

SPREAD KNOWLEDGE

**THE
HOLY QURAN**

**ENGLISH TAFSEER
CHAPTER 75
SURAH AL-QIYAMAH**

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By
ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI

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HOLY QURAN

CHAPTER

075

SURAH AL-QIYAMAH

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Introduction and Summary

This Surah belongs to the early Makkan period, but comes chronologically a good deal later than the last Surahs.

Its subject matter is the Resurrection, viewed from the point of view of man, especially unregenerate Man, as he is now, and as he will be then-his inner and psychological history.

C.255 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

*Eschew all evil: for man was created
Without purpose or without responsibility.
The Day of Account will come, and his own
Conscience bears witness that he
Must walk straight; for he must face
That Day's Realities. With patience await
The unfoldment of Allah's view. The faces
Of the Blest will beam with brightness and beauty.
For the others, Death will be terror---
For duties neglected and sins committed.
Woe unto man that he thinks not now
Of Allah's Purpose and the noble Destiny
For which Allah gave him Life and its Gifts.*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِیَوْمِ الْقِیَامَةِ (۱)

1. I do call to **witness** the Resurrection Day;

C5809. Cf. 70:40, and n. 5700.

Here the point to be enforced is understood. The appeal is made to two considerations:

- That every act has to be accounted for, and evil must have its recompense at the Resurrection; and
- that man's own spirit has a conscience which would reproach him for sin, if he did not suppress that inner voice.

وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللّٰوِاْمَةِ (۲)

2. And I do call to witness the self-reproaching spirit; (eschew Evil).

C5810. Our doctors postulate three states or stages of the development of the human soul:

- **Ammara** (12:53), which is prone to evil, and, if not checked and controlled, will lead to perdition;
- **Lawwama**, as here, which feels conscious of evil, and resists it, asks for Allah's grace and pardon after repentance and tries to amend; it hopes to reach salvation;
- **Mutmainna** (89:27), the highest stage of all, when it achieves full rest and satisfaction. Our second stage may be compared to Conscience, except that in English usage Conscience is a faculty and not a stage in spiritual development.

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَلَّن نَجْمَعَ عِظَامَهُ (٣)

3. Does man think that We cannot assemble his bones?

C5811. The Unbelievers' usual cry is: "What! when we are reduced to bones and dust, how can our personality be called to account?" (17:49).

The answer is:

Allah has said so, and He will do it; for the death here is not the end of all things.

بَلَى قَادِرِينَ عَلَى أَنْ نُسَوِّيَ بَنَانَهُ (٤)

4. Nay, We are able to put together in perfect order the very tips of his fingers.

C5812. An idiom for the most delicate parts of his body.

بَلْ يُرِيدُ الْإِنْسَانُ لِيَفْجُرَ أَمَامَهُ (٥)

5. But man wishes to do wrong (even) in the time in front of him.

C5813. It is bad enough not to repent of past sins. But the evil-doer who rejects a Day of Reckoning and has no conscience wants to go on in his career of sin and jeopardize his future also.

يَسْأَلُ أَيَّانَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ (٦)

6. He questions: "When is the Day of Resurrection?"

C5814. The question is skeptical or derisive. He does not believe that there is any chain of consequences in the Hereafter. He does not believe in a Hereafter.

فَإِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصَرُ (٧)

7. At length, when the Sight is dazed,

C5815. At the Hour of Judgment the full light and glory of the Lord will shine, and the effulgence will daze man's eyes. For the world as we knew it will go to pieces and a new World will come into being.

وَحَسَفَ الْقَمَرُ (٨)

8. And the moon is buried in darkness.

C5816. Not only will man's sight be dazed, but the great luminaries themselves will lose their light. The moon with its present reflected light will then cease to shine. All reflected or relative truth or goodness will sink into nothing before the true and Eternal Reality. (R).

وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ (٩)

9. And the sun and moon are joined together --

C5817. To the moon the sun is the original light, but the sun itself is a created light, and it will sink into nothingness along with the moon. Both will be like empty shells "whose lights are fled, whose glories dead", because the Light of Allah now shines in full splendour in a new World.

See n. 4344 to 39:69.

يَقُولُ الْإِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَيْنَ الْمَفَرُّ (١٠)

10. That Day will Man say "Where is the refuge?"

كُلَّا لَا وَزَرَ (١١)

11. By no means!

No place of safety!

إِلَى رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمُسْتَقَرُّ (١٢)

12. Before thy Lord (alone) that Day will be the place of rest.

C5818. All good and bad deeds, positive and negative, i.e., all sins of commission and omission, and all the good that a man did and all the evil that he omitted, all the influence that he radiated before him and all that he left behind him.

يُنَبِّئُ الْإِنْسَانَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ (١٣)

13. That Day will man be told (all) that he put forward, and all that he put back.

بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ (١٤)

14. Nay,

man will be evidence against himself,

C5819. Cf. 24:24, and n. 2976:

"On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their feet will bear witness against them as to their actions."

It is not what a man says about himself, or what others say of him, that determines judgment about him. It is what he is in himself. His own personality betrays him or commends him.

وَلَوْ أَلْفَى مَعَاذِيرَهُ (١٥)

15. Even though he were to put up his excuses.

لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ (١٦)

16. Move not thy tongue concerning the (Qur'an) to make haste therewith.

C5820. Cf. 20:114, and n. 2639:

"Be not in haste with the Quran before its revelation to thee is completed."

Surah 75 is an earlier revelation, and the shade of meaning is slightly different. The immediate meaning was that the holy Prophet was to allow the revelation conveyed to him to sink into his mind and heart and not to be impatient about it; Allah would certainly complete it according to His Plan, and see that it was collected and preserved for men, and not lost; that the inspired one was to follow it and recite it as the inspiration was conveyed to him; and that it carries its own explanation according to the faculties bestowed by Allah on man.

