

## Surah al-Qiyama, Chapter 75

(The Resurrection)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 40

### General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has forty Verses. The designation of the Chapter, denoting Resurrection, derives from the opening Verse. The Chapter, as reflected in its title, mainly treats of the Day of Resurrection.

It opens with an enumeration of the harsh and frightening incidents to occur at the end of the world and proceeds to make mention of the happy and sad appearances of the good and evil doers.

Further, the blessed Chapter deals with the states of mankind in the throes of death, the creation of man from a drop of semen as a token of Divine Omnipotence in recreating him. It is noteworthy that four Verses in the middle of the Chapter treat of the manner of Revelation and recitation of the Holy Qur'an.

According to the traditions, one who perseveres in the recitation of the blessed Chapter and acts upon it shall be able to happily and smilingly cross the Bridge Spanning Hellfire (sirat).

### Surah al-Qiyama – Verses 1–4

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ نَجْمَعَ عِظَامَهُ

بَلَىٰ قَادِرِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُسَوِّيَ بَنَانَهُ

**1. I swear by the Day of Resurrection.**

**2. And I swear by the self-reproaching self [the awakened conscience reproaching committing sins].**

**3. Does man think that We shall not assemble his bones.**

**4. Yes, We are Able to put together in perfect order the tips of his fingers.**

The blessed Chapter opens with two meaningful oaths:

**"I swear by the Day of Resurrection. And I swear by the self-reproaching self."**

Qur'an exegetes disagree on the connotation of la; some maintain that it is an emphatic particle and thereby lays further emphasis on the oath rather than negating it; some hold that it is a negative particle implying that the question is of such significance that an oath is not taken thereto, as it is said in common usage that someone's life is far dearer to be sworn on it.

The majority of the exegetes opt for the former, though some prefer the latter, maintaining that a clause may not be opened by the redundant la, but the emphatic particle occurs in the middle of the clause.

However, the former interpretation sounds to be further befitting, since the Qur'an swears by things more significant than the Day of Resurrection, e.g. the Pure Essence of God Almighty. Thus, it would be quite

natural to swear by the Day of Resurrection herein.

Furthermore, the occurrence of the redundant *la* is common in Arabic. In this respect, certain opening lines by the pre-Islamic poet Imra' al-Qays have been quoted which are indicative of the usage of the redundant *la* in the Arabic tongue.

We maintain that discussing the redundancy or the negation of the *la* is not that significant, since the usage entails the same result, namely the significance of the object of the oath.

The point is that the existence of conscience in the heart reflects the inevitable Resurrection, as human soul is brimmed with happiness upon doing good righteous deeds and it is thereby rewarded. Au contraire, the soul is severely tormented and chastised upon committing evil deeds, such that man may commit suicide in order to deliver himself from pangs of conscience; thus, the verdict as to the severest punishment is issued by conscience and man executes the verdict.

The reflection of the self-reproaching self in human soul is so wide ranging that it may be studied and investigated from any aspect.

Taking into account the truth that there is a small means of trial in the microcosm, i.e. human existence, how may one imagine that the macrocosm with all its majesty be deprived of a great just tribunal? Thus, we learn about the inevitability of the Day of Resurrection through the conscience in human heart. The interesting link between the twain oaths are thereby manifested. In other words, the latter oath serves as an argument substantiating the former.

Qur'an exegetes suggest different interpretations for the nature of the self-reproaching self. A well-known interpretation was already mentioned according to which human conscience reproaches man upon his committing evil deeds and makes him to revise and compensate his past evil deeds.

Another interpretation is that it implies censuring all mankind on the Day of Resurrection, such that the believers reproach themselves for not having done more good righteous deeds and the disbelievers reproach themselves for having trodden the path of disbelief, polytheism, and sin.

Some exegetes hold that the self-reproaching self reflects that of the disbeliever that reproaches him for having done evil deeds. However, the first interpretation is in line with the preceding and the following blessed Verses.

