

SPREAD KNOWLEDGE

THE
HOLY QURAN

ENGLISH TAFSEER
CHAPTER 69
SURAH AL-HAQQAH

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By
ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI

www.quran.live

HOLY QURAN

CHAPTER

069

SURAH AL-HAQQAH

ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI

Introduction and Summary

This Surah belongs to the early middle period of Makkan Revelation. The eschatological argument is pressed home; 'the absolute Truth cannot fail; it must prevail; therefore be not lured by false appearances in this life; it is Revelation that points to the sure and certain Reality.

C.249 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

*in the fleeting world few things are what
They seem. What then is sire Reality?*

*Nations and men in the past assumed
Arrogance and perished because they were unjust,
But that destruction was but a foretaste
Of the Doom to come in the Hereafter, when all
Creation will be on a new plan, and true values
Will be fully established; to the Righteous
Will be Bliss, and to Evil, Punishment.
The Word of Revelation is not a Poet's
Imagination or a Soothsayer's groping
Into the future. It is Allah's own Message,
Of Mercy to the Righteous, and warning
To those who reject the Truth. Praise
And Glory to the name of Allah Most High!*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

الحَاقَّةُ (۱)

1. The Sure Reality!

C5635. Al-haqqa:

- the sure Truth;
- the Event that must inevitably come to pass;
- the state in which all falsehood and pretence will vanish, and the absolute Truth will be laid bare.

The questions in the three verses raise an air of wonder.

The solution is suggested in what happened to the Thamud and the 'Ad, and other people of antiquity, who disregarded the Truth of Allah and came to violent end, even in this life,

Symbolically suggesting the great Cataclysm of the Hereafter, the Day of Doom.

مَا الْحَاقَّةُ (٢)

2. What is the Sure Reality?

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحَاقَّةُ (٣)

3. And what will make thee realize what the Sure Reality is?

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ وَعَادٌ ...

4. The Thamud and the 'Ad people ...

C5636. For these two peoples of antiquity, see n. 1043 to 7:73, and n. 1040 to 7:65.

... بِالْقَارِعَةِ (٤)

... (branded) as false the Stunning Calamity!

C5637. Another description of the terrible Day of Judgment.

This word **Qaria** also occurs as the title of Surah 101.

فَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَأَهْلِكُوا بِالطَّاغِيَةِ (٥)

5. But the Thamud -- they were destroyed by a terrible storm of thunder and lightning!

C5638. The Thamud were addicted to class arrogance. They oppressed the poor. The prophet Salih preached to them, and put forward a wonderful she-camel as symbol of the rights of the poor, but they ham-strung her. See n. 1044 to 7:73.

They were destroyed in a mighty calamity, an earthquake accompanying a terrible thunderstorm.

وَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَأَهْلِكُوا بِرِيحٍ صَرْصَرٍ عَاتِيَةٍ (٦)

6. And the 'Ad -- they were destroyed by a furious wind, exceedingly violent;

C5639. The 'Ad were an unjust people spoilt by their prosperity. The prophet Hud preached to them in vain. They were apparently destroyed by a terrible blast of wind.

See n. 1040 to 7:65.

See also 41:15-16, n. 4483, and 54:19, n. 5144.

سَخَّرَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ وَتَمَائِينَ أَيَّامٍ حُسُومًا فَتَرَى الْقَوْمَ فِيهَا
صَرَعى ...

7. He made it rage against them seven nights and eight days in succession:

So that thou couldst see the (whole) people lying prostrate in its (path),

... كَأَنَّهُمْ أُعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ خَاوِيَةٍ (٧)

as if they had been **roots of hollow palm trees** tumbled down!

C5640. A graphic simile. Dead men all lying about like hollow trunks of palm-trees, with their roots exposed! The 'Ad were reputed to be of a tall stature.

فَهَلْ تَرَى لَهُم مِّن بَاقِيَةٍ (٨)

8. Then seest thou any of them left surviving?

C5641. The calamity was thorough. The 'Ad were destroyed, and then the Thamud, and only the tradition of them was left behind.

See the references in n. 5636.

... وَجَاءَ فِرْعَوْنُ ...

9. And Pharaoh, ...

C5642. Pharaoh's Messenger was Moses. See the story in 7:103-137 and the notes there.

Pharaoh was inordinately proud, and his fall was proportionately great: it gradually extended to his dynasty and his people.

See [Appendix V](#).

... وَمَنْ قَبْلَهُ ...

... and those before him, ...

C5643. If we follow the sequence of peoples whose sins destroyed them, as mentioned in 7:59-158, we begin

with Noah, then have the 'Ad and the Thamud, then the Cities of the Plain, then Midian, then the people whose prophet was Moses (who occupies a central place in the canvas), and then the Pagan Quraish, to whom came the last and greatest of the prophets, our holy Prophet Muhammad.

