

## Section 23: The Resurrection

### Surah al-'Araf – Verses 182–183

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

وَأُمْلِي لَهُمْ إِنَّ كَيْدِي مَتِينٌ

**182. “And those who belie Our Signs, soon, step by step, We will draw them on from where they do not know.”**

**183. “And I will grant them respite. Verily My devising is strong.”**

In these couple of holy verses, one of the punishments of Allah (s.w.t) about many of the arrogant sinners has been stated which will be done upon them in the form of a ‘gradual punishment’.

The derivation of the Arabic term */istidrāj/* (consign to a gradual punishment) has been used in the Qur'an in two verses. One of them is the verse under discussion, and the other is in Surah Al-Qalam, No. 68, verse 44, both of which are about the deniers of the Divine verses. Through the first verse, concerning the punishment of these beliers, whose lives will be interlaced, Allah says:

**“And those who belie Our Signs, soon, step by step, We will draw them on from where they do not know.”**

The same meaning is emphasized in the second verse. It implies that it is not such that Allah punishes these people at once and with precipitation. But He respites them sufficiently for admonishment and awareness.

And, when they do not attend it, He will entangle them with some difficulties, because only those haste that are powerless and fear that they miss opportunities. The verse says:

***“And I will grant them respite...”***

But, Allah’s plots and punishments are so strong and exact that none is able to flee from them. The verse says:

***“... Verily My devising is indeed strong.”***

This verse warns all sinners that they should take the postponement of Divine punishment as a reason neither for their own sanctity and uprightness, nor for the weakness and inability of Allah.

They should not consider that the bounties and favours they enjoy are the signs of their nearness to Allah. It may happen that these bounties and victories that they receive become the preparation of the gradual punishment of Allah.

The Lord grants them abundant favours and, by respiting them, He promotes them, but finally, He leaves them to fall down so intensively that there remains no trace from them and their whole entity and their history will be completely interlaced.

It is narrated from Imam Sādiq (as) who, upon the commentary of this verse, said:

*“The purpose of this verse is a sinful person whom Allah gives a bounty and he counts it for his goodness, while it causes him to be neglectful of seeking forgiveness for the sin he has committed.”<sup>1</sup>*

## **Surah al-‘Araf – Verse 184**

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا مَا بِصَاحِبِهِمْ مِنْ جِنَّةٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ

**184. “Have they not reflected that there is no madness in their companion (the Prophet of Islam)? He is naught but a plain warner.”**

### **Occasion of Revelation**

The Islamic commentators have mentioned the following meanings upon the occasion of revelation of this verse in their commentary books:

When the Prophet (S) was living in Mecca, one night he went upon Safā Mountain and invited people to monotheism. He called to all people, and to the whole tribes of Quraysh in particular, and told them to beware the punishment of Allah.

He continued speaking until late at night. The local idol-worshippers of Mecca said that their companion had become mad since he was shouting the whole night until morning. At that moment the above-mentioned verse was revealed and gave them a knockdown answer.<sup>2</sup>

In this verse, at first, Allah answers the vain statement of the idol-worshippers by which they said the Prophet (S) was mad. The Qur'<sup>٢١</sup> says whether they did not contemplate to know that their companion (the Prophet) had no sign of madness. Here is the answer of Allah:

***“Have they not reflected that there is no madness in their companion (the Prophet of Islam)?...”***

He (Muhammad) (S) had been living among them for more than forty years. They were acquainted with his thought, intellect, and management. Then, how did they suddenly accused him like that? Then, following to that, the Qur'<sup>٢١</sup> says that he (S) is only a plain warner that advises his society to beware the dangers they are faced with. The verse says:

***“He is naught but a plain warner.”***

## **Surah al-‘Araf – Verse 185**

أَو لَمْ يَنْظُرُوا فِي مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَأَنْ عَسَى  
أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدِ اقْتَرَبَ أَجْلُهُمْ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ

**185. “Have they not considered the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and whatever Allah has created, and that maybe their term has already drawn near? Then in what other words after this will they believe?”**

In order to complete the previous statement, this verse invites them to study the world of existence, including the heavens and the earth. The verse says:

***“Have they not considered the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and whatever Allah has created...”***

This contemplation is for that they know that this vast world of existence, with its amazing systematic order, has not been created in vain. There has surely been a certain goal in it, and the invitation of the Prophet (S), in fact, has been in pursuance of the same goal of creation, i.e., the development and training of humankind.

Then, for the sake that they be awakened from the sleep of negligence, the Qur'<sup>٢١</sup> implies whether they have not ponder on this matter that the end of their lives might be near.

