

Surah Nabaa, Chapter 78

(The Great News)

Number of Verses: 40

Contents of the Surah

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Most of the verses of the last part of the Qur'an were revealed in Mecca. The nature of these Surahs is that they put emphasis on the Creation and the Resurrection, furnished with glad tidings and warnings; usually in a shocking and awakening tone.

All the verses of the Surahs, except a few, are short and full of implications. For the same reason, they affect, deeply, on any conscious person and they awaken some of the unaware, too. They give spirit to dead-like people and make the indifferent ones feel responsibility. On the whole, they have a specific case and an enthusiastic world of their own, full of enlightenment and attraction.

Surah Nabaa is not an exception to this general principle. It begins with an awakening question, and ends with a wonderful sentence full of warning.

The contents of the Surah can be divided into several parts:

The question that is stated in the first verse about the

“Great News” *Inaba'-in-`a`iml*

or the Hereafter.

Examples of the types of Divine Power in the Heavens and on Earth, and also of men's lives and their gifts as evidences to the possibility of the Resurrection and the Hereafter.

Preliminary signs of the Resurrection.

Reference to the painful chastisement of the transgressors.

The encouraging gifts and blessings of Heaven.

Finally, the Surah ends with some intensive warnings about the dreadful punishment, and then, the sad destiny of the Unbelievers.

The name of the Surah, Nabaa, is taken from its second verse, but sometimes it is called /'amma/ which is the first word in the first verse.

The Virtue In Studying Surah Nabaa

There is a tradition from the Prophet (S) which says:

"He who studies Surah Nabaa will be satiated, by Allah, with a cold drink in Heaven". 1

Another tradition from Imam Sadiq says:

"He who continues studying Surah Nabaa, everyday, will meet the Holy Shrine at Mecca (Kaaba) before the year ends". 2

Again, another tradition from the Prophet (S) says:

"He who studies it (Surah Nabaa) and learns it by heart, on the Day of Judgment, his reckoning will be concluded (so quickly) equal to the same length of time it takes to say a single prayer".

Surah Nabaa, Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ

عَنِ النَّبَاِ الْعَظِيْمِ

الَّذِي هُمْ فِيْهِ مُخْتَلِفُوْنَ

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُوْنَ

ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُوْنَ

1. ***“O what do they ask (one another)?”***
2. ***“Of the Great News,”***
3. ***“That in which they differ”.***
4. ***“Nay! they shall soon (come to) know,”***
5. ***“Nay indeed! they shall soon (come to) know”.***

The Great News!

In the first verse, it astonishingly questions:

“O what do they ask (one another)?”

Then, without expecting them to reply, the Qur’an answers:

“Of the Great News”.

“That in which they differ”.

For the meaning of /naba’-in-`a`im/, the commentators have put forth different ideas. Some of them say it means: ‘the Day of Resurrection’ while some others have meant it as ‘the revelation of the Holy Qur’an’ and still others have said it means: ‘The whole Islamic Principles’. In some narrations it has been commented on to mean ‘vicegerency and guardianship’; which will be dealt with later.

Paying careful attention to all verses of the Surah, especially to some points in the following verses and specifically to the sentence:

“Verily The Day of Sorting out is (a day) appointed”.

which has come after mentioning some Signs of Allah's Power in the heavens and on the Earth, and also paying attention to the fact that the most intensive opposition of the Unbelievers was about the existence of 'Resurrection'; all in all most commentators approve of the first idea, that is, in the sense of 'Resurrection' for the phrase /naba'-in-'a'aim/.

As Raqib says in his book, Mufradat, the term /naba'/ means: 'a great news which is useful and man is acquainted with it or has a strong conviction to it; and these three things are the conditions of /naba'/.

Therefore, the term

'a'aim/ 'great'

is more emphatic and, on the whole, indicates that this news, about which some were doubtful, has been a known fact, great and full of importance, and therefore, its most appropriate meaning is 'Resurrection'.

The phrase

'they ask (one another)'

may refer only to the Unbelievers who used to ask each other about the Resurrection; of course, not for their research and comprehension, but, due to their doubts.

It is also probable that the question is from the believers or from the Prophet (S), himself.

Here, a question may arise that: if /naba'-in-'a'aim/ refers to the Resurrection, which apparently all the unbelievers denied, why does it say

"That in which they differ"?

To answer this question, we say that: the denial of the Resurrection, in an absolute form, does not decisively exist even among the unbelievers, because many of them assume that there is the existence of the spirit after death, or in other words, 'the spiritual Resurrection'.

Some of them were doubtful about the bodily Resurrection as in Surah Naml No. 27, verse 66:

"Still less can their knowledge comprehend the Hereafter: nay, they are in doubt and uncertainty regarding it, nay, they are blind thereunto!"

And some of them completely denied the Resurrection and even said that the Prophet (S) was mad, because of his claim about Resurrection; as in Surah Saba, No. 34, verse 7-8:

"The Unbelievers say (in ridicule): Shall we point out to you a man that will tell you, when you are all scattered to pieces in disintegration, that you shall (then be raised) in a New Creation?"

"Has he invented a falsehood against Allah, or has a spirit (seized) him? Nay, it is those who

believe not in the Hereafter, that are in (real) Penalty, and in farthest Error".

Thus, their rejection of the Resurrection is certain.

It further states:

"Nay! they shall soon (come to) know".

"Nay indeed! they shall soon (come to) know".

When they will be informed, they will cry and will be sorry for themselves; each of them saying:

"Lest the soul should (then) say: Ah! Woe is me! in that I neglected (my Duty) towards Allah..."³

On the Day that they are surrounded by massive punishment, and they wish to return to their former life, they ask:

"Is there any way (to effect) a return?"⁴.

Even when they, being at the point of death, are sure about the partition and Resurrection; because all the curtains will be removed, then, and the facts of the next world will become obvious, they cry saying:

"...O my Lord! send me back (to life)",

"In order that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected..."⁵.

The Arabic term

/saya' lamun/ 'they shall soon come to know'

begins with ‘

س

’ (s) which is usually used as a sign for near future, and denotes that the Hereafter is near; that this whole life is just a fleeting moment in comparison to it.

Commentators have suggested different ideas about the twice repeated verse, mentioned above, which says the same facts for emphasis: To inform them that the Hereafter is in the near future, or to tell them two separate matters:

(1) That they will see the punishment of this world in the near future, and

(2) that they will see the next world's punishment after that (of which, the first idea seems more appropriate).

It is also probable that this refers to the improvement and progress of man's knowledge, when there will be so many reasons and evidences for the possibility of the Resurrection that even the unbelievers cannot afford to deny, but can only confess, the Reality.

However, the fault in this commentary is that this kind of knowledge is for the later generations of mankind, which this verse refers to, and not for those who used to live at the Prophet's time (S) and differed on the existence of the Hereafter.

Explanation: The Proposition of 'Vicegerency' and '/naba' _in_ 'a'aim/ (The Great News)

As was mentioned earlier, it has been said that the phrase /naba' _in_ 'a'aim/ has several meanings: 'the Hereafter, the Holy Qur'an, the entire Islamic Principles', etc. But, the whole concept, taken from the verses altogether, leads us to 'Resurrection' as having the closest meaning.

There are a lot of narrations, some of which have been cited by the Household of the Prophet 'Ahlul Bayt' (as), and some others by Sunni commentators, that say the phrase /naba' _in_ 'a'aim/ refers to Hazrat Ali's (as) vicegerency and Imamate (the leadership of the Islamic community), which is a matter of dispute among a group of Muslims, even today. Or it is interpreted as vicegerency, in general.

Three of the narrations are as follows:

1. Hafiz _Muhammad_ _ibn_ _Mo'min_ _Shirazi, one of the scholars of the Sunni Community, has narrated a tradition from the Prophet (S) on the commentary of the first verse of this Surah, and he (S) said:

"It means the vicegerency of Ali; about which everyone will be asked in the grave, and no one in the East or West, in the seas or over the land passes away without the angels asking him about the vicegerency of Amir _al_ _Mo'minin, and he will also be asked what his religion is, who his Prophet is, and who his Imam is".⁶

2. Another narration says that on the day of the Battle of Seffin, a man from the troops of Sham (Damascus), having his armor on and carrying a Qur'an with him, entered the battlefield while he was reciting Surah Nabaa.

Then Ali (as), himself, faced him and questioned him:

"Do you know what

/naba' _in_ 'a'aim/ (the Great News),

in which they differ, is?"

The man replied:

“No, I do not know”.