This is the chronological sequence. Here there is no details, nor even complete mention. But Noah is alluded to last, and the 'Ad and the Thamud mentioned first, because the latter two belong to Arab tradition, and this is specially addressed to the Pagans of Makkah. Pharaoh is mentioned rather than Moses for the same reason, and any others are "those before Pharaoh".

... وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَاتُ ...

... and the Cities Overthrown,

C5644. The Cities Overthrown: Sodom and Gomorrah, Cities of the Plain, to whom Lot preached:

See 9:70, n. 1330; and 7:80-84, n. 1049.

... بِالْخَاطِيئَةِ (٩)

... committed habitual Sin.

فَعَصَوْا رَسُولَ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَهُمْ أَخْذَةً رَابِيَةً (١٠)

10. And disobeyed (each) the messenger of their Lord;
so He punished them with an abundant Penalty.

إِنَّا لَمَّا طَغَى الْمَاءُ ...

11. We, when the water (of Noah's flood) overflowed beyond its limits, ...

C5645. It was a widespread Flood. Cf. 7:59-64: also 11:25-48.

Noah was ridiculed for his preparations for the Flood: see 11:38, n. 1531.

But Allah had commanded him to build an Ark, in order that mankind should be saved from perishing in the

Flood. But only those of Faith got into the Ark and were saved. As the Ark was built to Allah's command, Allah "carried you (mankind) in the floating (Ark)". (R).

... حَمَلْنَاكُمْ فِي الْجَارِيَةِ (١١)

... carried you (mankind), in the floating (Ark).

لِنَجْعَلَهَا لَكُمْ تَذْكِرَةً ...

12. That We might make it a message unto you,

C5646. It was a memorial for all time, to show that evil meets 'With its punishment, but the good are saved by the mercy of Allah.

... وَتَعِيَهَا أُنْوَاعُهَا (١٢)

and that ears (that should hear the tale and) retain its memory should bear its (lessons) in remembrance.

C5647. Cf. the biblical Phrase, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 11:15).

But the phrase used here has a more complicated import. An ear may hear, but for want of will in the hearer the hearer may not wish, for the future or for all time, to retain the memory of the lessons he had heard, even though for the time being he was impressed by it. The penetration of the truth has to be far deeper and subtler, and this is desired here.

فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ نَفْخَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ (١٣)

13. Then, when one Blast is sounded on the Trumpet,

C5648. We now come to the Inevitable Event, the Day of Judgment, the theme of this Surah. This is the first Blast referred to in 39:68, n. 4343.

وَحُمِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَالْجِبَالُ ...

14. And the earth is moved, and its mountains,

C5649. The whole of our visible world, as we now know it, will pass away, and a new world will come into being. The mountains are specially mentioned, because they stand as the type of hardness, size, and durability. They will be "crushed", i.e., lose their form and being at one stroke.

... فَذُكَّتَا نَكَّةً وَاحِدَةً (١٤)

and they are crushed to powder at one stroke --

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ (١٥)

15. On that Day shall the (Great) Event come to pass,

وَأَنْشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَهِيَ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاهِيَةٌ (١٦)

16. And the sky will be rent asunder, for it will that Day be flimsy,

وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ عَلَى أَرْجَائِهَا ...

17. And the angels will be on its sides,

C5650. The whole picture is painted in graphic poetical images, to indicate that which cannot be adequately described in words, and which indeed our human faculties with their present limited powers are not ready to comprehend.

The angels will be on all sides, arrayed in ranks upon ranks, and the Throne of the Lord on high will be borne by eight angels (or eight rows of angels). That will be the Day when Justice will be fully established and man be mustered to his Lord for reckoning. (R).

... وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَانِيَةٌ (١٧)

and eight will, that Day, **bear the Throne** of thy Lord above them.

C5651. The number eight has perhaps no special significance, unless it be with reference to the shape of the Throne or the number of the angels.

The Oriental Throne is often octagonal, and its bearers would be one at each corner. (R).

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُعْرَضُونَ لَا تَخْفَى مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ (١٨)

18. That Day shall ye be brought to Judgment: not an act of yours that ye hide will be hidden.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ ...

19. Then He that will be given his Record in his right hand ...

C5652. Cf. 17:71, where the righteous are described as those who are given their record in their right hand at Judgment.

In 56:27, 56:38, and other passages, the righteous are called "Companions of the Right Hand".

... فَيَقُولُ هَؤُلَاءِ أَقْرَبُوا كِتَابِيَهُ (١٩)

.. will say: "Ah here! read ye my Record!

