, Mursalat, and Naba brought old age upon me”. 3

It is worth considering that in all these Surahs the circumstances of the Here after and the horrors of the Resurrection Day and the Great Judgment are illustrated; and are the very things that affected the Prophet's (S) holy soul.

Obviously, reading without thinking and acting cannot be very fruitful.

Surah Mursalat, Verses 1-15

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

وَالْمُرْسَلَاتِ عُرْفًا

فَالْعَاصِفَاتِ عَصْفًا

وَالنَّاشِرَاتِ نَشْرًا

فَالْفَارِقَاتِ فَرْقًا

فَالْمُلْقِيَاتِ ذِكْرًا

عُدْرًا أَوْ نُذْرًا

إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَوَاقِعٌ

فَإِذَا النُّجُومُ طُمِسَتْ

وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ فُرِجَتْ

وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ نُسِفَتْ

وَإِذَا الرُّسُلُ أُقْتَتَتْ

لَايَّ يَوْمٍ أَجَلَتْ

لِيَوْمِ الْفَصْلِ

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

1. ***“By those (Angels)(winds) sent forth one after another,”***
2. ***“And those who move as a hurricane;”***
3. ***“By those who scatter far and wide,”***
4. ***“And those who separate (one from another);”***
5. ***“And by those who reveal the (Divine) Reminder,”***
6. ***“To justify or to warn;”***
7. ***“Surely that which you are promised (for the Resurrection) will befall.”***
8. ***“Then when the stars are extinguished;”***
9. ***“And when the heaven is cleft asunder;”***
10. ***“And when the mountains are carried away;”***
11. ***“And when the prophets are called unto their time appointed (for witness);”***
12. ***“For what Day is this (portent) deferred?”***
13. ***“For the Day of Sorting out (right from wrong).”***
14. ***“What do you know about the Day of Sorting out?”***
15. ***“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth!”***

Allah’s Promises Surely Befall! Woe to the Rejecters of Truth!

At the beginning of this Surah, there are five oaths in five verses about which many comments have been made and they are:

- “By those (Angels) (winds) sent forth one after another,”***
“And those who move as a hurricane;”
“And By those who scatter far and wide,”
“And those who separate (one from another);”

“And By those (the prophets) who reveal the (Divine) Reminder,”

“To justify or to warn;”

Now, let us see what these mysterious oaths, which announce some great events, mean.

Here are three known ideas:

1. All five parts mean winds and hurricanes, which have an effective role in nature.

If so, the verses mean:

“By the winds sent forth one after another.

“By the violent hurricanes which move;”

“By those which scatter clouds and bring down, to Earth, the lively droplets of rain through the clouds,”

“By those which scatter clouds after falling rain;”

“By the very winds which remind men of Allah,”

(Some others have said that the winds are of tormenting winds. This idea is opposite to the above, but it is also a reminder).

2. If all the oaths are sworn to Angels, then, the verses would mean:

“By the Angels sent forth (to the prophets) one after another,”

(or, the Angels sent forth with some definite known plans),”

“And by those who move, as a hurricane, to carry out their mission:

“By those who deliver the heavenly verses and scatter them,”

“And those who, by this action, separate purity from evil;”

“And those who give Allah’s Messages and instructions to prophets,”

3. The first and the second oaths are about winds and hurricanes, but the third, the fourth and the fifth ones are about Angels and their mission: ie. distributing the verses, sorting out the right from the wrong and revealing Allah’s instructions to prophets for justice and warning.

The first factor, which caused the third idea to form and separated these verses into two groups, is the conjunction ‘and’ in two of the verses, and another form of relative juncture; the Arabic letter ‘ف’ (f), which occurs in the rest.

The second factor is the important sense that verse seven consists of. All the oaths are for the subject matter of this verse, that is, the reality of the Resurrection and the Hereafter.

We know that at the beginning of the Resurrection there will be many great happenings that will change the world. There will be violent storms, earthquakes, and some other shaking events on the one hand, and on the other hand, formation of the Great Judgment, where Angels divide the individuals' records, and separate the believers from unbelievers, communicating Allah's decree to them.

If the above five verses are stated according to this idea, they are suited to what they are sworn to, and, from this point of view, the last idea is superior to the first two.

The last word in verse five,

/i'kr/; 'Reminder',

means either the knowledge bestowed upon the prophets, or the verses revealed to them.

