Al-Islam.org
Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project
Published on *Al-Islam.org* (https://www.al-islam.org)

Surah al-Qamar, Chapter 54, Verses 1 - 32

(The Moon)
Section (juz'): 27
Number of Verses: 55

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The blessed Chapter has 55 Verses and was revealed in Mecca. The designation of the Chapter derives from the raising the question of Cleaving of the Moon (shaqq al-qamar). All the blessed Verses of the Chapter in question end in the letter r.

The preceding Chapter ended with the question of Resurrection and the blessed Chapter 55 opens with the same. The Chapter mainly treats of Resurrection, Prophethood, and an account of Prophets' opponents. The accounts of five peoples, namely those of Noah (as), 'Ad, Thamud, Lot (as), and Pharoah are being referred to in this Chapter.

Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter

According to a tradition narrated from the Noble Prophet (S)

"One who recites Surah al-Qamar and perseveres will enter the Plain of Judgment in splendor on the Day of Resurrection on the condition that he acts upon Qur'anic Injunctions."

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

اقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ

وَإِن يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ

وَكَذَّبُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءهُمْ وَكُلُّ أَمْرٍ مُّسْتَقِرٌّ

1. The Hour has drawn near and the moon has been cleft asunder.
2. And if they see a miracle, they turn away, saying: "This is continuous magic."
3. They belied [***Divine Verses***] ***and followed their own desires. And every matter will have a place*** [***for its own***].

The first blessed Verse treats of two significant happenings. Firstly, mention is made of Resurrection drawing near entailing the most significant alteration in the world of creation serving as an opening to a new life in the other world, a world whose greatness and extent are indescribable and unintelligible to us, the captives of the mundane world.

Resurrection is inevitable and close to us. The life of this world is so transient and man is supposed to be attentive and prepare the provision for the Hereafter. Secondly, the blessed Verse deals with the great miracle of Cleaving of the Moon bearing witness to Divine Omnipotence over all things serving as a token of the veracity of the Prophetic Call. God Almighty says that Resurrection draws near and the moon cleft asunder.

The question of the Cleaving of the Moon is recurrently mentioned in Shi'i and Sunni tradition sources, according to which, disbelievers asked the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) to cleave the moon asunder because they imagined that magic and sorcery could not affect the heaven and if the moon happened to cleave asunder, Prophet Muhammad's (S) task could definitely be regarded as a miracle.

It is worthy of note that separation of the planets of the solar system off the sun and/or meteors reflect the possibility of the moon cleaving asunder. It is interesting to note that Cleaving of the Moon occurred at night without prior proclamation as to the same while people were asleep.

The travelers proceeding toward Mecca and Syria and even Indians could witness Cleaving of the Moon.[1] It is inscribed on some monuments in India that the completion date of those monuments was the time when the moon cleft asunder.

According to Muslim consensus, consecutively transmitted traditions, and the testimonies of many a Prophetic Companion, people witnessed Cleaving of the Moon. According to Tabarsi, ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ud, Anas ibn Malik, Hudhayfa, Ibn ‘Abbas, Jubayr ibn Mat‘am, and ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar witnessed Cleaving of the Moon and bore witness to the same.

According to Tabarsi, it is also narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas that disbelievers got together one night in full moon and asked the Noble Prophet (S):

"If your claim to Prophethood is true, command the moon to cleave asunder into two halves."

The Noble Prophet (S) inquired:

"If I do so, would you believe?"

They replied:

"Yes."

Then the Noble Prophet (S) invoked God Almighty to command the moon to cleave asunder into two halves. The Noble Prophet (S) summoned disbelievers and asked them to observe Cleaving of the Moon.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) on the authority of Ibn Mas‘ud that he said:

"By Allah in Whose Hand of Might rests my soul, I witnessed the Mount of Hira through the two halves of the moon when it was cleft asunder."

According to Qur’an exegetes, transmitted traditions, and historical sources, there is no doubt as to Cleaving of the Moon which happened by Divine Will and the Noble Prophet's (S) miracle.[2] Sunni exegetes and traditionists maintain that Cleaving of the Moon is consecutively transmitted[3] among whom mention may be made of Suyuti quoting the same on the authority of ‘Abd al-Razzaq, Ahmad, ‘Abd ibn Humayd, Muslim, Ibn Jurayr, Ibn al-Mundhar, Tirmidhi, Ibn Murdiwayh, Bayhaqi[4], and Qurtubi[5].