Imam Ali (as) said:

“I am, by Allah, the very

/naba’ –in –‘a‘im/ (the Great News)

*that you differ in and you quarrel against my vicegerency. You turned away from my vicegerency after you had pledged allegiance to it, and only on Dooms Day will you really comprehend, once more, what you had understood about it before”.*⁷

3. A narration from Imam Sadiq says:

“The Great News’

*is the same as Vicegerency”.*⁸

To gather the contents of these narrations and the commentary of the verse, in the same sense as ‘Resurrection’, which was previously mentioned, is possible in two ways:

(1) The phrase /naba’ –in –‘a‘im/ has a broad meaning which includes all of the meanings previously given, though when these verses were revealed the Qur’an insisted on ‘Resurrection’ more than anything else. Still, this does not hinder us from finding more interpretations, of the verse, other than the above and

(2) as we know and as it has been mentioned repeatedly, the Qur’an has various meanings; that is, a verse may have several meanings, in different dimensions, among which only one is obvious by the apparent words and the other meanings are hidden, but they can be found with the help of other explanations and are not clear to anyone except ‘the distinguished ones’.

This is not the only verse that has obvious and hidden meanings. There are many other verses, in the Holy Qur’an, of which the Islamic narrations contain different commentaries.

But, we emphatically state that it is not possible to understand the hidden meanings of the Qur’an without the clear explanations or commentaries from the Prophet or sinless Imams (as), and the existence of hidden meanings, in the Qur’an, should not be a possible way of misusing it by the mischief-makers who comment on the verses in whatever way they wish.

Why is the Resurrection Emphasized On So Much?

It was mentioned, before, that the most important thing which is emphasized on and spoken about, in the thirtieth part of the Holy Qur’an; whose Surahs are mostly Meccan, is the Resurrection and man’s state in the Hereafter.

This is so because, for the improvement of man, the first step is to know that there is a Reckoning Day. And there is a flawless Court in which nothing is hidden from its Judges; a Court where you can find no transgression, no oppressor, and no mistake.

Neither recommendations nor bribes are useful therein. No one can tell a lie or deny the Truth. In short, there is no way to flee from the grip of punishment, there; the only way is staying away from sin, here; in this world.

The belief in there being such a Court shakes man, awakens the sleeping souls, makes the spirit of piety and responsibility come alive, and invites human beings to be careful of their duties.

Generally, the main factor in the appearance of corruption, in any environment, is one of two following points:

- (1) the weakness of the watchmen, or
- (2) the weakness of judicial organization.

If the watchful guards look over the deeds of man, and careful courts verify the offenders' crimes and let no mischief leave without penalty, then, in such a safe and sound environment, surely inequity, corruption, transgression, and rebellion will decrease to the minimum.

When the worldly life, under the control of its watchmen and courts is so, then man's divine spiritual life is obvious.

Belief in an Omnipresent Unity that:

"...From whom is not hidden he least little atom..."⁹,

and belief in the existence of Resurrection, which according to Surah Zilzal No. 99, verses 7-8:

"So, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it!"

"And whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall behold it",

nothing will be forgotten and everything will be in front of man. This kind of belief supplies such a piety in man that can guide him to the path of charity and goodness throughout his life.

Surah Naba, Verses 6-16

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهَادًا

وَالْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا

وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا

وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا

وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا

وَبَيْنَنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شَدَادًا

وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا

لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا

وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا

6. "Have We not made the earth as a (wide) expanse?"

7. "And the mountains as pegs?"

8. "And We created you in pairs,"

9. "And We made your sleep for repose,"

10. "And We made the night as a covering"

11. "And We made the day for (seeking) livelihood,"

12. "And We built above you seven firmaments"

13. "And We made (therein) a blazing lamp,"

14. "And We sent down from the clouds water in abundance"

15. "That We may bring forth thereby grain and plants,"

16. "And gardens of luxurious growth?"

These verses are, in fact, an answer to the questions of the rejecters of the Resurrection, and those who differ on /naba'-in-`a`im/ 'the Great News' since, these verses mention a portion of the wise order of this world of being and its reasonable gifts, which have a very effective function in man's life.

They are, on the one hand, a few of the clear Signs of Allah's power over all things; including the rebirth of the dead, and on the other hand, they point to the fact that this Wise order cannot exist in vain since, if with the end of this material world all other things end, too, this life will certainly be in vain.

Thus, these verses can be considered as some reasons for the Resurrection from two points of view:

(1) Through the 'reasoning of power', and

(2) through the 'reasoning of knowledge'.

In these eleven verses, twelve important blessings are pointed out, mixed with grace and affection and accompanied with reasoning and stimulation of the sentiments. As bare rational reasoning is not quite sufficient, sentiments and affections are needed.

At first, it begins with the earth and says:

"Have We not made the earth a (wide) expanse?"

The term /mihad/, as Raqib cites in his book, Mufradat, means 'a level and tidy place'. It is derived from the term /mahd/ 'a bed, cradle'. Some commentators and philologists have rendered it to mean 'bed', which is both soft and comfortable.

The use of this term, for the earth, is full of meaning because, on the one hand, most parts of the land are so smooth and level that man can build houses thereon and prepares gardens and farms thereabout.

On the other hand, all his necessities are found over the Earth or hidden on its insides in the form of raw

materials and valuable mines.

And, then again, the earth swallows up man's refuse, and the corpse of the dead are buried in it; (because of their dissolution and the absorption of their various microbes in the soil), to be vanished by the wonderful properties of dust.

Furthermore, the Earth, itself, rotates and then rotates around the Sun by which the days and nights and the four seasons of the year appear and these, too, play an important role in man's life.

In addition, the earth stores up, under its surface, much of the water that falls down from heaven and then, gradually, distributes it through springs and subterranean canals.

In short, everything useful for the comfort of the creatures living on the land, is supplied on this smooth bed; the Earth. The importance of this great blessing will be made clear only when some slight changes happen to it.

Then, in order that the importance of the mountains may not be forgotten, in contrast to the smoothness of the surface of the Earth, it says:

“And the mountains as pegs?”.

Mountains have deep and expanding formations joined together under the ground. They, armour-like, protect the Earth's surface against the inner pressure caused by the central molten lava, and the outer pressure resulting from the moon.

Also, mountains stand as lofty walls in the way of terrible storms, and as safe abodes for men to rest, therein. If they were not so, man's life would be quite uncomfortable under the constant strikes of violent storms.

In addition, mountains are the source of sweet water as well as different precious mines.

Adding, still, to all of the above, the mountains' peaks; like gears of a wheel, restrain, by friction, the thick air mass around the globe, as if dragging it along with themselves.

Some scientists say that if the surface of the Earth were a flat plain, then, when the globe turns, the air would slide over it and great storms would develop. This constant turmoil would make the surface too hot and uninhabitable.

After mentioning these two phenomenal blessings of Allah, it refers to the spiritual signs of Allah and says:

“And we created you in pairs”.

The term /azwaj/ is the plural form of the term /zauj/ which means 'mate, companion, a couple, and

gender (husband or wife)' from which not only is a man created and through which his generation survives, but also his spouse is counted as the reason for his spiritual tranquility, as Surah Rum No. 30 verse 21 says:

“And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts)...”.

In other words, the genders (masculine and feminine) are the complement of each other then, they become complete and this makes them a whole.

Since the term /azwaj/ also means: 'kinds, species, and classes', some commentators have rendered it to mean: 'the variations in man from the point of color, race, language, different spiritual levels and talents'; which are signs of Allah's greatness and the cause of perfection in societies.

Then, it refers to 'sleep', a grand divine gift to man, and says:

“And We made your sleep for repose,”.

The term /subat/ is derived from /sabt/ which originally means 'discontinue, rest' and then it was used for the 'suspension of work' for the purpose of resting, and that the term 'Saturday' in the Arabic vocabulary is called /yaum-us-sabt/, because it had been affected by the custom of the Jews who stopped working on Saturday.

Thus, the term /subat/ narrowly refers to the stopping of most of man's physical and mental activities when he sleeps. The very temporary stopping of activity causes refreshment and improvement for the tired organs, strengthening the soul and the body, renewing one's pleasure, removing any fatigue and uneasiness, and consequently, making man ready to start working again.

Though one-third of the human beings' lifetime is occupied by sleep and they have always been entangled with the question of 'dreams', still they wonder about the mysteries of sleep. Even yet, it is not exactly known why that at a special moment the mind fails to work well, the eyelids droop and all the limbs come to a peaceful state.

But, one thing is definitely known and that is: sleep is of great importance to one's health, and that is why psychiatrists try to make their patients' sleep normally and regularly, because it is impossible to cure them without it.

Those who do not sleep enough are pale, withered, nervous, and dull. On the contrary, those who sleep normally, when they rise they feel, in themselves, much pleasure and vitality.

After a tranquil sleep, study progresses very quickly and mental activity and physical endeavors are often more successful. These facts show the important functional role of sleep in man's life.

There are few tortures, for a person, that are as painful as compulsory sleeplessness. Experiments have shown that man's tolerance for lack of sleep is very little and soon he loses his health and becomes sick.

The aforementioned statements about the importance of sleep mean, of course, a balanced sleep, because, over sleeping, like gluttony, is one of the graceless behaviors which causes various sicknesses.