And we know that in the verses of Qur'an the word 'Qur'an', itself, means Reminder; as we see in Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 6,

"And they say: O thou to whom the Reminder is revealed! Thou art indeed a mad man!"

Gabriel, who revealed the Message to the holy Prophet (S), was only one angel, but

/mulqiyat/ 'angels'

is in a plural form.

Since, according to some narrations, sometimes large groups of angels accompanied Gabriel to bring the verses; as in Surah Abasa, No. 80, verse 15 which denotes that verses are revealed to the Prophet (S)

"by the hands of Angels".

What are these oaths for? The next verse uncovers the secret:

"Surely that which you are promised (for the Resurrection) will befall."

There is no doubt that resurrection and bringing man to life again, recompense and punishment, reckoning and retribution (judgment) are right and proper.

This verse demands that all of Allah's promises are sure irrespective of the promises to good-doers and evildoers in this world and in the Hereafter.

There is nothing mentioned about the Resurrection in this verse, but in the former verses there are some

hints to Resurrection, which confirm that it exists. For example, giving life to the dead lands by sending down rain, which is an illustrative incident of Resurrection; revealing Allah's instructions to the prophets; and appointing Messengers, all of which would be meaningless without the Hereafter. Then, the promised Resurrection is bound to come.

Similar to that is Surah Zariyat, No. 51, verse 22–23:

“And in heaven is your sustenance...”

and

“Then, by the Lord of heaven and earth, this is the very Truth...”

The oath to the Lord /rabb/ ‘the Owner, the Cherisher’ denotes that our sustenance is seriously true, and it is the Lord’s Wisdom which demands that sustenance be provided to the creatures.

Through the following three verses, the signs of that Day are pointed out:

“Then when the stars are extinguished;”

“And when the sky is cleft asunder;”

“And when the mountains are carried away;”

The word /tamasat/ is derived from /tams/ which means ‘to efface’ or ‘to obliterate (to destroy all trace of)’, may refer to the extinction of the stars or their dissolution, but the first rendition is more fitting.

A similar meaning is found in Surah Takwir, No. 81, verse 2:

“And when the stars darken;”

The word /nasafat/ is derived from /nasf/ which originally means ‘to winnow as chaff, the act of winnowing’, but here, it means: ‘to reduce the mountains to powder and scatter them abroad’.

In general, from many verses of the Holy Qur’an it is understood that, at last, this physical world will end with some series of extremely horrible events, and its regularity will be terribly destroyed. Then the spiritual world will be substituted by a new order.

The events are so horrible and amazing that no single word or expression can describe them. Are the mountains which are reduced to powder and scattered abroad, and like events, describable?

Some commentators have said that, in comparison with these events, the greatest earthquakes man has ever seen are like tiny firecrackers, which little boys explode for fun, and liken these horrifying events with the greatest atomic bombs.

At any rate, these meanings, in the Holy Qur’an, indicate the great difference between the physical world

and the spiritual world.

Then, in the following verse, one of the occurrences at the gathering place, on the Day of Judgment, is defined:

“And when the prophets are called unto their time appointed (for witness)”.

The theme of this verse and that of Surah A’raf, No. 7, verse 6 are similar:

“Then shall We question those to whom Our Message was sent and those by whom We sent it.”

And then it adds:

“For what Day is this (portent) deferred?”

“For the Day of Sorting out (right from wrong).”

This question, and its answer, shows the greatness of that Day, and what a clear and meaningful answer this is:

“For the Day of Sorting out”.

It is the Day of sorting out right from wrong, believers from unbelievers, good-doers from evildoers, and the Day of Judgment for all.

And then:

“What do you know about the Day of Sorting out?”

What are we looking for when the Prophet (S), having such extensive and broad knowledge and keen insight; by which he was able to discover the secrets of that mysterious world, could not deeply appreciate all the dimensions of that Day?

As it was repeatedly mentioned before, it is impossible for us, prisoners in this world of a cage, to understand all the great secrets of the Hereafter; we may only see its silhouette, but we believe in it.

Then, the warning:

“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth.”

The term

/wayl/ ‘woe’

is interpreted as ‘punishment with destruction, any punishment, or, a site in Hell full of torment’. This word is usually said to anyone or anything for whom or that which falls into misfortune and on whom one

does not wish Allah's mercy to descend and, here, it is used for the painful fate of the rejecters on that Day.