Other sources have transmitted the same on their authorities. It is a matter of consensus and is free from doubt. The sources are not mentioned herein for the sake of brevity.

The second blessed Verse is saying that when obdurate disbelievers witness the miracle proving the veracity of your Prophetic Call turn away saying that it is a magic repeated. The Arabic word mustamirr (continuous, repeated) reflects that they had repeatedly seen miracles worked by the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) such that Cleaving of the Moon was another. Although such false ascription was a pretext for their disobedience to Truth.

Alluding to their opposition and its inauspicious consequences, the blessed Verse 3 is saying that they belied and followed their concupiscent desires and

"every matter will have a place* [*for its own*]*."

The point is that their denial of the Prophetic Call, the Noble Prophet's (S) miracles, and their denial of Resurrection sprang from their following concupiscent desires, since their prejudice, obduracy, and arrogance impeded their submission to Truth.

On the other hand, their lust for unconditional deriving pleasures of the flesh and their impurities stemming from committing sins and doing wrong served as obstacles in acknowledging the Call to Truth, since such acknowledgement entailed obligations. It has been always likewise and it will remain the same. The worst obstacle on the path toward Truth is following concupiscent desires.

"Every matter will have a place* [*for its own*]*"

designates that everyone will receive the Reward and Recompense of his own deeds. The good shall reap Rewards and the evil shall suffer the evil consequences of their vile deeds.

The expression seemingly makes a reference to the truth that nothing shall be effaced in this world, but any good or evil act shall stay the same until man receives his Reward or Recompense of the same. It is worthy of note that the shadows of night will end in the bright of the day and Truth shall be established on its stable place.

The Holy Qur'an says elsewhere6:

"Therefore, one who does righteous good deeds equal to the weight of an atom shall see it. And one who does evil equal to the weight of an atom shall see it."

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as):

*"No servant shall be afflicted by any affliction unless he has committed sins."*7

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 4-6

وَلَقَدْ جَاءهُم مِّنَ الْأَنبَاء مَا فِيهِ مُزْدَجَرٌ

حِكْمَةٌ بَالِغَةٌ فَمَا تُغْنِ النُّذُرُ

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَدْعُ الدَّاعِ إِلَى شَيْءٍ نُّكُرٍ

4. And indeed there has come unto them news wherein there is to cease disbelief,
5. Perfect wisdom, but the words of the warners benefit the obdurate not.
6. Therefore, turn away from them. The Day that the Caller shall call [them] to a terrible thing and torment of Hell.

The Arabic word naba' is applied a piece of news which has three characteristics. Firstly, the subject matter happens to be of significant occurrence, as any piece of news is not termed naba'. Secondly, knowledge and/or certitude is accrued of the same. Thirdly, the issue is true devoid of untruth.8

The Arabic word muzdajar derives from z–j–r ("drive back, hold back") which connotes the news that may impede man from committing sins. In other words, accounts of the ancients and their desperation and torments contain significant news embodying warning and disgust for believers.

The blessed Verse 5 is saying that the Holy Qur'an is wisdom par excellence in terms of eloquence, which resumes the points discussed in the preceding Verses.

As it was mentioned above, it may make a reference to the point that Cleaving asunder of the Moon at a certain time, all the miracles of the Prophets and the torment of the damned unfortunate (ashqiya') as the Recompense of their deeds, and all other happenings that occurred at other times owing to the Preordination of the Most Exalted Lord constitute Wisdom par excellence.

"But the words of the warners benefit them not"

may allude to the fact that such obdurate, arrogant, and ignorant people were not convinced to believe by such significant miracle but they regarded it as magic and remained in their disbelief and animosity.

In short, all these blessed Verses indicate that Cleaving of the Moon at the command of the Seal of the Prophets (S) was done to bear witness to the veracity of his Prophetic Call and the same was worked according to the order of the world of creation.

Addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse 6 is saying that when disbelievers witnessed such great miracle but failed to believe, you are supposed to withdraw from them without taking troubles for their ignorance but remember the Day when the Divine Caller calls people unto a horrible thing – the Call to Record of deeds. It is worthy of note that the Arabic word nukur designates something horrible and unbeknownst.

Surah al-Qamar – Verses 7-8

خُشَّعًا أَبْصَارُهُمْ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ كَأَنَّهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُّنتَشِرٌ

مُّهْطِعِينَ إِلَى الدَّاعِ يَقُولُ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِرٌ

7. They will come forth with humbled eyes from graves as if they were locusts scattered,
8. Hastening with erect necks towards the Caller. The disbelievers will say: "This is a hard Day."

The Arabic word ajdath is the plural form of jadath ("grave, tomb"). Humbling of eyes is a token of intensity of fear or shamefulness leading to humbleness. The similitude of sinners on the Day of Resurrection to scattered locusts reflects their perplexity and astonishment upon coming out of graves hastening hither and thither out of witnessing the torment on that Day.

The blessed Verse 8 is saying that when they leave their graves upon the Call, they protrude their necks toward Calling angels out of the intensity of fear. The Arabic word muhti‘in derives from h-t-‘ ("protrude one's neck").

Some exegetes interpret the word in the sense of gazing or hastening. Both senses are possible in the interpretation of the blessed Verse, though the former sense is seemingly more appropriate herein, since when a horrible sound is heard, man immediately protrudes his neck and then turns toward the source of the sound.

It is worthy of note that the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question may refer to all these senses. Thus, upon hearing the Divine Caller, they protrude their necks toward the source of the sound, then gaze at it, and later on hasten toward it and make their presence at Divine Tribunal. Then, the horror of the hard incidents of that Day encompasses them all.

Thus, the blessed Verse proceeds to add that disbelievers say that that today is a hard and excruciating. It is a hard day since all the things cause fear in sinners. May God Almighty bestow His Mercy upon His servants. On that Day, there shall be neither fear nor grief for believers.

Surah al-Qamar – Verses 9-10

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ فَكَذَّبُوا عَبْدَنَا وَقَالُوا مَجْنُونٌ وَازْدُجِرَ

فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَغْلُوبٌ فَانتَصِرْ

9. The people of Noah (as) denied [him] before the disbelievers denying the Noble Prophet (S). They denied Our servant and besides denial of his Prophethood said: "A madman!" and that he was far from the true path.
10. Then Noah (as) invoked his Lord [saying]: "I have been overcome, so render [me] assistance!"

God Almighty consoles the Noble Prophet (S) saying that if disbelievers denied your Prophetic Call and miracles, do not entertain sorrow since people in aforetime were the same. The people of Prophet Noah (as) did so many wrongs to the Archprophet (as) and transgressed the bounds to such an extent that they attributed madness and ignorance to him.

They even threatened that they would kill him as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an9:

"They said: 'If you cease not, O Noah (as), you will surely be among those stoned to death.'"

Finally, he was desperate of guiding them and said unto God Almighty that neither such people nor their offspring may be guided.

Thus, according to the blessed Verse 10, Noah (as) said:

"I am overcome, render me assistance."

Following nine hundred and fifty years of imparting Divine Guidance, his people, except for a small number, denied his Prophetic Call. Further, they transgressed the bounds to such extent that he was desperate and called his Lord saying that he could not guide them to the Straight Path and invoked him to take his vengeance upon them. Then, God Almighty answered his prayer as a consequence of which the torment of tempest encompassed them.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 11-12

فَفَتَحْنَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاء بِمَاء مُّنْهَمِرٍ

وَفَجَّرْنَا الْأَرْضَ عُيُونًا فَالْتَقَى الْمَاء عَلَى أَمْرٍ قَدْ قُدِرَ

11. Therefore, We opened the gates of the heavens with water pouring forth.
12. And We caused springs to gush forth from the earth. Therefore, the waters from the earth and

the heaven joined for a matter preordained.

The blessed Verses make a telling and awe-inspiring reference to the manner of their torment saying that following Noah's (as) invocation, We opened the gates of the heaven and an incessant and heavy rain poured down.