So, if they do not believe today, and do not accept the invitation of this Messenger to the revealed Qur'an with those numerous clear signs, which words will there be after this that they believe in? The verse says:

*"...and that maybe their term has already drawn near? Then in what other words after this will they believe?"*

## Surah al-'Araf – Verse 186

مَنْ يُضِلِّ اللَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

186. *"Whomever Allah leads astray there is no guide for him, and He will leave them in their contumacy wandering blindly."*

At last, the statement upon the sinners is concluded in this verse as such that those whom Allah leads astray they will have no guide and Allah leaves such people bewildered in their transgression. This is the result of their continuous indecent deeds. The verse says:

*"Whomever Allah leads astray there is no guide for him, and He will leave them in their contumacy wandering blindly."*

Such kind of meanings has been stated particularly upon the group of sinners who zealously and arrogantly show obstinacy against the rights and facts. They treat such, as if a curtain has fallen over their eyes, ears, and hearts. These dark curtains are the result of their own deeds, and this is the meaning of the phrase *'Allah leads astray'*.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي لَا يُجَلِّيهَا لِوَقْتِهَا إِلَّا هُوَ  
ثُقُلَتْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا تَأْتِيكُمْ إِلَّا بَغْتَةً يَسْأَلُونَكَ كَأَنَّكَ حَفِيٌّ عَنْهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا  
عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

## Surah al-'Araf – Verse 187

187. *"They ask you about the Hour (of Resurrection) when it will set in. Say: 'Its knowledge is only with my Lord. None but He can manifest it at its time. Heavy is it in the heavens and the earth. It will not overtake you but suddenly'. They ask you, as if you were well-informed of it. Say: 'The knowledge of it is only with Allah, but most people do not know'."*

The infidels of Quraysh sent a number of persons to the scholars of the Jews in order to learn some difficult questions so that when they would ask them from the Prophet (S) he could not give any answer to them and they might condemn him. One of these questions was that they asked about the exact time of the occurrence of Resurrection.

The Qur'anic term /'ayyān/, mentioned in this verse, has been used for asking the time. The Arabic word /ass'ah/ refers to the beginning of Resurrection, while the word /al-qiyamah/ means the time of reckoning in Hereafter when the rewards and retributions will be given.<sup>3</sup>

The Arabic term /mursā/ means 'that which is fixed with regard to time or place'. Thus the Qur'anic phrase /jibāl-un-rāsīyat/ means: 'fixed and firm mountains'.

The word /haffiyy/, used in the verse, means a constant researcher. This epithet, concerning to the Prophet (S), means as if he (S) had completely researched the time of the occurrence of Resurrection Day and had asked it from Allah and knew it well.

The idea of the heaviness of the Hereafter in '**the heavens and the earth**', maybe, refers to the destruction of celestial globes, darkening of the sun, revolution of the earth, etc.

However, the lack of knowledge about the features and details of Hereafter does not harm the principal of the belief in Resurrection. No one is aware of the time and the place of his death, but this situation can not be taken as a reason for denying the principal of death. The verse says:

***“They ask you about the Hour (of Resurrection) when it will set in. Say: ‘Its knowledge is only with my Lord. None but He can manifest it at its time. Heavy is it in the heavens and the earth. It will not overtake you but suddenly’. They ask you, as if you were well-informed of it. Say: ‘The knowledge of it is only with Allah, but most people do not know’.”***

Once the Holy Prophet (S) was asked about the reappearance and coming out of Hadrat Gh'im (as). He answered:

*“His example is like the time (of Resurrection).”*

This statement means that the time of his reappearance resembles the time of Resurrection. Then, he (S) recited this verse:

***“...None but He can manifest it at its time. Heavy is it in the heavens and the earth. It will not overtake you but suddenly’...”***<sup>4</sup>

## **Surah al-'Araf – Verse 188**

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ لَأَسْتَكْتَرْتُ  
مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءُ إِنْ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

**188. “Say: ‘I own for my self neither any benefit nor harm except what Allah may please; and had I known the Unseen, I would have acquired much good, and no evil would have touched me. I am not but a warner and a giver of glad tidings for a people who believe.’”**

## Occasion of Revelation

It happened that one day some people of Mecca came to the Prophet (S) and said that if he had communication with the Lord, would He inform him of the future expensiveness and cheapness of goods so that thereby he could supply whatever was beneficial and ward off whatever was harmful; or would He aware him of drought or of different regions with abundant water so that he could move from dry provinces into blissful lands? At this time, the verse was revealed and answered them.

## Only Allah Knows the Unseen

In the previous verse, it was said that no one knows the time of Resurrection but Allah (s.w.t.). Through this verse, now, the lack of knowledge of Unseen among persons, in general, is referred to.<sup>5</sup>

By the first sentence of the verse, Allah commands His Messenger, Muhammad (S), thus:

**“Say: ‘I own for my self neither any benefit nor harm except what Allah may please...’”**

All powers existed in the world come from the source of Allah, the Exalted, and no person has originally any power from his own self. It is He Who has granted these abilities to human beings.

After stating this matter, the Qur’ān points to another important question which was under the demand of a group of people. Allah commands His Messenger (S) to say that he was not cognizant of the Unseen and its secrets. In this regard, the verse continues saying:

**“...and had I known the Unseen, I would have acquired much good, and no evil would have touched me...”**

Then, the real position of the Prophet (S) and his Messengership has been pointed out through a short and explicit sentence, as follows:

**“...I am not but a warner and a giver of glad tidings for a people who believe.’”**

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1. Tafsir-us-Sūfi, p. 256

2. Tafsir-us-Sūfi, p. 257

3. Tafsir-i-Marḥūqī.
4. Narrated by Imam Ridḥā (as), cited in Nūr-uth-Thaqalayn.
5. The commentators of the Qurʾān has cited a great deal of matters about both this verse and ‘ the knowledge of Unseen ’ in their commentary books.

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