'The rejecters of Truth'

are those who do not believe in the Hereafter. And we know that those who reject the Day of Judgment and the Day of Reckoning easily commit any sin or corruption. But a firm belief in the reality of that Day demands virtue and responsibility in human beings.

Contents of the Oaths

In the above verses, it swears to the winds and hurricanes. This is because they have an important structural role in nature: they move the clouds and take them over dead lands, pouring down rain, and then scattering them.

Winds scatter seeds far and wide, here and there, and produce forests. They fertilize many of the plants and flowers. They change the weather, hot and cold, or moderate it.

They clear the air of epidemics: they take the fresh air from green fields and bring it into cities to substitute its polluted one. They cause the seas to undulate and oxygenate the water, which is essential to the developing processes of living creatures in the seas. Surely, winds and breezes are beneficial to man in the world.

Some other verses of the above group swear to angels by which Allah's Messages and revelations, that cherish virtue and humanity, were gradually conveyed to the prophets' hearts like the winds that come gently as harbingers with blessings of rain and fertility. Winds are in the physical world while angels are in the spiritual world. Then Allah's oaths are to both the physical cherishers and the spiritual ones.

It is interesting to note that all the oaths are for the belief that His promise of mercy and justice in the Hereafter,

'the Day of Sorting out'

is indeed true.

Surah Mursalat, Verses 16–28

أَلَمْ نُهَكِ الْأَوَّلِينَ

ثُمَّ نَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْآخِرِينَ

كَذَلِكَ نَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِينَ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

أَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُمْ مِنْ مَاءٍ مَهِينٍ

فَجَعَلْنَاهُ فِي قَرَارٍ مَكِينٍ

إِلَى قَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ

فَقَدَرْنَا فَنِعْمَ الْقَادِرُونَ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ كِفَاتًا

أَحْيَاءَ وَأَمْوَاتًا

وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ شَامِخَاتٍ وَأَسْقَيْنَاكُمْ مَاءً فُرَاتًا

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

16. ***“Did We not destroy the men of old?”***
17. ***“Then shall We make following (generations) follow them.”***
18. ***“Thus do We ever deal with men of sin.”***
19. ***“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth.”***
20. ***“Did We not create you from a base fluid?”***
21. ***“The which We placed in a safe abode; (firmly fixed).”***
22. ***“For a period (of gestation) determined?”***
23. ***“For We determine; and We are the best to determine (and then Resurrection is easy for Us to portend)”***
24. ***“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth!”***
25. ***“Have We not made the earth (as a place) to draw together?”***
26. ***“Both for the living and the dead,”***
27. ***“And placed therein high mountains standing firm, and given you to drink (wholesome) sweet water?”***
28. ***“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth!”***

They See These Signs of Power, Yet They Reject the Resurrection!

Through these verses, Rejecters are warned in different ways and by various statements.

First, they are reminded of the old generation’s fate:

“Did We not destroy the men of old?”

In our own times we can observe relics of old civilizations. Generations such as those of the ‘Ad, the Thamud, Noah’s, Lot’s and Pharaoh’s were destroyed as punishment for their evil deeds; partly by flood, lightning and hurricane, and some generations by earthquakes and meteorites.

“Then shall We make following (generations) follow them.”

Allah’s Law is always the same. Sin or corruption prepares its own destruction. Should some be punished for sinning while others not?

“Thus do We ever deal with men of sin.”

In fact, this verse is a confirmation to the destruction of the old generations and for the present and future generations, as well. Since Allah's punishment is neither for revenging nor settling His own personal account, it, therefore, depends on their own sinful deeds and on His superior wisdom.

Some believe that the word

lawwalin/ 'old',

in this verse, refers to the generations of Noah, 'Ad and Thamud; and the word

lakhirin/ 'following'

refers to the generations after them; such as those of Lot and Pharaoh.

But taking note of the term

Inutbi'uhum/ "...shall we make follow (generations) follow them",

which is in the future tense and

lalam nuhlik/ "Did We not destroy...",

which is in past tense it, then, becomes clear that 'old' refers to all the old generations who were destroyed by Allah's Will, and 'following' refers to the sinners of the Prophet's (S) time or those who will come into being after that and will commit sins and corruptions.