The metaphor of opening the gates of the heaven is a beautiful one which is employed at the time of pouring down heavy rain. The metaphor is also used in the Persian tongue when it is said that it is as if the gates of heaven have opened and all the rain is pouring down.

The Arabic word munhamir ("pouring down, flowing down") derives from h-m-r ("pour down, flow") connoting heavy pouring down of rain or flowing of tears. The word is also figuratively employed to connote milking animals to the last drop. It would be of interest to know that according to some exegetes, they had been afflicted with famine for years and expected rain until a fatal rain, rather than a rejuvenating one, poured down.

The blessed Verse 12 is saying that such heavy rain poured down that water gushed forth from the earth, as reflected in the blessed Verse in question. God Almighty cleft the earth asunder and made many a spring gush forth from the same. The two waters intermingled as it was preordained and encompassed all over the earth.

In short, water gushed forth from all over the earth and springs flowed and a heavy rain poured forth and the waters met and formed an immense and agitating ocean.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 13-14

وَحَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَى ذَاتِ أَلْوَاحٍ وَدُسُرٍ

تَجْرِي بِأَعْيُنِنَا جَزَاء لِّمَن كَانَ كُفِرَ

13. And We carried him on a [vessel] made of planks and nails,
14. The vessel upon which Noah (as) and his followers embarked Floated under Our Eyes. It was a Reward for him who had been denied.

The blessed twain Verses in question let go of the account of the tempest, since what had to be said is contained in the preceding blessed Verses.

Proceeding with the account of Noah's Ark, the blessed Verse 13 reads:

"We carried him on a [vessel] made of planks and nails."

According to Raghib's Mufradat, the Arabic word dasur, the plural form of disar, originally denotes "shove, push off severely." Since nails are hammered with heavy strikes into the wood and the like, it is called disar. However, some exegetes maintain that the word designates rope, applied to the ropes of the sail and the like.

It is worthy of note that the Qur'anic expression employed herein is meaningful and significant, since it reflects that in such harsh tempest encompassing everything, We commanded some pieces of wood and some nails to rescue Noah (as) and his followers and these inanimate objects fulfilled their obligation in the best manner and the same reflects Divine Omnipotence.

The expression may also allude to the simplicity of the vessels of that time in comparison with modern sophisticated vessels. Nonetheless, according to historical sources, Noah's (as) Ark was sufficiently large for whose building he spent years and it could accommodate one pair of different animals.

The blessed Verse 14 is a reference to the special Favor bestowed upon Noah (as) by God Almighty saying that the Ark cleaves waves asunder before Our Eyes and under Our Supervision.

"Before Our Eyes"

is a delicate metaphorical expression alluding to special attention to and perfect preservation of something, as it is elsewhere10 attested in the Holy Qur'an:

"And build the vessel under Our Eyes and with Our Revelation and call not upon Me on behalf of those who did wrong; they shall certainly be drowned."

The blessed Verse 14 further adds:

"It was a Reward for him who had been denied."

Prophet Noah (as) like all other Prophets enjoyed the Great Favors and Bounties of the Lord, but ignorant disbelievers denied his Prophetic Call.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 15-16

وَلَقَد تَّرَكْنَاهَا آيَةً فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ

فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ

15. And Verily, We left the vessel as a Sign. Then is there any that will receive admonition?
16. Then how terrible is My Torment and My Warning?

In these twain blessed Verses, God Almighty is saying that He made the account of Noah's Tempest and Ark and the perdition of disbelievers at the time remain until the Day of Resurrection such that it may serve as warning and admonition for all peoples and they learn that denying Messengers of Allah entails evil consequences.

The blessed Verse 15 is saying:

"Is there anyone who will receive admonition out of such all-encompassing torment and learn the manner of My torment in store for disbelievers and contenders?"

Surah al-Qamar - Verse 17

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ

17. And We have verily made the Qur'an easy to understand and receive admonition. Then, is there anyone who will receive admonition?

The blessed Verse in question is saying that God Almighty truly made the Holy Qur'an easy to understand, such that anyone may easily comprehend the words and expressions therein and thereby find the path toward his happiness.