The general meaning follows the same lines: we must not be impatient about the inspired Word; we must follow it as made clear to us by the faculties given to us by Allah.

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ (١٧)

17. It is for Us to collect it and to promulgate it:

فَإِذَا قُرَأْنَاهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ (١٨)

18. But when We have promulgated it, follow thou its recital (as promulgated):

ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ (١٩)

19. Nay more,

it is for Us to explain it (and make it clear):

كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ (٢٠)

20. Nay, (ye men!) but ye love the fleeting life,

C5821. Cf. 21:37.

Man loves haste and things of haste. For that reason he pins his faith on transitory things that come and go, and neglects the things of lasting moment, which come slowly, and whose true import will only be fully seen in the Hereafter.

وَتَدْرُونَ الْآخِرَةَ (٢١)

21. And leave alone the Hereafter.

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاصِرَةٌ (٢٢)

22. Some faces **that Day**, will beam (in brightness and beauty) --

C5822. This passage (especially with reference to verses 26-28) would seem to refer to what our Doctors call the Lesser Judgment (**Qiyamat-us-Sugra**), which takes place immediately after death, and not to the Greater or General Judgment, which may be supposed to be referred to in such passages as occurs in Surah 56.

There are other passages referring to the Lesser Judgment immediately after death; e.g., 7:37 etc.

If I understand aright, the punishment of sin takes place in three ways;

- it may take place in this very life, but this may be deferred, to give the sinner respite;
- it may be an agony immediately after death; and
- in the final Resurrection, when the whole of the present order gives place to a wholly new World: 14:48.

إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ (٢٣)

23. Looking towards their Lord;

وَوَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَاسِرَةٌ (٢٤)

24. And some faces, that Day, will be sad and dismal,

تَنْظُنُّ أَنْ يُفْعَلَٰ بِهَا فَاكْرَةٌ (٢٥)

25. In the thought that some back-breaking calamity was about to be inflicted on them;

كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِيَ (٢٦)

26. Yea, when (the soul) reaches to the collar-bone (in its exit),

C5823. A symbolic picture of the agony of death.

وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقٍ (٢٧)

27. And there will be a cry,
"Who is a magician (to restore him)?"

وَوَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ (٢٨)

28. And he will conclude that it was (the Time) of Parting;

C5824. He = the dying man, whose soul is referred to in verse 26 above.

وَالْتَقَّتِ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ (٢٩)

29. And one leg **will be** joined with another:

C5825. When the soul has departed, the legs of the dead body are placed together in position, in preparation for the rites preliminary to the burial.

Saq (literally, leg) may also be taken metaphorically to mean a calamity:

calamity will be joined to calamity for the poor departed sinner's soul, as his life-story in this world is now done. Willy-nilly, he will now have to go before the Throne of Judgment.

إِلَى رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ (٣٠)

30. That Day the Drive will be (all) to thy Lord!

Section 2

فَلَا صَدَقَ وَلَا صَلَّى (٣١)

31. So he gave nothing in charity, nor did he pray! --

C5826. His indictment in this and the succeeding verse consists of four counts:

- he neglected prayer;
- he neglected charity;
- he rejected Truth; and
- he turned away.

In 74:43-46, the four counts are

- neglecting prayer;
- neglecting charity;
- talking vanities;
- denying the Day of Judgment;

see n. 5803,

Nos. 1 and 2 are identical in both places, and Nos. 3 and 4 are analogous.

Rejecting the truth is equivalent to talking vanities and making an alliance with falsehoods. Denying the Day of Judgment means behaving as if no account was to be given of our actions, i.e., turning away from right conduct.

An additional touch is found here in verse 33. See next note.

وَلَكِنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى (٣٢)

32. But on the contrary, He rejected Truth and turned away!

ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ يَمَمْتًا (٣٣)

33. Then did he stalk to his family in full conceit!

C5827. Conceit or arrogance is the root-cause of most Evil. By that cause fell Iblis: see 2:34.

أُولَىٰ لَكَ فَأُولَىٰ (٣٤)

34. Woe to thee,
(O man!) yea, woe!

ثُمَّ أُولَىٰ لَكَ فَأُولَىٰ (٣٥)

35. Again, woe to thee, (O man!), yea woe!

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى (٣٦)

36. Does Man think that he will be left uncontrolled, (without purpose)?

C5828. Suda: has many implications:

- uncontrolled, free to do what he likes;
- without any moral responsibility; not accountable for his actions;
- without a purpose, useless;
- forsaken.

أَلَمْ يَكُنْ نُطْفَةً مِّن مَّنِيِّ يُمْنَى (٣٧)

37. Was he not a drop of sperm emitted (in lowly form)?

C5829. Cf. 22:5, where the argument is developed in greater detail.

The briefer argument here may be stated thus. His lowly animal origin makes him no higher than a brute; his fetal development is still that of a brute animal; then at some stage come human limbs and shape; the divine spirit is poured into him, and he is fashioned in due proportion for his higher destiny. In spite of that the mystery of sex remains in his nature: we are living souls, yet men and women.

Allah Who creates these wonders,-has He not the power to bring the dead to life at the Resurrection?

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقَ فَسَوَّى (٣٨)

38. Then did he become a leech-like clot;
then did (Allah) make and fashion (him) in due proportion.

فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَى (٣٩)

39. And of him He made two sexes, male and female.

أَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَى (٤٠)

40. Has not He, (the same), the power to give life to the dead?