And, so, the warning:

"Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth."

The words

'that Day'

here, means the Hereafter, when they will have their main punishment and retribution. The repetition of the verse is for emphasis, though they may have a chastisement even in this world.

Then, it attracts their attention to the period of gestation which shows them the power and the authority of the Creator and also the abundance of His blessings to man. Consequently, they understand His force, in regard to the Resurrection, and, they, themselves, owe Allah for His numerous blessings and respect Him.

"Did We not create you from a base fluid?"

"The which We placed in a safe abode, (firmly fixed)".

A place where all the conditions for life, growth and protection of the fetus exist. It is so amazing and interesting that it causes everyone to wonder.

“For a period (of gestation) determined?”

A period of time that no one knows, but Allah. During this period many changes occur and every day the fetus enters a new phase in its development in that abode.

“For We determine; and We are the best to determine, (and then Resurrection is easy for Us to portend)”.

This is the same reason for which the Qur’an has emphatically used in proving the possibility of the Resurrection.

For example, in the beginning verses of Surah Hajj, No. 22, mankind’s attention is attracted to the process of their own physical growth; from lifeless matter to seed, fertilized ovum, fetus, child, youth, aged and death! How can they doubt that the author of all these wonderful stages in their lives, in this world, each of which is as important as the Resurrection, can also give them another kind of life after the end of this probationary life? How different is dust from sperm!

“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth”.

Woe to those who see these numerous wonders of His power and yet they deny Him.

In this respect, Imam Ali (as) has said:

“O creature who has been equitably created and who has been nourished and looked after in the darkness of wombs with multiple curtains. You were originated from the essence of clay and put in a quiet place for a determined length and ordained time. You used to move in the womb of your mother as an embryo, neither responding to a call nor hearing any voice.

Then you were taken out from the place in which you stayed to a place that you had not seen, and you were not acquainted with awaiting its benefits. Who guided you to obtain your sustenance from the milk of your mother’s breast?

Who taught you to express your demands with your cries? Verily, when you cannot fully understand your own self, how can you understand your Creator? It is impossible for you to understand Allah from the attributes which are meant only for His creatures.”⁴

In another part of the verses, the external nature and His blessings, in this great world, are described. These are proofs for both His authority and Mercy, and for the reality of Resurrection, while the former verses were about the creation of man himself.

“Have We not made the earth (as a place) to draw together?”

“Both for the living and the dead”.

The term

/kifat/5 ‘a place where things are gathered together’

is derived from /kaft/ which means ‘to gather together’, or ‘to attach one thing to another’. ‘Birds flying fast’ is also called /kifat/, since when they fly fast they gather their wings to their sides in order to move more quickly through the air.

It intends to say: Earth is a gathering place for all human beings; it gathers the living men and women over itself and gives them their needs totally, and envelops their dead bodies in its insides. If the ground were not fit for burial, the bad smell and various diseases would arise from the corpses and this would be a disaster for the living ones.

Yes, the land, like a mother who gathers her children around her, gathers individuals over itself, caresses them, feeds them, dresses them, gives them residence, gives them all their needs, keeps their corpses in its inside, dissolves them and then causes their harmful effects to vanish.

Some commentators have used /kifat/ in the sense of ‘to fly quickly’ and have said that the term refers to the Earth’s rotation around the Sun, and other movements, all of which were not known by people at the time of revelation of the Qur’an.

In the next verse, that is:

“...the living and the dead”,

it seems that the first meaning is more suitable. Particularly, if we consider the following narration from Imam Ali (as). When he was coming back from the Seffin Battlefield he reached a cemetery outside the gate of Kufa.

He looked across it and said:

“This is the abode of the dead and where they dwell”,

and then he looked towards the houses of the city and said:

“This is the abode of the living”.

He wanted to tell others that there is not a long distance between the abode of the living and that of the dead, then, he recited the above verses:

“Have We not made the earth (as a place) to draw together?”

“Both for the living and the dead.” 6

Then, the Qur'an mentions one of the great blessings of Allah on the earth:

“And placed therein high mountains standing firm...”