Thus, people may learn the accounts of former peoples like Prophet Noah's (as) tempest and Ark and the perdition of all peoples all over the earth except for his followers. Thus, they may learn the Recompense of their evil deeds and take a lesson.

Now, is there anyone who remembers God Almighty and receive admonition? It is in this vein that people may reflect upon the horror of torment in this world and attain to felicity. It is worthy of note that not everybody deserves to benefit from Qur'anic Verses since it is solely for those who remember God Almighty rather than those who are immersed in neglect.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 18-19

كَذَّبَتْ عَادٌ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي يَوْمِ نَحْسٍ مُّسْتَمِرٍّ

18. The people of 'Ad belied their Prophet. Then how were My Torment and My Warnings?
19. Indeed, We recurrently sent against them a furious and icy gale on an inauspicious day.

Following the account of Prophet Noah (as) and the tempest, the Holy Qur'an proceeds with those of Prophet Hod (as) and the people of 'Ad so that it makes people aware of the manner of the torment of those who disobeyed Divine Command.

Although the people of 'Ad were strong, robust, and of high stature such that they extracted rocks from mountains and built their houses, they were afflicted with Divine torment in the form of an incessant icy gale on an inauspicious day. The inauspicious day mentioned herein may reflect Divine torment encompassing disbelievers on that day and led to their perdition.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 20-22

تَنزِعُ النَّاسَ كَأَنَّهُمْ أَعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ مُّنقَعِرٍ

فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ

20. A harsh gale plucking out men as if they were eradicated stems of date-palms.
21. Then, how are My Torment and My Warning?
22. And indeed We made the Holy Qur'an facile to comprehend and remember. Then is there anyone who will receive admonition?

Depicting the aforesaid gale, the Holy Qur'an is saying that it plucked down people like the uprooted trunks of palm-trees and scatters them hither and thither. The Arabic word munqa'ir deriving from q-'-r designates the lowest point of anything though it is employed in the sense of 'eradicate.'

The expression may allude that the people of 'Ad were strong and robust and as some exegetes say they had built underground shelters in order to preserve themselves from gales, but the gale blew so harshly that day that it eradicated them from their shelters and scattered them around. It is also said that

the gale struck them unto the earth head down that their heads were severed.

The Arabic word a'jaz is the plural form of 'ijz denoting the lower or rear part of something and their similitude to the lower parts of palm-tree trunks is owing to the point that the gale was so harsh that their limbs were severed and scattered into the air and then their bodies were uprooted from the earth and were scattered hither and thither. It may also connote that the harshly blowing gale pounded them onto the earth head down and broke their necks and severed their heads.

The blessed Verse 21 is warning that people may see how Divine torment and warnings were. God Almighty thus chastised other peoples who trod the path of denial, arrogance, vanity, sinfulness, and rebellion. What do you think that you proceed on their path?

The blessed Verse 22 is saying that God Almighty made the Holy Qur'an facile to comprehend and derive admonitions thereof. Is there anyone who remembers God Almighty and receives admonition? Is there anyone listening to the Divine Call and Warnings?

It is worthy of note that the clause;

"Then how was My Torment and Warnings?"

is reiterated as to the people of 'Ad – once in the beginning of the account and once at the close of it. The difference might lie in the fact that their torment was more severe and more horrible, though all Divine torments are severe.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 23-26

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِالنُّذُرِ

فَقَالُوا أَبَشَرًا مِّنَّا وَاحِدًا نَّتَّبِعُهُ إِنَّا إِذًا لَّفِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ

أَؤُلْقِيَ الذِّكْرُ عَلَيْهِ مِن بَيْنِنَا بَلْ هُوَ كَذَّابٌ أَشِرٌ

سَيَعْلَمُونَ غَدًا مَّنِ الْكَذَّابُ الْأَشِرُ

23. Thamud belied the warners.
24. And they inquired: "Should we obey one single man amongst us? Truly then we should be deeply [entangled with] in error and madness!"
25. Is it that he is the only one from amongst us who receives Revelation? Nay, he is an very arrogant and a liar!"
26. Tomorrow they will come to know who is the liar, the arrogant one!