It is interesting that there is not a certain time limit for the natural length of sleep in all persons, but everyone should find the amount of sleep that one needs regarding his physical and mental activities and according to one's own experience.

And stranger still is when human beings are placed in a difficult situation where they must stay awake for a long time. Their perseverance for sleeplessness increases, temporarily, so that sometimes they decrease their sleep to one or two hours, but it has often happened that when the circumstances have changed, man, both spiritually and bodily, has demanded the recompense of that sleeplessness and has taken it back.

There are, of course, a few rare individuals who are able to go without continuous sleep, for months at a time. In contrast, there are some people who fall asleep even when they are walking on the street or when they are speaking with another person.

Surely, this state is very dangerous for them, especially if there would be no one to look after them. Obviously, these kinds of people are sick and sooner or later they will be faced with physical and spiritual difficulties.

In short, this wonderful characteristic, which appears in man and is called 'sleep', contains many mysteries and is perceived as a 'miracle'.

Although the above mentioned verse is about 'sleep', as a divine blessing, it seems that death, and wakefulness could, also, symbolize Resurrection, so the verse could be a hint to both of them.

Then, again, concerning sleep, it speaks about the blessing of 'night' and says:

“And We made the night as a covering”.

Following immediately after that, it says:

“And We made the day for(seeking) livelihood”.

Contrary to the dualists (because of being uninformed about the secrets of Creation, where they thought that the light of day is good and the darkness of night is evil and they believed in a separate god, for both of them, while thinking that the former originated from 'God' and the latter from Satan) we should give a bit more thought to it, then we will recognize that both of them are great blessings and are the

origin of other blessings, as well.

According to the above verses, the gloom of night is a cloth and covering over the body of the Earth and over all living creatures residing on it. Night, compulsorily, stops the exhausting activities of the life and makes the gloom of darkness, which is actually peace, calmness, and tranquility, dominate over everything in order to give the tired limbs a chance to recover and the gloomy spirit a chance to revive, since a good and quiet sleep is more likely to be obtained in the dark.

Besides this, when night comes, the sunshine disappears. If the sun were to shine continuously, all plants and animals would die from its heat, and the Earth could not be a dwelling place for them.

For the same reason, the Holy Qur'an has frequently emphasized on this matter.

Once, it says:

“Say, see you? If Allah were to make the Day perpetual over you to the Day of Judgment, what god is there other than Allah who can give you a Night in which you can rest?...”¹⁰.

And after that it adds:

“It is out of His Mercy that He has made for you Night and Day, that you may rest therein, and that you may seek of His Grace...”¹¹.

It is noteworthy that, in the Holy Qur'an, many great things have been made oath to, once, but 'night' has been made oath to seven times, which illustrates the importance of the darkness of night, since we know that an oath is made for important affairs.

Those who make the night bright with artificial light and sit up all night long and sleep during the daytime, instead, become rather afflicted and sickly.

People, in villages, who sleep soon, at night, and get up early in the morning, lead healthier lives.

Night has other useful advantages, too.

For instance, the period after midnight and before dawn is the best time to pray and supplicate to Allah and a very good occasion for self-perfection and devotional acts as Surah Zariyat, No. 51, verse 18, about the qualities of the Righteous, says:

“And in the hours (wee hours of the morning) of early dawn, they (were found) praying for forgiveness”.

The light of the day, too, is a unique blessing. It produces movement, such as, preparing man for effort and endeavor, and causing the plants and animals to grow under its rays.

Then, the above sentence which says:

“And We made the day for (seeking) livelihood”,

is truly so complete and meaningful that it does not need any further explanation.

In conclusion, the duration of the day and night and the precise regularity of their gradual changes, is one of the Signs of Allah in Creation. Moreover, it is counted as a natural calendar for the arrangement of man’s life timetable.

Then, from the Earth our attention is turned to the heavens and it says:

“And We built above you seven firmaments”.

The number ‘seven’, here, may be a multiplication figure which refers to the numerous celestial spheres, groups of systems, galaxies and the different firmaments, in the existing universe, which have a firm nature and are created massive and strong.

Or, it may be a figure of quantity in the sense that what we see from the galaxies belongs to the first sky, as Surah Saffat, No. 37, verse 6 states:

“We have indeed decked the lower heaven with beauty (in) the stars”,

and beyond that there are six more skies that are far from man’s reach.

It is also probable that the phrase

/sab`an shidadal ‘seven firmaments’

refers to the several layers of the atmosphere surrounding the Earth which, in spite of being apparently transparent, is so dense that it protects Earth from the continually falling meteorites.

As soon as one of them enters Earth’s atmosphere it becomes hot enough to burn, because of its violent contact with the protecting layers and then it turns to ash and comes down slowly over the land. If this layer of atmosphere did not exist, our cities and farms would be exposed to the invasion of these meteorites day and night.

Some scientists have calculated the tenseness of the atmosphere, surrounding the Earth, as being more than one hundred kilometers thick, and equal to a steel ceiling ten meters thick!

And this is only one of the commentaries for the phrase

/sab`an shidadal ‘seven firmaments’

After a short description about the creation of the heavens, attention is paid to the Sun, the great

world_illuminating gift, and says:

“And We made (therein) a blazing lamp”.

The term /wahhaj/ is based on the term /wahaj/ which means ‘light and heat’ issuing from fire. Therefore, the term with this sense ‘brightly burning’ used for the Sun, points to a couple of great blessings that are the origin of all material gifts of this world, that is ‘light’ and ‘heat’.

The light of the Sun not only lights man’s surrounding environment and the whole solar system, but also is very effective in the growth of living creatures.

Its heat, in addition to the effect that it directly has on the lives of human beings, animals and plants, is the main cause of the existence of clouds, winds, and rainfall necessary for the irrigation of dry lands

Because of its ultraviolet rays, the Sun is very useful in destroying microbes. If it were not, generations of living creatures would perish in a short time.

The Sun constantly illuminates the whole world, free of charge, with its warm, bright light and from an appropriate distance. It is neither so hot and burning, nor so cold and dim; and it offers itself to all of us.

If we compare the value of energy produced by the Sun, with the price of other sources of energy, it adds up to a very large sum. Let us assume that we grew an apple tree with artificial light and energy. Each apple would cost an extraordinary amount. But now, indeed, we receive this worldly productive light, freely, from /siraj_an_wahhaj/ ‘a blazing lamp’.

The Sun is the star nearest the Earth, whose mean distance from it is nearly 93,000,000 miles (about 150,000,000 kilometers); its diameter is about 865,000 miles; its mass is about 322,000 times, and its volume more than 1, 300,000 times, that of the Earth, and its density is about one-fourth that of the Earth.

Its outer heat is about 6,000° C (10,000 F). (The Kelvin temperature scale uses a degree of which the unit of measurement equals the centigrade degree, but it is numbered from absolute zero, which is -273.16° C). All of these are arranged, in such a way, so that if they were a little more or a little less than what they are, it would be impossible for life to exist on the Earth.

Following the description of the gifts of ‘light’ and ‘heat’, it speaks of another important matter, about life, which closely relates to the subject of sunshine and says:

“And We sent down from the clouds water in abundance”.

The term /mu`şarat/ is the plural form of the word /mu`şar/ which is based on the term /`aşr/ in the sense of ‘pressure’ and the term is used with the meaning of ‘clouds emitting or pressing out rain’, as if to press itself to pour water.

Some others have said that it means ‘the clouds that are ready to rain’, because the form of the word used in Arabic texts denotes to ‘readiness for something’.

Some commentators have said that /mu`şarat/ is not an adjective for the word ‘clouds’, it is an adjective for the word, ‘winds’ which press on the clouds from every side in order for it to rain.

The term /thajjaj/ is based on /thajj/ which means ‘to pour abundant water, continuously’ and also it is used, here, in the Arabic intensive form. So, on the whole, the meaning of the verse is that: ‘We sent down, continuously, abundant water from the clouds emitting rain’.

Rain, by itself, has some benefits and merits when it falls: it makes the air fresh, it washes the dirt away, it decreases the heat of the weather; it even moderates the cold weather, it decreases the cause of diseases and it brings man spirit and joy.

But the following verses point to three other great benefits of rain; it says:

“That we may bring forth thereby grain and plants”.

“And gardens of luxurious growth”.

Raqib cites in his book, Mufradat, that the term /alfaf/ denotes that the trees of this garden are so thick and entangled that they are joined to each other.

In fact, in those two previous verses, all of the foodstuff that grows on the land and which men and animals use have been pointed out because a great part of it is compiled of grains /habba/, the vegetables and roots /nabata/ and, thirdly, fruits /jannat/.

It is true that in these two verses only three outstanding benefits of rain are mentioned, but its benefits, undoubtedly, are not limited only these.