These high mountains and their underlying formations united together, on the one hand, protect the earth, armor-like, against the inner pressures and the pressures resulting from gravity and, on the other hand, they prevent the air's friction with the land by providing a break in the air mass with their peaks, and thirdly, they control the violent winds and storms. Then, in this way, they afford peace and comfort to the earth's dwellers.

And, at the end of this verse, another gift from the mountains is cited:

“...and given you to drink wholesome sweet water?”

The

‘wholesome sweet water’

is useful and lively both for

‘you’

and for

‘your’

animals, agriculture, and gardens.

It is true that all the sources of sweet water are from rain, but mountains play the primary role in supplying life with water: many headsprings and aqueducts stem from mountains; many of the rivers and streams originate from the heavy thick melting snow on the high mountains tops.

The tops of the mountains, because of their altitude, are the most useful for human beings, as they are far from the plains surface and they are always cold. They can keep the snow there for years and then the sun melts the snow, gradually, flowing into the streams.

The refrain is repeated:

“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth.”

It is they who see these signs and the types of His Bounty and Power; the blessings by which they are continually benefited and, yet, deny the Resurrection, His Justice and His Wisdom.

Surah Mursalat, Verses 29-40

انطَلِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَا كُنتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ

انطَلِقُوا إِلَىٰ ظِلِّ ذِي ثَلَاثِ شُعَبٍ

لَا ظَلِيلٍ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنَ اللَّهَبِ

إِنَّهَا تَرْمِي بِشَرَرٍ كَالْقَصْرِ

كَأَنَّهُ جِمَالَتٌ صُفْرٌ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

هَذَا يَوْمٌ لَا يَنْطِقُونَ

وَلَا يُؤْذَنُ لَهُمْ فَيَعْتَذِرُونَ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

هَذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ ۚ جَمَعْنَاكُمْ وَالْأُولَىٰ

فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ كَيْدٌ فَكِيدُونَ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

29. ***“(On that Day it will be said unto them:) Depart you to that which you used to deny.”***
30. ***“Depart to a shadow failing threefold, (stifling smoke from fire)”***.
31. ***“(Which yields) no relief nor shelter from the flame”***.
32. ***“Indeed it throws about sparks (as big) as castles;”***.
33. ***“As if there were (a string of) yellow camels (marching swiftly)”***.
34. ***“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth.”***
35. ***“This is a day wherein they speak not, (they will not be in a position to put forward any valid defense or plea)”***,
36. ***“Nor will it be open to them to put forth excuses”***.
37. ***“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth”***.
38. ***“This is the Day of Sorting out (right from wrong). We have brought you and the men of old together”***.
39. ***“If you have a trick (to flee away from punishment) use it against Me!”***
40. ***“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth”***.

They Can Neither Defend Themselves Nor Escape

The final fate of the rejecters of the Hereafter and the Divine Judgment is stated in these verses: a statement that takes one into deep thought, indeed, because it makes clear the horrors of the Event.

The command is:

“(On that Day it will be said unto them): Depart you to that which you used to deny”.

Depart to the blazing fire (Hell) which you used to mock. Depart to the different kinds of punishment which you have prepared for yourselves in your previous life.

The term /inḡaliqu/ is based on /inḡilaq/ which means: ‘to depart, go one’s way without stopping, to be free or loose’.

In fact, it is an explanation of their state in the Hereafter. They will be kept a long time for their account, then, being given leave, they will be told to go to Hell promptly without any pause.

The presenter of the case may be Allah, Who commands them directly of the punishment to come, or it may be the angels. The tone of the statement is quite harsh, which is also a kind of torment.

“Depart to a shadow falling threefold, (stifling smoke from fire)”

A column of smoke falls from above, another from the right side, and the third one from the left side. This black and thick hostile smoke surrounds them to envelop them completely.

This shadow gives no comfort, nor coolness, since they themselves are from fire, so it says:

“(Which yields) no relief, nor shelter from the flame”

Some persons may think that a shadow is there which partly reduces the heat of the flames of the fire, but this verse conveys the contrary idea. It suggests that this shadow is not of the kind that you think of, but it is a hot stifling one rising from the thick smoke of fire that reflects the heat of flames, totally.

Surah Waqiah, No. 56, verses 41–44 attest to the mentioned subject and refer to the companions of the Left Hand:

“The Companions of the Left Hand – What will be the Companions of the Left Hand?”