إِنِّي ظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي مُلَاقٍ حِسَابِيَهُ (٢٠)

20. "I did **really understand** that my Account would (one Day) reach me!"

C5653. The righteous one rejoices that the faith he had during this world's life was fully justified, and is now actually realized before him. He quite understood and believed that good and evil must meet with their due consequences in the Hereafter, however much appearances may have been against it in the life in the lower world, "in the days that are gone".

فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ (٢١)

21. And he will be in a life of Bliss,

فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ (٢٢)

22. In a Garden on high,

فُطُوفُهَا دَانِيَةٌ (٢٣)

23. The **Fruits whereof** (will hang in bunches) low and near.

C5654. The description is that of ripe, luscious grapes, hanging low in heavy bunches, so near that they could be gathered and enjoyed in dignified ease.

Cf. also 55:54; 76:14.

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا أَسْلَفْتُمْ ...

24. "Eat ye and drink ye, with full satisfaction; because of the (good) that ye sent before you ...

C5655. Cf. 2:110: "Whatever good ye send forth for your souls before you, ye shall find it with Allah: for Allah sees well all that ye do."

... فِي الْأَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ (٢٤)

... in the days that are gone!"

C5656. It will be a wholly new world, a new earth and a new heaven, when the blessed might well think with calm relief of "the days that are gone".

Cf. 14:48, and n. 1925.

Even Time and Space will be no more, so that any ideas that we may form here will be found to have become wholly obsolete by then.

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوْتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ ...

25. And he that will be given his Record in his left hand,

C5657. This is in contrast to the righteous ones who will receive their record in their right hand.

Cf. 69:19, n. 5652.

The righteous are glad when they remember their past: their memory is itself a precious possession. The unjust are in agony when they remember their past. Their memory is itself a grievous punishment.

... فَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُوتَ كِتَابِيَةَ (٢٥)

will say: "Ah! would that my record had not been given to me!

وَلَمْ أَدْر مَا حِسَابِيَةَ (٢٦)

26. "And that I had never realized how my account (stood)!

يَا لَيْتَهَا كَانَتْ الْقَاضِيَةَ (٢٧)

27. "Ah! would **that (Death)** had made an end of me!

C5658. The **death** as from this life was but a transition into a new world. They would wish that that death had been the end of all things, but it will not be.

مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنِّي مَالِيَهُ (٢٨)

28. "Of no profit to me has been my wealth!

هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيَهُ (٢٩)

29. "My power has perished from me!"...

C5659. The intensest agony is when the soul loses power over itself, when the personality tries to realise itself in new conditions and cannot: this is life in death.

خُذُوهُ فَغُلُّوهُ (٣٠)

30. (The stern command will say): "Seize ye him, and bind ye him,

C5660. Perhaps the word for '**bind**' should be construed: '**bind** his hands round his neck, to remind him that his hands when they were free were closed to all acts of charity and mercy':

Cf. 17:29.

ثُمَّ الْجَحِيمِ صَلْوَهُ (٣١)

31. "And burn ye him in the Blazing Fire.

ثُمَّ فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوهُ (٣٢)

32. "Further, make him march in a chain, **whereof** the length is seventy cubits!

C5661. The sinful men who will be given their record on the Day of Judgment in their left hands will be in utter despair. Their power and authority which they misused to perpetrate injustice and oppression will be gone. The wealth that had made them turn a deaf ear to the call of Truth will be no more. They will cry out in agony:

"O would that we were never raised again!. O would that death had obliterated us once for an".

But their cries will be of no avail. They will be seized, bound in chains and drawn into the Blazing Fire for their crimes against Allah and man. [Eds.]

إِنَّهُ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ (٣٣)

33. "This was he that **would not believe** in Allah Most High,

C5662. The grip of sin was fastened on sinners because they forsook Allah. They ran after their own lusts and worshipped them, or they ran after Allah's creatures, ignoring Him Who is the cause and source of all good.

وَلَا يَحْضُرُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ (٣٤)

34. "And would not encourage the feeding of the indigent!

C5663. Cf. 107:3; 89:18.

The practical result of their rebellion against the God of Mercy was that their sympathies dried up. Not only did they not help or feed those in need, but they hindered others from doing so. And they have neither friend nor sympathy (food) in the Hereafter.

فَلَيْسَ لَهُ الْيَوْمَ هَاهُنَا حَمِيمٌ (٣٥)

35. "So no friend hath he here this Day.

وَلَا طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ غَسِيلِينَ (٣٦)

36. "Nor hath he any food except the corruption from the washing of wounds,

C5664. They wounded many people by their cruelty and injustice in this life, and it is befitting that they should have no food other than -the foul pus from the washing of wounds.' (R).