Seventy percent of man’s body weight is made up of water; the main origin of all living creatures, as the Qur’an says:

“... We made from water every living thing...”¹²

Therefore, water acts as the essential property in the life of living creatures, especially man.

Not only man’s body, but also many factories are paralyzed without water, and a lot of manufactures would fold, too, without the availability of water.

The beauty and the livelihood of nature is due to water, and the best commercial and economical trade routes, of the world, are waterways.

Explanation: The Relation Between These Verses and the Resurrection

Through the above eleven verses, the greatest divine gifts and the most basic necessities of man's life are pointed out, i.e. light, darkness, heat, water, land, and plants.

The statement about this precise regularity, on the one hand, is a clear proof of Allah's power over everything.

Therefore, there would be no doubt for anyone as to how Allah can bring the dead to life again; as the Qur'an says, very clearly, for an answer to the rejecters of the Hereafter:

"Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like thereof? Yes indeed! for He is the Creator Supreme, of skill and knowledge (infinite)!"¹³

On the other hand, this great and lofty establishment certainly has a definite goal, which undoubtedly cannot be construed as the mere 'life of this world' or being satisfied by simply eating, drinking, and sleeping, but Allah's knowledge requires an aim higher than this goal and, in another sense, the first life is an admonishment for the Next Life, an' a stopover on man's long journey, as Surah Mo'minun, No. 23, verse 115 verifies:

"Did you then think that We had created you in jest that you would not be brought back to Us (for account)?"

And, too, sleeping and wakefulness can be seen as a kind of death and rebirth, and the dry and dead lands that are revived by falling rains again and again, every year, are before our very eyes the incidents that refer to the Resurrection.

They illustrate the Hereafter and the life after death. Surah Fatir, No. 35 verse 9 attests to this idea.

It, after pointing to the revival of the dead lands by rain, says:

"...even so (will be) the Resurrection!"

Surah Nabaa, Verses 17-20

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا

يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَتَأْتُونَ أَفْوَاجًا

وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا

وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا

17. ***“Verily the Day of Sorting out is (a day) appointed”.***

18. ***“The Day when the Trumpet shall be blown and you shall come forth in groups”.***

19. ***“And the heaven shall be opened and become (wide as) gates,”***

20. ***“And the mountains shall be set in motion as if they were a mirage”.***

Finally, the Promised Day Will Come

There were some various evidences for Resurrection referred to in the previous verses.

Here, as a consequence, the first verse says:

“Verily the Day of Sorting out is (a day) appointed,”

The phrase

/yaum-al-fasl/ ‘the Day of Sorting out’

is a very meaningful one which speaks of isolations on that Great Day: The separation of Good from Evil, the separation of the believing good-doers from disbelieving sinners, the isolation of parents from child, and brothers from each other.

The term /miqat/ is based on the term /waqt/ ‘time’ which means ‘an appointed time’. The certain places, where the pilgrims to Kaaba put on

their pilgrimage dress, are called /miqat/, because they gather there at an appointed time.

Then, some of the specialties and the events of that Great Day are detailed:

“The Day when the Trumpet shall be blown and you shall come forth in groups”.

It is well understood, from the verses of the Holy Qur’an, that two great events will happen

“...when the Trumpet shall be blown”

In the first incident, the order of the universe becomes disturbed and all the people, over the earth, and those who are in the heavens will die. In the second case the world will be renewed, the dead will return to life and the Resurrection will occur.

The term /nafx/ means 'blow' and the term /şur/ means 'trumpet' which is usually sounded for stopping or starting the caravans or troops, and the people, in them, understand this from its two different sounds whether they should stop or start.

This is a delicate point referring to those two great events. And what is said in the above verse, is a hint to the 'second blast', when 'the dead are revived and the Resurrection occurs'.

This verse says that on that Day,

"...you shall come forth in groups",

while Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 95 says:

"And every one of them will come to Him singly on the Day of Judgment"

and, also, Surah Asra, No. 17, verse 71 says:

"One day We shall call together all human beings with their (respective) Imams..."

To collect these senses together, we see that 'people being in groups' is not in contrast with

'every group enters the Resurrection with its respective Imam'.

And 'every one of them will coming singly' is stated for the reason that there are several stopovers in the Hereafter.

People may come in groups with their respective leaders; leading or misleading, at the first halting places, but when they stand before the throne of Justice, they stand individually, or as Surah Qaf, No. 50, verse 21 says:

"And there will come forth every soul: with each will be an (angel) to drive and an (angel) to bear witness"

It is also probable that they come one by one, because they are separated from their friends, partners and supporters. Since, in the Hereafter, everyone is alone with one's own deeds.

"And the heaven shall be opened and becomes (wide as) gates"

What are the meanings of 'be opened' and 'gates'?

Some commentators have said that it means that the doors of the 'unseen world' will be opened to the 'intuition world' where the curtains will be removed, thus making the world of angels open to the world of man.¹⁴

Some others think that this verse points to what is said in other verses of the Holy Qur'an, such as in

Surah Inshiqaq, No. 84 verse 1 which says:

“When the Sky is rent asunder”,

and on another occasion in relation to the same sense, but using another word it says:

“When The Sky is cleft asunder”¹⁵.

In fact, there will appear so many clefts in the celestial spheres that it will seem as if they have changed into open gates.

There is another probability that man, in the present conditions of this world, cannot venture through the heavens, and if it were possible for him to, it would be strictly limited, as if, the present circumstances had shut the gates of the skies to him. But, in the Hereafter, man will become free from the earthly world and the gate—ways to the heavens will be opened to him, and then the necessary conditions will become available.

In other words, on that Day, the skies will be ‘cleft asunder’ and after that new skies and earth will be substituted, as Surah Ibrahim, No. 14, verse 48 says:

“One day the Earth will be changed (into) a different Earth and so will be the heavens...”

On this occasion the gates of the skies are opened for the earthly men to go through and follow their ways: the righteous go into Heaven whose doors will be opened to them:

“...until behold, they arrive there; its gates will be opened; and its keepers will say: Peace be upon you...”¹⁶

It is in the same place that angels come to them from every door and congratulate them:

“...and angels shall enter unto them from every gate (with the salutation)”¹⁷.

And the doors of Hell will be opened to the Unbelievers:

“The Unbelievers will be led to Hell in crowds: until when they arrive there, its gates will be opened...”¹⁸

And, thus, man arrives in a place where the width is as wide as the phenomenal earth and heavens:

“...and for a garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth...”¹⁹.

And finally, the next verse, explaining the events of the Hereafter, illustrates the status of the mountains and says:

“And the mountains shall vanish as if they were a mirage”.

As it is understood from all the different verses of the Qur'an about

'the end of the mountains in the Hereafter',

that mountains will go through stages: at first they will move:

"And the mountains are in motion"²⁰.

Then they will be taken off and crushed:

"...and the earth and mountains are lifted up and crushed with a single blow"²¹.

And after that they will be as a poured heap of sand:

"...and the mountains become a slipping heap of sand"²².

Then, they will change like fibers of teased or carded wool which can be moved about by the winds:

"And the mountains will be like carded wool"²³.

They will turn to dust, then, and scatter about:

"And the mountains shall be crumbled to atoms",

"Becoming dust scattered abroad"²⁴.

And finally, as the current verse denotes, there will remain only a trace of them as a mirage.

Thus, mountains will disappear throughout the earth at last, and the land will be level:

"They ask you concerning the Mountains: say, My Lord will uproot them and scatter them as dust";

"He will leave them as plains smooth and level"²⁵.

The term /sarab/ is based on the term /sarab/ and means: 'a mirage', a deceitful appearance as of water in the desert. Then anything that has an appearance, but is nothing, indeed, is called 'mirage'.

In fact, the mountains will turn into dust and will be scattered in the air in a state like a mirage. When high solid mountains will have a destiny like this, the state of other changes in the world and, also, the state of people of great authority, in this life, will be obvious there; a mere mirage.

The following question may arise: Do these events happen with the 'first blast', which is the end of this world, or with the 'second blast', which is the beginning of the Resurrection?

Since the verse

"The Day when the trumpet shall be blown and you shall come forth in groups"

certainly relates to the 'first blast', when people survive and arrive at the Hereafter in groups, this verse must be concerned with the same blast, too, but its beginning (the movement of the mountains) may occur with the 'first blast' and its end (changing as a mirage) with the 'second blast'

There is another probability that all the stages of the mountains relate to the first blast, however, since the range of these two blasts are almost close to each other, they are mentioned together, as in some other verses of the Qur'an. The events of the first blast are mentioned with the events of the second blast (as in Surahs Takwir and Infitar).

It is noteworthy that in the former verses mountains were referred to as 'pegs' and the earth as a 'cradle'; but in these verses it is said that on the Day when the order of the destruction of this world will be issued, that cradle will be disturbed and those great pegs will be leveled and, hence, their tangible matter will become decomposed and shattered.