“(They will be) in the midst of a fierce Blast of Fire and in Boiling Water,”

“And in the shades of Black Smoke.”

“Nothing (will there be) to refresh, nor to please:”

It has been said that the threefold shadow denotes a reflection of their present triple rejection to the principles of religion, i.e. monotheism, prophecy, and Resurrection; because, rejection of the Resurrection is not separate from the rejection of the other two.

But some others have said that it refers to the triple source of their faculties of anger, carnality, and suspicion. The triple shadows of smoke illustrate the black stains of sins.

The following is the translation of a Persian poem:

Keep away from anger and carnality.

The smoke of which darkens the insight.

When anger appears, wisdom disappears:

And when lust dominates, the soul is impudent.

“Indeed it throws about sparks (as big) as castles”,

They are not like the sparks thrown off by a fire in our human world, which are sometimes very tiny.

The term

/qaşr/ 'castle'

is meaningfully used here. Perhaps, it is more suitable to say: 'spark like the mountains'. But it should not be forgotten that, as it was mentioned for the verses before, mountains are the origin of many blessings as well as the headsprings of the wholesome sweet water, while castles of the oppressors are the source of blazing hot fire.

The next verse conveys another form of descriptive explanation for the sparks of this blazing fire:

"As if there were (a string of) yellow camels (marching swiftly)."

The term

/jimalah/ 'camels'

is a plural form of /jamal/ 'camel', and the word /şufr/ is a plural form of /aşfar/ which means: 'that which is yellow' because sparks of fire are usually a reddish yellow.

In the former verse the sparks, from the point of view of size, were likened to castles and in this verse, from the point of view of number, colour, and speed, they are likened to a number of yellow marching camels.

When the sparks are so, it is obvious what the blazing fire is! And, besides this, how many other punishments are there nearby?

Supplication

O Lord Please protect all of us against it with Your Mercy.

At the end of this portion, once more, the same refrain is repeated:

"Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth".

Then another explanation about the characteristics of that terrible Day begins.

It says:

"This is a day wherein they speak not,

(they will not be in a position to put forward any valid defense or plea)".

Yes, it is true that on that Day the sinners will be dumbfounded.

This fact is also mentioned in Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 65:

“That Day shall We set a seal on their mouths...”

And, also at the end of the same verse it says:

“...But their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will bear witness to all that they did”

And even more, in some other verses it is said that their skins will speak and bear witness to what should be said.

“Nor will it be open to them to put forth excuses”

They are allowed neither to say anything nor to excuse and defend, because the facts will speak plainly enough, against them, and they do not need to speak.

In the human world, this prevaricating tongue misused its freedom: falsely denied the prophets, mocked the righteous, canceled the right, and substituted the wrong in place of the right. So, in the spiritual world this tongue should be locked and shut as a punishment. The very state is a torment, too, because one cannot defend or excuse oneself.

There is a narration from Imam Sadiq (as) in which he says:

*“Allah is greater and more just than not to allow His servant to apologize to Him with his plausible excuse. But they have no plausible excuse, indeed, to bring up.”*⁷

From some of the verses, of course, it is understood that sinners can speak sometimes in the Hereafter, since, there are many halting places, therein, where some of their tongues are shut and their limbs bear witness, and in some others, their tongues are allowed to express their intensive begrudging, grief, and disaster.

Again it says:

“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth”

Next, the sinners are addressed. To describe ‘that Day’, it says:

“This is the Day of Sorting out (right from wrong). We have brought you and the men of old together”

All members of the human race, from the earliest ones to the latest, with no exception, are gathered for reckoning and the Great Judgment

“If you have a trick (to flee away from punishment) use it against Me!”

Can you escape from My domain?

Or, are you able to defeat My Power?

Or, can you ransom and redeem yourself?

Or, are you able to deceive the Accountants?

Do your best, but do know that you can do nothing.

In fact, this is a term used to show their inability and helplessness; the same demand as that which is made for the Holy Qur'an as we can see in Surah Baqarah No. 2, verse 23:

“And if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed (from time to time) to Our servant, then produce a Surah like it...”

As Raqib says in Mufradat: /kayd/ means ‘applying or thinking of a remedy, ’ which is sometimes blameworthy and sometimes praiseworthy, though the former is more frequently used (as it is used in the above verse).’