لَا يَأْكُلُهُ إِلَّا الْخَاطِئُونَ (٣٧)

37. "Which none do eat but those in sin."

فَلَا أُفْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصِرُونَ (٣٨)

38. So I do **call to witness** what ye see

C5665. This is an adjuration in the same form as that which occurs in 56:75, 70:40, 90:1, and elsewhere.

Allah's Word is the quintessence of Truth. But what if someone doubts whether a particular Message is Allah's Word communicated through His Messenger, or merely an imaginary tale presented by a poet, or a soothsayer's vain prophecy? Then we have to examine it in the light of our highest spiritual facilities. The witness to that Word is what we know in the visible world, in which falsehood in the long run gives place to truth, and what we know in the invisible world, through our highest spiritual faculties. We are asked to examine and test it in both these ways.

وَمَا لَأُتْبَصِرُونَ (٣٩)

39. And what ye see not,

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ (٤٠)

40. That this is verily the word of an honored messenger;

C5666. Honoured messenger. one that is worthy of honour on account of the purity of his life, and may be relied upon not to invent things but to give the true inner experiences of his soul in Revelation.

وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَاعِرٍ ...

41. It is not the word of a poet:

C5667. A **poet** draws upon his imagination, and the subjective factor is so strong that though we may learn much from him, we cannot believe as facts the wonderful tales he has to tell. And the poet who is not a Seer is merely a vulgar votary of exaggerations and falsehoods.

... قَلِيلًا مَا تُؤْمِنُونَ (٤١)

little it is ye believe!

وَلَا يَقُولُ غَاهِنَ ...

42. Nor is it the word of a soothsayer:

C5668. A **soothsayer** merely pretends to foretell future events of no profound spiritual consequence. Most of his prophecies are frauds, and none of them is meant to teach lessons of real admonition. Such admonition is the work of an honoured prophet.

... قَلِيلًا مَا تُذَكَّرُونَ (٤٢)

little admonition it is ye receive.

تَنْزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٤٣)

43. (This is) a Message sent down from the Lord of the Worlds.

وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقْوِيلِ (٤٤)

44. And if the messenger were to invent any sayings in Our name,

لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ (٤٥)

45. We should certainly seize him by his right hand,

C5669. The **right hand** is the hand of power and action. Any one who is seized by his right hand is prevented from acting as he wishes or carrying out his purpose.

The argument is that if an impostor were to arise, he would soon be found out. He could not carry out his fraud indefinitely. But the prophets of Allah, however much they are persecuted, gain more and more power every day, as did the holy Prophet, whose truth, earnestness, sincerity, and love for all, were recognised as his life unfolded itself. (R).

ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ (٤٦)

46. And We should certainly then cut off the artery of his heart:

C5670. This would effectually stop the functioning of his life.

فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِّنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حَاجِزِينَ (٤٧)

47. Nor could any of you withhold him (from Our wrath).

C5671. The protection which the prophets of Allah enjoy in circumstances of danger and difficulty would not be available for impostors. (R).

وَإِنَّهُ لَنَذْكُرُهُ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ (٤٨)

48. But verily this is a Message for the Allah-fearing.

وَإِنَّا لَنَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مِنْكُمْ مُّكَذِّبِينَ (٤٩)

49. And We certainly know that there are amongst you those that reject (it)

وَإِنَّهُ لَحَسْرَةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ (٥٠)

50. But truly (Revelation) is a **cause of sorrow** for the Unbelievers.

C5672. The Message of Allah is glad tidings for those who believe in Him and follow His Law, for it is a message of Mercy and Forgiveness through repentance and amendment. But in the case of the wicked it is a cause of sorrow, for it denounces sin and proclaims the punishment of those who do not turn from evil:

وَإِنَّهُ لِحَقِّ الْيَقِينِ (٥١)

51. But verily it is **Truth** of assured certainty.

C5673. All **Truth** is in itself. But as received by men, and understood with reference to men's psychology, certainty may have certain degrees.

- There is the probability or certainty resulting from the application of man's power of judgment and his appraisal of evidence. This is *ilmulyaqin*, certainty by reasoning or inference.
- Then there is the certainty of seeing something with our own eyes. "Seeing is believing." This is '*ain-ul-yaqin*, certainty by personal inspection.
See 102:5,7.
- Then, as here, there is the absolute Truth, with no possibility of error of judgment or error of the eye, (which stands for any instrument of sense-

perception and any ancillary aids, such as microscopes etc.). This absolute Truth is the **haqq-il-yaqin** spoken of here.

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ (٥٢)

52. So glorify the name of thy Lord Most High.

C5674. As Allah has given us this absolute Truth through His Revelation, it behoves us to understand it and be grateful to Him. We must celebrate His praises in thought, word and deed.