Surah Naba, Verses 21-30

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا

لِلطَّاغِينَ مَابًا

لَابِثِينَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا

لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا

إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا

جَزَاءً وَفَاتًا

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا

وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا

وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ كِتَابًا

فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا عَذَابًا

21. *“Surely Hell lies in ambush”.*
22. *“For the transgressors a destination”.*
23. *“To abide therein for ages”.*
24. *“Nothing cool shall they taste therein, nor any drink”.*
25. *“Except a boiling fluid and pus”.*
26. *“A fitting recompense (for their evil)”.*
27. *“Surely they used not to look forward to the reckoning (for their deeds)”.*
28. *“And they rejected Our Signs with strong denial”.*
29. *“And everything have We recorded in a book”.*
30. *“So taste you (the fruit of your deeds); for no increase shall We grant you, but in punishment”.*

Hell is a Great Ambush!

After presenting some of the evidences of Resurrection and a part of its incidents, attention is paid to the destiny of the Unbelievers and says:

“Surely Hell lies in ambush”,

“For the transgressors a destination”.

“To abide therein for ages”.

The term /mirşad/ is a place_noun which means ‘a place of observation, or of ambush’. Raqib cites in his book Mufradat: ‘/marşad/ and /mirşad/ both mean the same thing with a slight difference; that /mirşad/ is called a place that is made especially for an ambush’.

Some commentators have said that the term is in the Arabic intensive form, with the same sense as that

of a person who lies in ambush, continuously. Of course, the first meaning is both more common and more appropriate.

The question of

'Who is lying in wait, in Hell, for the transgressors?'

has been answered with

'the angels of chastisement',

because according to Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 71 the whole of mankind, good or evil, will pass by the fire of Hell or over it, thus:

"Not one of you but will pass over it: this is with thy Lord, a Decree which must be accomplished".

In this companion passage, the angels of chastisement are lying in wait to catch the transgressors.

If we comment on the term with the meaning of its Arabic intensive form, Hell is lying in wait and each of the transgressors, who passes by, will be absorbed inside, and in this passage it can be seen that none of them will be safe from fire since, either the angels of chastisement or the intensive absorption of Hell, will capture them.

The term /ma'ab/ means: 'a place of return', and sometimes means: 'residence'. It is used, here, with the latter meaning.

The term /aḥqab/ is the plural form of /huqb/ with the sense of 'a long space of time'. The 'space' has been commented on, differently, as to being 'forty', 'seventy' or 'eighty' years. In any case, this sense denotes that the transgressors will remain in Hell for a long time, but it will end at last. This contrasts with the verses that denote the eternity of chastisement for them.

The commentators have followed different tracks in commenting on this, for example:

Among the consensus of the commentators, a well-known commentary says that the term /aḥqab/, in this text, means that 'some long spaces of time will pass one after another without having an end; with each one that passes, another substitutes'.

In some traditions, it is said that this verse is about those evildoers who will finally be free from the fire, not about those who will be in Hell forever.²⁶

Then, to point to a small part of the great punishments in Hell, it says:

"Nothing cool shall they taste therein, nor any drink".

“Except a boiling fluid, and pus”.

And also, of course, the thick hot smoke mentioned in Surah Waqiah No. 56, verse 43 thus:

“And in the shades of Black Smoke”.

The term /ḥamim/ means ‘a boiling water’ and the term /qassaḡ/ means ‘pus’ flowing from a wound or sore, and some have commented on it to mean ‘bad-smelling fluids’.

The Righteous, in contrast with them, drink the wholesome pure drinks from the heavenly springs gifted by Allah:

“...and their Lord will give them to drink a Drink, Pure and Holy”²⁷.

And there are some drinks for them, in nice heavenly containers, which are sealed with musk:

“Whose seal is musk...”²⁸.

What a contrast between the righteous and evildoers!

Since these grave and dreadful punishments may seem surprising to some, in addition to this, it says:

“A fitting recompense (for their evil)”.

And why not? Those who were cruel to the oppressed, in the world, and had no mercy on anyone; tyrannical branding all the hearts and spirits so that it seemed that they burnt their victims, violently, deserve to suffer painful punishments like that and their drinks should, also, be so.

Basically, as we have mentioned repeatedly, it is understood from the verses, of the Qur’an, that at least many of the chastisements in the Hereafter are the incarnation of men’s deeds in this world.

For instance, Surah Tahrim No. 66, verse 7 says:

“O you Unbelievers! Make no excuses this Day! You are being but requited for all that you did!”

(And now you see them in front of you).

To explain the cause of these punishments, it says:

“Surely they used not to look forward to the Reckoning (for their deeds)”.

And the same carelessness paid to the Reckoning and the Day of Judgment was the cause of their rebellion, tyranny, and cruelty, which resulted in this dreadful destiny for them.

In fact, the lack of Faith, about the Reckoning, is a certain cause of rebellion; that which is the cause of those grave chastisements.

The term /layarjun/ is derived from /raja‘/ which means both ‘hope’ and lack of fear and terror’. In principle, when one hopes and expects a penalty, naturally he fears, and if he does not expect it, he does not dread it, and these two correlate with each other. Then, those who do not have hope in the Reckoning do not fear, either.

The term /inna/ shows emphasis; the term /kanu/ is a sign for the past continuous tense; the term /hisaba/ which has been used in an indefinite form, here, after the negative sign of /la/, means ‘reckoning’ and in general, all point to the fact that they, the transgressors, never expected any Reckoning or the Record, at all.

Or, in other words, they had forgotten about the Day of Judgment and they left no room for it in their lives. It is natural that such persons who become the doers of any great evil and sin will finally be involved in these painful punishments.

“And they rejected Our Signs with strong denial”.

Their low desires had become so strong in them that they denied all the Signs of Allah in order to continue going astray and accomplish their unlawful wishes.

It is obvious that these verses carry some broad meanings, so that they include the verses consisting of the unity of Allah, prophecy, divine legislation, creation, the prophets miracles, precepts, and traditions. And, regarding the denial of the extensive Divine Signs and evidences, that have covered the world of creation and divine legislation, we should accept the punishment for these people as ‘a fitting recompense’ and just penalty.

Then, as a warning to these rebels and, also, for the emphasis on the balance of ‘sin’ and ‘penalty’, and the authority of a fitting recompense (for their evil), it says:

“And everything have We recorded in a book”.

We accept this warning so that we, therefore, would not imagine that something of our deeds will be left unrecorded and that we will not be punished for it, and also, that we would never consider the painful punishments as unjust.

Many of the verses, of the Qur’an, certify the fact that all of man’s deeds, irrespective of small or great, apparent or hidden, and even intentions and beliefs, are recorded.

Once it says:

“All that they do is noted in (their) Books (of Deeds): ‘Every matter, small and great, is on record’”²⁹.

Another time it says:

“... Verily, Our messengers record all the plots that you make!”³⁰

In addition, it says:

“...and We record that which they send before and that which they leave behind...”³¹

And then, when the records of the evildoers will be handed to them, they will cry saying:

“Ah! Woe to us! What a book is this! It leaves out nothing small or great, hut takes account thereof!”³².

Undoubtedly, the person who believes in this fact with all his heart, will be very careful in his deeds and the very belief creates a lofty wall between him and sin and is counted as one of the important factors, effective in good training.

In the last verse, of this portion under discussion, the style of speaking is changed from the third person to the second person, addressing them directly and in a threatening tone:

“So taste you (the fruit of your deeds); for no increase shall We grant you, but in punishment”.

Whatever you cry, whenever you say

‘Ah woe to us’,

or ask to return to the world to do good instead of evil; all are in vain and you gain nothing, but your punishment.

This is the penalty of those who, when they were faced with the Prophets’ kind invitation to faith and piety, used to say:

“It is the same to us whether you admonish us or be not among (our) admonishers!”³³.

And again, this is the penalty of those who, when the messages of Allah, are recited get nothing from it:

“...but it only increases their flight (from the Truth)!”³⁴.

And finally, this is the penalty of those who avoided no sin and were fond of no act of charity.

It is narrated that the Prophet (S) said:

“This verse is the most intensive one in the Qur’an about those who deserve Hell”.³⁵

Why shouldn’t it be so!? When the Merciful and Beneficent Allah addresses them with wrath and says:

“...for no increase shall We grant you, but in punishment”,

to make them completely hopeless.

Surah Nabaa, Verses 31-37

إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا

حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا

وَكَوَاعِبَ أَتْرَابًا

وَكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا كِذَابًا

جَزَاءً مِنْ رَبِّكَ عَطَاءً حِسَابًا

رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمَنُ ۚ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا

31. "Surely for the Righteous there is a victory,"

32. "Gardens enclosed and vineyards"

33. "And comely maidens, with the freshness of youth, equals in age".

34. "And a cup overflowing".