The people of Thamud are the third people whose account is precisely mentioned as a lesson. They inhabited in the land of Hijr, in the northern region of Hijaz. Their Prophet Salih (as) made his utmost effort to guide them onto the Straight Path, but his efforts were of no avail. They denied Divine Warnings.

The Arabic word nudhur herein connotes warning Prophets and the denial of the Prophetic Call by the people of Thamud is regarded as that of all the Prophets, since the Prophetic Calls of all Prophets were consistent. Nonetheless, the Arabic word nudhur is herein the plural form of indhar denoting statements made accompanied by warning which are naturally included in the words of any Prophet.

The second Verse in question treats of their pretexts as to their denial of the Prophetic Call saying:

"They said: 'Should we follow a man of our community? If we do so, we will be in error and entangled with madness.'"

Arrogance and vanity served as veils between them and Prophetic Calls. They said that Prophet Salih (as) was a man like them. Thus, it would be in vain to follow him. What are his privileges over us so that we should follow his commands? Astray peoples often found the same fault with Prophets saying that they are people like us for which reason they may not be Divinely appointed Prophets.

The Arabic word su‘ur is the plural for of sa‘ir originally denoting blazing fire but it is employed at times in the sense of madness as well, since madmen are imbued with special excitement. Thus, naqa mas‘ura is applied to mad camel. It is worthy of note that the plural form su‘ur connotes emphasis and permanence, be it in respect to madness or as to setting fire ablaze.

In the third blessed Verse disbelievers are saying that taken for granted that Divine Revelation be sent to a certain man, would he be the only one receiving it where there are people enjoying more recognition, fame, and possessions?

They also say that he is an arrogant liar desiring to rule over them. The ignorant solely regard the form but are totally ignorant of significance and truth. Narrow minded people have always regarded Prophets human beings like them and have been ignorant of their spiritual truth.

They have been unaware of the their inward precious jewels thereby they are connected to the spiritual world and that of Divine Command and are prepared to receive Divine Revelation. It is through the

nexus that they receive Divine Favors and impart the same unto their peoples. Therefore, they regarded Prophets liars. It is worthy of note that the Arabic word ashir connotes exuberance accompanied with lustfulness.

The fourth blessed Verse in question thus provides disbelievers with a reply saying that it will be known tomorrow as to who the lustful liar is. Divine torment will strike them into a handful of dust and ashes and Divine Chastisement shall entangle them in the Hereafter. Such false accusations may not befit Prophets but are worthy of disbelievers.

Surah al-Qamar - Verse 27

إِنَّا مُرْسِلُو النَّاقَةِ فِتْنَةً لَّهُمْ فَارْتَقِبْهُمْ وَاصْطَبِرْ

27. Indeed, We are sending the she-camel as a test for them. Therefore, we said unto Salih (as) to watch their end and be patient!

The people of Thamud went to the extreme in denying Prophet Salih's (as) Prophetic Call and said unto him derisively:

"If you are a Prophet, command the mount to send forth a red haired ten month pregnant camel and we share the water with her such that she may drink the water and provide us with milk and the next day we use the water."

To try them God Almighty granted their wish and it was through Divine Will and Omnipotence that a red haired and ten month pregnant camel came out of the mount thus addressing Prophet Salih (as):

"Watch and be patient so that you see what they will do to the she-camel."

Surah al-Qamar - Verse 28

وَنَبِّئْهُمْ أَنَّ الْمَاء قِسْمَةٌ بَيْنَهُمْ كُلُّ شِرْبٍ مُّحْتَضَرٌ

28. And We inform them that the water is to be shared between them and the she-camel, each one of them receive the allotted share.

Addressed to Prophet Salih (as), the blessed Verse in question is asking him to inform the people of Thamud that they should divide the water between themselves and the she-camel. There was seemingly a fountain whose water sufficed to provide the people inhabiting the region with water.