On that Day, certainly, they can do nothing because, as we know, there is no means for man, of any kind, to use for his defense, which Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 166, points out:

“...and all relations between them would be cut off.”

It is interesting to note that, on the one hand, that Day is called ‘the Day of Sorting out’ and, on the other hand, it is said that:

“We have brought you and the men of old together”;

both occurring in the same section. At first, all are gathered in the Great Court of Justice, then they are divided into different rows in accordance with their belief and their deeds. Even those who go to Paradise, having different rows of different degrees; the likes of which are those who go to Hell, having different rows with various steps of descent.

Yes, that Day is the day of sorting out (right from wrong, and oppressor from oppressed).

Again, the warning and enlightening verse is repeated:

“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth”.

Surah Mursalat, Verses 41–50

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي ظِلَالٍ وَعُيُونٍ

وَفَوَاكِهَ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

كُلُوا وَتَمَتَّعُوا قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ مُجْرِمُونَ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ ارْكَعُوا لَا يَرْكَعُونَ

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ

فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ

41. ***“The righteous are amidst shades and fountains (of Heaven),”***
42. ***“And fruits such as they desire”.***
43. ***“Eat ye and drink ye pleasantly (until you are satiated) in return for what ye did”.***
44. ***“Thus do We certainly reward the Doers of Good”.***
45. ***“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth”.***
46. ***“(O ye Unjust) Eat and enjoy yourselves (on earth) a little while, (but be warned that an evil End in the Hereafter awaits you) for that ye are sinners”.***
47. ***“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth”.***
48. ***“And when it is said unto them: Bow down, they bow not down”.***
49. ***“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth”.***
50. ***“(If they do not believe in Holy Qur’an) then what statement, after that, will they believe in?”***

What Statement Will They Believe In, If They Do Not Believe in Holy Qur’an?

We know that the Qur’anic style generally couples warning with glad tidings, threats with encouragement, and the fate of the Righteous with that of the sinners, so that the affairs are better understood.

On this basis, after describing various punishments of the sinners, in the Hereafter, in the aforementioned verses, there follows a short, but meaningful verse about the state of the Righteous on that Day:

“The righteous are amidst shades and fountains (of heaven) “.

Meanwhile, the sinners are in the shade of stifling smoke from fire, as it was understood from the previous verses.

The Arabic word

/ʕilal/ ‘shadows’

is the plural form of /ʕill/ ‘shadow’; whether in the shade of a tree and the like, during the day, or in the shadows of the darkness at night, while /fi/ is ‘to cast a shadow by only a single source of light’ such as the shadow of trees which intercepts the rays of the sun.

Then it says:

“And fruits such as they desire”.

It is clear that fruits, shadows, and fountains are a small part of the Blessings that Allah will bestow on them: a small part, describable in human language, is in comparison with all the Blessings in Heaven, but so plentiful and beyond the imagination of the Earth’s dwellers, that it is indescribable.

It is interesting to note that they will be entertained so excellently and abundantly at Allah's feast that they are told:

“Eat ye and drink ye pleasantly (until you are satiated) in return for what you did”.

The statement which is said to them directly, whether by Allah or by Angels, is full of kindness and affection; clearly is a sustenance for their soul.

The phrase,

“for what you did”,

denotes that these gifts are not given to anyone undeserving, and nothing is obtained by raw claim or imagination but, is actually prepared by good deeds.

As Raqib cited in Mufradat: /hani' means anything that is wholesome and has no pain afterward. So, water and the daily meal are thus called and it is sometimes used for life, too.

Therefore, this shows that the fruits, foods and drinks, in Heaven, are not the same as those in this world; of which we sometimes suffer malnutrition, pain and undesirable effects.

Some commentators believe that this imperative sentence denotes to the allowance of using these Blessings, lawfully, while some others believe that this is just a command.

But, on the whole, it should be understood that, at ceremonies, these commands are a kind of hospitality and the host's desire is that the guests would be asked to help themselves, as a kind of respect and dignity shown to them, because he likes that his meal will be eaten completely, by the guests, and this shows that they honor him.

The next verse emphasizes that these gifts are not undeservedly given:

“Thus do We certainly reward the Doers of Good”.

Note that the first verse insists on 'righteousness' and 'devotion' then another verse is based on 'deed', and this verse emphasizes on 'doing good'.