35. "No Vanity shall they hear therein, nor Untruth,"

36. "A reward from your Lord, an award sufficing,"

37. "Lord of the heavens and the earth and all between the two, the All-merciful, with Whom none

shall have power to argue.

Some Great Rewards for the Righteous

The former verses were about the destiny of the rebels and about some of their painful punishments and the causes of their rebellion. The following verses are about the opposite group; the true believers, the Righteous, and some of their rewards in the Hereafter: compare them with each other so that the facts can be understood more clearly. This is the style, in the Qur'an, which sets the opponents facing each other and makes their state clear by showing the contrasts in their positions.

At first, it says:

“Surely for the Righteous there is a victory”.

The term /mafaz/ is a place-noun which is derived from /fauz/ in the sense of ‘gaining goodness safely’ and also means: ‘salvation and victory’ which is necessary for gaining the goodness safely’. Regarding the term /mafaz/, which is used in an indefinite form in this text, it means ‘gaining a very great victory and salvation’.

Then, describing this felicity and salvation, it says:

“Gardens enclosed and vineyards”.

The term /ʿadaʿiq/ is the plural form of /ʿadiqah/ which is a garden planted with trees surrounded by a wall. Raqib cites in his book, Mufradat, that /ʿadiqah/ originally means: ‘a piece of land containing water for irrigation’, like /ʿadaqah/, ‘the eye-socket’, where water exists, continuously, for lubricating the eye.

It is interesting to note that, among all the fruits, grapes are emphasized on, here, because of their extra advantages in comparison with the other fruits.

Since, according to statements of the scientists of nutrition, grapes are not only a complete food, from the point of their nutritive value, but are, also, counted as an article of foodstuff closely similar in comparison to mothers’ milk. They produce calories, in the body, twice as much as meat does. Grapes have so many useful properties that they could be called ‘a natural pharmacy’.

Further to this, they possess the characteristic of being antitoxins; useful in blood purification. They work as a remedy for rheumatism and gout, and are a factor in controlling the level of nitrogen in the blood.

In addition to these, grapes strengthen the nerves, bring happiness, and because of containing different kinds of vitamins, make man able-bodied and powerful.

These are only a few of the qualities of grapes.

And hence, it has been related that the Prophet (S) has said:

“Grapes are your best fruit”...

Then, referring to another gift, in Heaven, for the Righteous, it says:

“And comely maidens, with the freshness of youth, equals in age”.

The term /kawa'ib/ is the plural form of /ka'ib/ which means 'a damsel entering puberty' which illustrates their prime youth. And the term /atrab/ is the plural form of /tirb/ which means 'persons of the same age' which is used mostly for the feminine gender. Some others have said that the term is originally based on /tara'ib/ meaning: 'ribs of the chest' which are very similar to each other.

It is probable that the maidens of Heaven, themselves, are 'equals in age' or they are 'equals in age' with the wives of the Righteous, for only by this standard can complete sympathy and understanding be figured. However, the first commentary seems more appropriate.

Then, the fourth gift, allocated to the Righteous, is mentioned:

“And a cup overflowing”.

It is not a drink like the worldly wine; which is filthy and makes man drunk unconscious and descends him lower than the lowly animals, but it is a drink that increases the wisdom and refreshes the spirit and soul.

The term /ka's/ means 'a cup full of drink', and it sometimes means the container, itself.

The term /dihaq/ is rendered as 'overflowing' by many commentators and philologists, but in 'Lisan-ul-Arab' by Ibn-i-manzur, two more meanings are cited for it: 'successive(ly), repeated(ly)' and 'limpid, clear'.

Therefore, if we consider all these senses, the verse means: 'in Heaven, overflowing cups of pure, limpid drink are brought, repeatedly, for the Righteous'.

In speaking about 'cup' and 'drink' reference is made to the disgusting association of the two in this world, while the heavenly drink is just the opposite to that devilish worldly wine.

Subsequently, the next verse says:

“No Vanity shall they hear there, nor Untruth”.

Two probabilities are suggested regarding the pronoun in /fiha/ and as to which noun it refers to. The first says it refers to 'Heaven' and the second, that it refers to 'cup'.

According to the first commentary the verse means that: 'they hear no foolishness or falsehood in

Heaven', as was said in Surah Qashiya, No. 88, verse 10–11:

***“In a Garden on high”,
“Where they shall hear no (word) of vanity”.***

And, according to the second commentary the verse means: there will not appear any deceit or worthlessness as a result of having that cup of drink as was said in Surah Tur, No. 52, verse 23:

“They shall there exchange, one with another, a (loving) cup free of frivolity, free of all taint of ill”.

In any case, one of the great spiritual bounties for the Righteous, in Heaven, is that they hear no vanity, no falsehood, no slander, no rejection of the truth, no justification of the unjust, and no worthless talk such as are usually associated with this earthly world which is indulged in by some corrupted people and causes pain to the hearts of the Righteous.

Verily, how nice and comfortable the environment where this kind of unbecoming speech is not found therein, and according to Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 62:

“They win not there hear any vain discourse, but only salutations of Peace:...”.

In counting the bounties in Heaven, for the Righteous, a spiritual gift is mentioned, at the end, which excels the others and says:

“A reward from your Lord, an award sufficing”.

What blessing and reward can be better and has a higher standard than that of a powerless servant, favored with the grace and love of his Great, Gracious Lord. Allah rewards him, honors him, and gives him a liberal and bountiful gift. This is the true Salvation, which is so delightful for the Righteous that no other blessing can match it.

The term /rabb/ ‘Lord’ followed by /ka/, the second person singular pronoun (addressee), together with the term /’ata’/ ‘an award’ are all signs of His superior favor which are involved in these rewards.

The term /hisaba/, according to many commentators, means ‘sufficient’, like /hasbi/ ‘enough’.

A tradition from Hazrat Ali (as) says that in the Hereafter Allah takes careful count of each good deed, of the Believers, and wards them, for every good deed, ten to seven hundred times more, as he has cited from the Qur’an:

“A reward from your Lord, an awardsufficing.”³⁶

It is understood from this narration that though Allah’s rewards are paid out generously or bountifully as awards, they are based on the account of good deeds, i.e. His awards are in proportion with men’s good deeds. Hence, the term /hisaba/, in the above verse, can be commented on by its common meaning:

‘account’. This meaning and the previous meaning, then, can be used interchangeably.

Then, in the last verse of this part, it says:

“Lord of the heavens and the earth and all between the two, the All-merciful...”

Truly, the One Who is the owner of the great universe, and is its Creator, too, Whose Grace is seen everywhere and covers everyone, does, indeed, award the Righteous, abundantly, in the Hereafter.

This verse, without doubt, points to the fact that if Allah promises the Righteous such rewards, then a small part of it; in the form of His general Grace, has been shown to those in the heavens as well as to those on the earth in this world.

And at the end of the verse, it says:

“...with Whom none shall have power to argue”.

The pronoun of the term

Ilayamlikunl, ‘none shall have’,

may refer to all creatures in the heavens and on the earth, or to all the Righteous and the rebels gathered in the Hereafter for the Reckoning and recompense. Whichever it may be, it points to this fact, that on that Day no one has the right to protest against the Record, because it is 50 precise and the recompense so just that no one can say anything.

Besides, no one has the right to offer intercession, but by Allah’s leave:

“...Who is there con intercede in His presence except as He permitteth?...”³⁷

Explanation: The Rewards of the Righteous and the Recompense of the Rebels

There is an interesting comparison between the rewards of the Righteous, in these verses, and the chastisement of the disbelieving rebels in the former verses.

The contrast is between

Imafazl ‘a place of salvation’

for the Righteous and

Imersadl ‘a place of ambush’.

The Upright will have and enjoy

‘gardens enclosed, and vineyards’,

but the transgressors will have fire

'to abide therein for ages'

The Righteous are awarded

'pure drinks'

in

'cups overflowing',

but the evildoers are recompensed

'a boiling fluid and pus'.

The Righteous, are

'awarded sufficingly'

by Allah; the All-merciful, but the rejecters receive

'a fitting recompense'

from Him; the Just.

The rewards are increased for the Righteous, but there is an increase of punishment for the rebels.

In short, these two groups are in contrast with each other in every respect, because they are different from the point of belief and action.

The Pure Drinks in Heaven

In different verses of the Holy Qur'an, the heavenly drinks are well-defined and specified. Studying these verses shows that those who drink these drinks attain such an ecstasy that no human language can describe it.

In Surah al-Insan, No. 76, verse 21 the drink is characterized as 'pure drink':

"And their Lord will give to them to drink of a Drink, Pure and Holy".

On some other occasions it is emphasized that this clear white drink is a drink that brings no headiness nor intoxication:

***"Round will be passed to them a Cup from a clear-flowing fountain",
"Crystal-white, of a taste delicious to those who drink (thereof)",***

“Free from headiness; nor will they suffer intoxication therefrom”³⁸.