The people of Thamud were assigned to make use of the water one day and leave it to the she-camel the next day and receive milk from her in return. However, they rejected the offer and suffered the evil consequences of their deeds and it will be reflected in the following Verses.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 29-30

فَنَادَوْا صَاحِبَهُمْ فَتَعَاطَى فَعَقَرَ

فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرِ

29. But they called their comrade and he took [a sword] and slew [her].
30. Then, how is My Torment and My Warnings?

The disobedient, vain, and obdurate people made up their minds to slay the she-camel though Prophet Salih (as) had warned them that if they harm her in any way, they would be afflicted with torment.

But, they ignored his warning and called one of their comrades and asked him to slay the she-camel. The Arabic word sahib may herein allude to one of the chiefs of the people of ‘Ad who was one of their most notorious scoundrels named in historical accounts as Qadara ibn Salif. He was an ugly villain and one of the most inauspicious people of the time.

The Arabic word ta‘ati originally denotes handling something or embarking upon some act, but it also connotes fulfilling significant, perilous, toilsome, and profitable tasks. It is worthy of not that all these interpretations are possible in the blessed Verse in question, since embarking upon slaying the she-camel required audacity.

Furthermore, it was toilsome and naturally entailed remuneration. The Arabic word ‘aqar is cognate with ‘uqr originally denoting root and basis, but employed as to camels, it connotes slaying or cutting sinews. Different reports exist as to the manner of slaying the she-camel. Some maintain that her sinews were severed with sword.

Some hold that Qadara lay in ambush behind a rock and shot her with an arrow and then attacked her with a sword. The following blessed Verse in question opens the account of the horrible torment of the disobedient people: "Now observe the manner of My Torment and Warnings."

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 31-32

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَكَانُوا كَهَشِيمِ الْمُحْتَظِرِ

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ

31. Indeed, as the Recompense of their crime, We sent against them an awful cry and the lightning and they became like the stalks scattered in a pen by cattle owners.
32. And verily, We have made the Qur'an easy to understand and remember. Then is there anyone who will receive admonition?

The blessed Verse 31 is saying that God Almighty sent a horrible cry upon them; as a consequence of which, they turned into dried up and mashed plants gathered as fodder for cattle by their owners. The Arabic word sayha ad hoc denotes a loud cry from the heaven and it may connote the awe-inspiring lightning flashing above their city.

The word hashim denotes fragile things like stalks. The word is employed ad hoc in the sense of such stalks flailed and prepared as fodder by cattle owners. It is also applied to the stalks scattered beneath them. The Arabic word muhtadir is applied to one who gathers dried plants to feed his cattle.

The metaphorical expression employed in the blessed Verse in question regarding the torment of the people of Thamud is quite wondrous and meaningful, since God Almighty did not send hosts from the heaven and the earth to cause the perdition of the disobedient people, but smashed everything within a wide expanse solely through a loud cry heard from the heaven, an awe-inspiring lightning, an enormous explosion.

Their prosperous palaces and mansions turned into cattle fodder and their corpses became like flailed plants scattered beneath cattle. Comprehension of such meaning was rather hard for former peoples, but it is not thus today owing to awareness as to the aftermath of explosions shattering everything within their scopes.

It is however worthy of note that the Lightning of Divine Torment is not to be compared to such explosions and thus it becomes evident that such awe-inspiring lightning inflicted what a massive disaster upon such disobedient people.

The second blessed Verse in question asks whether such admonitory and excruciating fate is not sufficient to awaken mankind. Is there anyone who receives admonition out of the Holy Qur'an and its

vivid and crystal clear expressions, accounts, and warnings?

---

1. A building was ruined in Beijing, the capital of China, on whose pillars it was inscribed that it had been erected in the second year after the Cleaving of the Moon (Majma‘ al-Bayan, vol. 24, p. 11).
2. See Shi‘i and Sunni exegetic sources including: Majma‘ al-Bayan; Tafsir Burhan; Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Nur al-Thisqalayn; Tafsir Nimuna; Tafsir Makhzan al-‘Irfan; Tafsir Nur; Atyab al-Bayan; Tafsir al-Mizan.
3. Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 133.
4. in Dala’il
5. transmitting on the authority of Anas
6. 99:7-8
7. Usul Kafi, vol. 2, p. 269.
8. Raghib's Mufradat.
9. 26:116
10. 11:37

Source URL:
https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-17/surah-al-qamar-chapter-54-verses-1-32