'Righteousness' or 'virtuousness' means avoidance of any sin, corruption, paganism and the denial of Allah; and 'doing good' is used for any good action; while 'deed' refers only to the activities which are piously done. So, the blessings bestowed by Allah are for these groups, not for the fake claimants of faith and committers of various kind of sin, though they appear to be among the faithful people.

At the end of this part, the refrain is, again, mentioned:

“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth”.

Woe to those who are deprived of these blessings and affections. The pain of the regret of this deprivation is not minor to the blazing fire of Hell.

Since being busy with worldly pleasures and the desire of having unconditional freedom for following after carnality, is one of the factors of the denial of Resurrection, the next verse addresses the sinners and in a threatening tone says:

“(O ye Unjust) Eat and enjoy yourselves (on earth) a little while, (but be warned that an evil End, in the Hereafter, awaits you) for that ye are sinners”.

The term

/qalilal/ ‘a little’

can refer either to the short period of life in this world, or to the few blessings of this world in comparison with the countless, immense blessings of the next world.

In fact, the righteous are highly regarded in the Hereafter and are addressed with this affectionate sentence:

“Eat ye and drink ye pleasantly (until you are satiated)...”,

but worldly men are addressed with this threatening sentence:

“(O ye Unjust) Eat and enjoy yourselves (on earth) a little while...”.

The Righteous are told:

“...in return for what ye did”,

but the unjust are told:

“...for that ye are sinners”.

Further, it makes it clear that it is man’s sin, originating from faithlessness or lusts, that paves the way for Allah’s punishment.

Then, the aforementioned warning is followed again by:

“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth”.

Woe to those who were deceived by this scintillating world and its lusts, and consequently prepared Allah’s punishment for themselves.

In the next verse another source of their disaster, that is: ‘pride and self-conceit’, is touched on where it

says:

“And when it is said unto them: Bow down, they bow not down”.

many of the commentators have said that this verse was revealed about the Thaqif tribe when the Prophet (S) told them to say prayers and they answered that they would never bow; that it would be a disgrace for them.

Then he (S) said:

“Religion is worthless without bowing and prostration”.

They not only refused bowing and prostration, but also had this quality of pride throughout their life and permeating their ideas. They resigned neither to Allah’s Will nor to the Prophet’s instructions nor to people’s rights; they were humble neither to the Creator nor to other human beings. In fact, these two elements, ‘pride and carnality’, are the most important factors in committing crimes, sins, cruelties, and denial.

Then, finally, for the tenth time in this Surah, it says:

“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth”.

In the last verse of Surah Mursalat, in a scolding tone and with profound astonishment, it questions:

“(If they do not believe in Holy Qur’an) then what statement, after that, will they believe in?”

One who does not believe in Qur’an; that which if it were sent down on a mountain, that mountain would humble itself and cleave asunder for fear of Allah, would not resign to believe in any Holy Book or any rational logic, and this is a sign of enmity and obstinacy.

As it was mentioned, at the beginning of this Surah, the verse:

“Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth,”

is repeated ten times for emphasis on one important fact: Resurrection. Repetitions, like this one, are found in the statements of all eloquent speakers for what they want to emphasize on; whether it be prose or verse.

But some commentators believe that each time the verse is repeated, it means that it is about a new subject, and which comes just before the one that the rejecters deny; so, therefore, actually there is no repetition of the verse.

We conclude this Surah with a sentence from ‘Ruh–al–Bayan’ which says:

“This Surah was revealed to the Prophet (S) in a cave somewhere close to ‘Qif Mosque’ Mina and I have

seen the cave myself “.

Supplication

O Lord! Bestow on us Your Grace not to reject Your verses.

O Lord! Protect us against pride and carnal desires; the main sources of sin. O Lord! Set us in the Bliss of the Righteous among those who win be highly regarded at Your Feast.

1. Majma' _al_ _Bayan, vol. 10, p. 414.

2. ibid

3. Khisal_ _i_ _Saduq, Chapter 4, Tradition 10

4. Nahj_ _ul_ _Balaqa, Sermon No. 162 (Arabic Version); Sermon No. 166 (English Version).

5. /Kifata/ is the second object for its verb, and is infinitive; used as a subjective noun.

6. Tafsir_ _i_ _Borhan, vol. 4, p. 417.

7. Nur_ _uth_ _Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 49.

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