And in another Surah it says:

“Verily, the Righteous drink of a cup; the mixture of which is (like) camphor”³⁹.

Also, it says:

“And they will be given to drink there of a cup (of pure drink) mixed with Zanjabeel (ginger)”⁴⁰.

In the current verse, it says:

“And a cup overflowing”.

But most important is that it is Allah Who offers and serves them the drinks with His Favor and Grace:

“...and their Lord will give to them to drink...”⁴¹.

Supplication

O Lord! We pray that You will give us the pure drink, also.

Surah Nabaa, Verses 38–40

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا ۗ لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أُنزِلَ لَهُ الرِّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ
صَوَابًا

ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ ۗ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَا بَأ

إِنَّا أَنْذَرْنَاكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَا لَيْتَنِي
كُنْتُ تُرَابًا

38. “The Day on which the Spirit and the angels shall stand arrayed, they shall speak not except whom the All-merciful gives leave, and (who) speak what is right”.

39. “That Day is certain; whoever then desires may take refuge with his Lord”.

40. “Surely We have warned you of a Punishment near, the Day when man shall see what his two

hands have sent forth and the Unbeliever shall say: O! would that I were dust”.

The Unbeliever shall say:

“O! would that I were dust”.

A noticeable part of the chastisement for the transgressors and the reward for the Righteous, on Dooms Day, were mentioned in the previous verses.

Verses 38 to 40 introduce ‘That Great Day’, and expound on some of its events, by saying:

“The Day on which the Spirit and the angels shall stand arrayed, they shall speak not except whom the All-merciful gives leave, and (who) speaks what is right”.

Undoubtedly, the act of the Spirit and the angels on that Day; ‘to stand arrayed and speak not except those whom the All-merciful gives Leave’, is only because of their obedience to Him. In this world, too, they fulfill His Will and serve His commands. Of course, their fulfillment, in that world, will be more apparent, more clear and more extensive.

What does

‘the Spirit’

mean, here? Commentators have yielded several interpretations for it, some of which extend to eight probabilities. The following meanings are the most important ones:⁴²

1.

‘The Spirit’

is a creature other than the angels and greater than all of them.

2.

‘The Spirit’

is the angel Gabriel who is the greatest angel because he is charged, especially, with bringing Messages from Allah to the human Apostles.

3.

‘The Spirit’

may be the souls of men, collectively, that rise with the angels.

4.

'The Spirit'

is an angel of the highest standard, higher than all angels, and greater than Gabriel. It is the very angel who was with all prophets and the sinless Imams (as) and remains so.

It is noteworthy that, in the Qur'an, 'the Spirit' is sometimes simply mentioned alone and without any definition.

In this case, it is often equivalent to the angels, as in this verse:

"The angels and the Spirit ascend unto Him..."⁴³

Or;

"The angels and the Spirit descend therein by their Lord's leave for every affair."⁴⁴

In these two verses,

'the Spirit'

is mentioned after

'the angels',

and in the current verse it is mentioned before "the angels", therefore, it may indicate the greatness of a distinguished one.

But in many verses of the Qur'an 'the Spirit' is mentioned with something else or with a specification.

For example,

/ruh-ul-qudus/ 'Holy Spirit'

in Surah Nahl, No. 16, verse 102 says:

"Say, The Holy Spirit has brought the revelation from thy Lord in Truth..."

or

/ruh-ul-amin/ 'the Spirit of Faith and Truth'

in Surah Shuaraa, No. 26, verse 193 says:

"With it came down the Spirit of Faith and Truth".

In some verses Allah designates the word

'Spirit'

for Himself as in the following:

"...and breathed into him of My spirit..."⁴⁵

And in another verse it says:

"...Then We sent to her Our spirit..."⁴⁶.

It seems that the term

'Spirit'

which is stated differently in these verses, may have different meanings whose explanations are stated, appropriate, under each of them in the commentary.

But, among these various commentaries, what seems the most fitting, to the current verse, is that the Spirit here, refers to one of the great angels of Allah that, according to some narration's, is even higher than Gabriel, as a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"He is an angel greater than Gabriel and Michael".⁴⁷

And, it is cited in Ali-ibn-Ibrahim's commentary that:

"The Spirit"

is an angel, greater than Gabriel and Michael, and he was with the Prophet (S) as wells as with the Imams".⁴⁸

Although in some narration's quoting Ahlul Bayt, it is cited that the Prophet (S) has said: ·

The Spirit is an army from Allah's armies, who are not angels and have a head, hands and feet

"and, then, he (S) recited:

'The Day on which the Spirit and the angels shall stand arrayed',

and said:

'These are an army and those are of another army.'⁴⁹

In any case, as it was pointed out earlier, the great creature of Allah's, whether it be among the angels or is another kind of creature, will be with the angels in the Hereafter; all of them ready to obey Allah's command.

In the Hereafter, everyone is so terrified that no one is able to say a word or offer intercession except by Allah's leave. They praise Him, or intercede, as He permits, only for those who are deserving.

It is cited, in a narration, that once Imam Sadiq (as) was asked about this verse and he said:

"By Allah, on the Day of Judgment, we will be given leave for them and we will speak".

The narrator asked him (as) what he would say on that Day, and he answered:

*"We praise our Lord, and send blessings on our Prophet, and intercede for our followers and our Lord does not refuse us".*⁵⁰

It is understood from this narration that on the Day of Judgment the Prophets and the sinless Imams will be in the row of angels and

'the Spirit'

who will be given leave to speak will praise Allah and intercede.

The term

/sawab/ 'what is right'

an evidence that angels, the Spirit, prophets, and Saints will intercede for those who are deserving and their intercession will not be undue.

Then, it points to that Great Day which is the Day of resurrection for both men and angels, as well as The Day of Judgment for the transgressors, where they will be given their recompense, and the Righteous will be rewarded, and it says:

"That Day is certain".

The term /ṣaqq/ means: 'a thing that surely happens' and 'that which is right and proper, just and true'. This meaning is completely right for the Dooms Day, where the rights of everyone will be given to him; the oppressed's rights will be taken from the oppressors, the 'rights' and 'the hidden secrets' will be manifested, and hence, it will be 'right' in all respects.

Since recognition of this fact can be the most effective motive for men to move towards the path of Allah and obeying him, then immediately after the previous sentence, in this verse, it says:

"...whoever then desires may take refuge with his Lord".

That is, all the means of this divine motion are prepared: right and wrong have been introduced; prophets have said enough about the Truth and Divine Reality; wisdom, which is an inner apostle, has clearly defined the end of the transgressors and the Righteous, and the court, the Judge, and the

Judgment have been known. The only remaining thing is man's firm decision that should be made with free-will; which Allah has bestowed on him, to go forth on the right path.

The term /ma' ab/ means 'a place of return' and it is also cited with the sense of 'road' and 'way'.

Then, as an emphasis on the sinners' punishment, and as a warning to those who think that the Great Day is very far from them or it is on credit, stating that it is very near it says:

"Surely We have warned you of a punishment near..."

The life of this world, however long it may be, is as a mere moment in comparison with the life of the Next World. According to an Arab proverb: 'Everything that is certain to come, is near'.

Then, for the same reason, Allah, in Surah Maarij, No. 70, verses 5-7 tells His prophet:

"Therefore do thou hold patience, a patience of beautiful contentment)"

"They see the (Day) indeed as afar-off (event): 'But We see it (quite) near'"

Amir-al-Momineen Ali (as), also in this regard, says:

*"Whatever is certain to come, is near".*⁵¹

It is near because the main source of men's divine chastisement is their own deeds, which are always with them as we see from Surah Ankabut, No. 29, verse 54:

"...and most surely hell encompasses the unbelievers"

Since on that Day a great number of people, being full of grief and sorrow, will be regretful of their actions, which, then, of course, will, be quite useless.

Following that warning, it says:

"...the Day when man shall see what his two hands have sent forth, and the Unbeliever shall say: O! would that I were dust"

Some commentators have considered the term /yanqur/, in the same sense of /yantaqir/, that is: 'on that Day, men will wait for the recompense of their deeds'.

And some others have considered it to mean: 'looking at the Record and observing the good and evil actions'.

And it has also been construed as meaning: 'to see the reward and the penalty of the deeds'

These commentaries originate from the idea that they have paid little attention to the existence of the embodiment of man's deed, on that Day, otherwise, the meaning of the verse is clear and no

interpretation would be needed.

From the different verses of the Qur'an and Islamic narration's, it is understood that on that Day the deeds of man will be personified in some appropriate forms and will appear in front of him.

In fact, he will truly see his own deeds, himself, and when he observes his evil actions he will be both sorry and regretful, and when he observes his good actions he will be happy and delighted. As a matter of fact, one of the best rewards for the Righteous, and one of the worst punishments for the evildoers is the very personification and incarnation of their deeds, which will follow them everywhere.

Surah Kahf, No. 18, verse 49 says:

"...they will find all that they did, placed before them..."

And Surah Zilzal, No. 99, verses 7-8 say:

"So, whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall behold it"

"And whoever has done an atom's weight of evil shall behold it"

So, these are some of the wonders of the Hereafter that the deeds of man will be personified and the powers will be changed into a tangible substance and become a living thing.

The sentence

/Imaqaddamat yadahul 'what his two hands have sent forth',

is so stated because, man usually does most of his actions with his hands, but, surely they are not limited only to those actions which are performed by the hands. The actions which are done by the tongue, eyes, and ears are included, too.

Verse 40, of this Surah, has warned us about the matter before we reach that Day and it says:

"...And let every soul look at what (provision) he has sent forth for the morrow."

When the unbelievers see the deeds of their lifetime in front of them, they will be so sorry that they will say:

'O! would that I were dust',

and from it would never have been created as a human being.

Of course, they know that dust is better than themselves, because dust is not only harmless but also useful for all: it takes a single grain and makes a return of sometimes more than one hundred plants, instead. But humans have been the source of corruption in different forms.

In some verses of the Qur'an it is said that when the Unbelievers and the sinners see the Hereafter and the throne of Divine Judgment, therein, and the recompense of their deeds, they will react differently, all of which relates to the intensive grief they have.

Sometimes, they say:

“Ah! woe is me! in that I neglected (my duty) towards Allah...”

And sometimes they say:

“Now then send us back (to the world): we will work righteousness: for we do indeed (now) believe”.

And further still they say:

“Would that I were dust.”,

which was discussed in the current Surah.

The Clear Solution For Fatalism and Free-will

This controversy is one of the oldest cases which has been discussed among the scholars, some of whom believed in man's free-will and some in another philosophy; each have stated some reasons to prove their ideas.

It is interesting to note that the fatalists and those adherents to the idea of free-will' have both approved the principle of free-will, in practice, and have accepted it. In other words, their scientific conflicts are bound only to the circle of their discussions and not in practice. This clearly shows that the principle of free-will exists in the nature of all men, and by refusing the various temptations, everyone agrees with the principle of free-will.

One of the most clear evidences to free-will is the common conscience or the general nature of men that appears in man's life in different forms. Since, if man thought that deeds were obligations and did not believe in free-will, then why:

1. Do they sometimes repent of their behavior, for what they have done, or the actions they have not done, and decide to take benefit from their former experiences in their future conduct?
2. Condemn the evildoers. If they are obliged why are they scorned?
3. Are the good doers praised?
- 4 Do people try to train their children, so that they can gain felicity and be happy. If all are obliged, what is the use of training?

5. Do all the scientists, without exception, try to increase the standard of morals in societies? Why?
6. Does man repent of his errors? If the principle of fatalism is accepted, what does 'penitence' mean?
7. Does man become sorry about his negligence in carrying out his duties? Why?
8. Are criminals and evildoers, all over the world, strictly interrogated and tried in courts? The action beyond the limit of man's Will does not need interrogation and trial.
9. Throughout the world and among all sects, whether they are polytheist or materialist, do they believe in punishment for criminals? Then, is it a penalty for the deed that they were obliged to do?
10. Do even the fatalists, when their interests and honor is violated by someone, protest and call him as an offender in the court?

In short, truly, if man is not free in Will, then why should he have feelings of regret?

What is blame and scorn? Can a person whose hand is trembling. unwillingly, be blamed?

Why are the good doers praised? Do they have a free will of their own to continue doing good?

In fact, when the effect of training and education is accepted, fatalism will be meaningless.

Besides, morals, without assuming free-will, have no sense at all. If we are obliged to do things, what is the meaning of repentance? What is regretting for? Then, the trial of an obliged person is the most cruel thing, and punishing him is worse than that.

All these point to the fact that the principle of 'free-will' is in human nature and it fits in with the general conscience of mankind. Not only the common people, but also all special classes and all philosophers are like that in their deeds, and then, even fatalists are actually free in Will.

It is an interesting fact that the Qur'an has frequently emphasized on this situation.

It says:

"...whoever then desires may take refuge with his Lord".

Not only in these verses, but also in many other verses of the Qur'an, stress has been put on man's Will, however, to discuss this, here, will deviate us from our topic of discussion, so, suffice it to mention only three of them, thus:

"Surely We guided him to the way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (is up to him)"⁵².

"Let him who will, believe, and let him who will, reject (it)"⁵³.

"Surely this is an admonishment, that whosoever will, (taking this straight way) may choose a path unto his Lord"⁵⁴.

Discussing fatalism and free-will is very time consuming and many books and articles have been written about these subjects. What we have mentioned, here, was only a small sample on the subject, from the point of view of the Qur'an and the conscience, which we will end on this important point:

The adherence to fatalism, from the view of some men, is not only for the philosophical discussions and the reasoning out of problems, but it is for some other important psychological and social matters, as well, which are undoubtedly factors in its appearance and continued popularity.

Many persons have assumed that the belief in fatalism' or fatal destiny' or 'fate' in the sense of fatalism, have a common source: to escape from personal responsibility, or to use it as a cover-up for the defeats and failures resulting from their negligence and carelessness, and/or due to their low desires.

Sometimes, colonizers, to break the perseverance of people and to extinguish the nation's fire of wrath, imposed this idea on them saying that their fate has been the same from the beginning, so, they can do nothing, but accept it.

Assuming that this belief is correct, the whole behavior of all criminals is permissible and the vice of all sinners becomes excused, then, there will be no difference between an obedient person and a criminal.

Supplication

O Lord! Protect us from these misled ideas and their consequences.

O Lord! On the Day that Hell lies in ambush for the transgressors and Heaven is a victory for the Righteous, we all have hope in your Grace.

O Lord! On the Day when all see their deeds in front of them, do not put us to shame.

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1. Majma-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 420.
 2. Tafsir-i-Borhan, vol. 4, p. 419.
 3. Surah Zumar, No. 39 verse 56
 4. Surah Shura No. 42 verse 44
 5. Surah Mo'minin, No. 23 verse 99-100
 6. Risa'lat-ul-I'tiqad, Abu Bakr-Muhammad-ibn-i-Shirazi (Based on Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, vol. 4, p. 484).
 7. Tafsir-i-Borhan, vol. 4. p. 420, Tradition 9.
 8. Tafsir-i-Borhan, vol. 4, p. 419, Tradition 3.
 9. Surah Saba No. 34 verse 3
 10. Surah Qaşaş No. 28, verse 72
 11. Surah Qasas, No. 28, verse 73
 12. Surah Anbiya, No. 21, verse 30
 13. Surah Yasin. No. 36 verse 81
 14. Al-Mizan, vol. 20, p. 265 (Farsi Translation)
 15. Surah Infitar, No. 82 verse 1
 16. Surah Zumar, No. 39 verse 73

17. Surah Rad, No. 13, verse 23
18. Surah Zumar, No. 39, verse 71
19. Surah Al-i-Imran, No. 3, verse 133
20. Surah Tur. No. 52, verse 10
21. Surah Haqqah, No. 69, verse 14
22. Surah Muzzammil, No. 73, verse 14
23. Surah Al-Qariah, No. 101, verse 5
24. Surah Waqiah, No. 56, verses 5-6
25. Surah Ta-Ha, No. 20. verses 105-106
26. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p 494, Tradition 23 and p. 495, Tradition 26
27. Surah al-Insan, No. 76, verse 21
28. Surah Mutaffifin, No. 83, verse 26
29. Surah Qamar, No. 54, verses 52-53
30. Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 21
31. Surah Yasin, No. 36, verse 12
32. Surah Kahf, No. 18, verse 49
33. Surah Shuara, No. 26, verse 136
34. Surah Bani Israil, No. 17, verse 41
35. Tafsir-i-Kashshaf, vol. 4, p.690 and Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 307
36. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn' vol. 5, p. 495, Tradition 29.
37. Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 255
38. Surah Saffat, No. 37, verses 45-47
39. Surah al-Insan, No. 76, verse 5
40. Surah al-Insan, No. 76, verse 17
41. Surah al-Insan, No. 76. verse 21
42. Qartabi, The Commentary, vol. 10, p. 6977.
43. Surah Maarij, No. 70, verse 4
44. Surah Qadr, No. 97, verse 4
45. Surah Al-Hijr, No. 15, verse 29
46. Surah Maryam, No. 19, verse 17
47. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 427.
48. Tafsir-i-Ali-ibn-Ibrahim, vol. 2, p. 402.
49. Durr-al-manthur, vol. 6, p. 309.
50. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 427.
51. Nahj-ul-Balaqa, Sermon No. 103 (Arabic Version). Sermon No 106 (English Version).
52. Surah al-Insan, No. 76, verse 3
53. Surah Kahf, No. 18, verse 29
54. Surah al-Insan, No. 76. verse 29

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