The tribunal of the conscience is so majestic and cherished that God Almighty swears by it and regards it as something significant. It is truly majestic, since it is one of the most significant of human means of salvation provided that the conscience happens to be awakened rather than enfeebled by the burden of sins. It is also worthy of note that the object of the oath (*muqassamun lahu*) is omitted as the contextual meaning of the following blessed Verses reflect the same.

Thus, the blessed Verses in question say:

*"By the Day of Resurrection and the self-reproaching self that you shall be all raised on the Day of Resurrection and shall be recompensed for your deeds."*

It is interesting that the blessed Verse swears by the Day of Resurrection that there shall be Resurrection, reflecting that it is regarded as a certainty by which one may swear against those who belie it.

Finally, different selves have been enumerated in the Qur'anic Verses, the traditions, and the prayers.

1. The soul that bids to evil (nafs ammara bi-'l-su') and may lead to decadence and corruption if it is unchecked by reason and faith.

Thus, it is reflected in the Qur'an:

***"Verily [there is] the soul that bids to evil unless My Lord bestows Mercy [upon me]."***

Such self bids man to commit evil deeds, unless God Almighty grants mercy. It persists in bidding man to evil so that he may be entangled with the evil consequences of his evil deeds. In this vein, it is narrated from the Noble Imam 'Ali (as) that the soul bidding man to evil may be likened to a hypocrite who flatters a man and pretends to be his friend so that it may overcome him and lead him to the following stages.<sup>1</sup>

It is reflected in the Holy Qur'an that having cast Joseph (as) into a well, his brothers returned to their father with his shirt smeared with blood, saying that a wolf had devoured Joseph (as).

The Prophet Jacob (as) replied:

***"Nay, but your own selves have made up a tale,"***<sup>2</sup>

namely your selves adorned such evil deeds in our eyes and provoked you to commit such evil deed.

According to a tradition, the believers are required to invoke God Almighty by saying:

*"O Lord! Do not leave me with my self for a twinkling of an eye."*<sup>3</sup>

In his prayers of the complainants (munajat shakkin) the Noble Imam Zayn al-'Àbidin (as) thus invokes God Almighty:

*"I complain to You of the self bidding man to evil, hastening toward misdeeds and sins. Afflicted by any evil, it cries out. It is niggardly when some good is supposed to be done to others by it. It is quite prone to sports and indulgence. It is imbued with neglect and negligence. It leads me to hasten toward committing sins and impedes me from repentance."*

2. The reproaching self (nafs lawwama) which is mentioned in the blessed Chapter in question and may

imply conscience. It is in man's nature to reproach himself owing to committing misdeeds or decrease in the good ones in this world and the Hereafter. Such reproach is equal to repentance that may serve as a prelude to repenting from committing sins or it may lead to despair and self-alienation.

3. The peaceful self (nafs mutma'inna) that results from establishing ritual prayers and remembrance of God Almighty through which man attains to security and peace of mind.

Mention is made of the peaceful self in the Qur'anic Verses, e.g.

***"Establish prayers for My Remembrance"***<sup>4</sup>;

***"Behold! In the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest"***<sup>5</sup>;

***"O the peaceful self! Return to your Lord well-pleased and well-pleasing! Enter among My servants. And enter My Paradise!"***<sup>6</sup>.

A man endowed with security and peace of mind does not entertain fear of death, but he is eager to fall a martyr in Allah's Cause. He is indifferent to mammon but is always satisfied with Divine Preordainments.

The blessed Verses 3 and 4 include a rhetorical question:

***"Does man think that We shall not assemble his bones? Yes, We are able to put together in perfect order the tips of his fingers."***

In this vein, it is narrated that a polytheist by the name of Ibn Rabi'a who was the Noble Prophet's (S) neighbor came to him and inquired about the nature and the time of the Day of Resurrection and said to the Noble Prophet (S) that even if he saw that Day, he would not believe in him as it would be incredible to God might assemble the bones.

Then the blessed Verses in question were revealed and replied to his question. Thus, the Noble Prophet (S) invoked God Almighty to rid him of such evil neighbor.<sup>7</sup>

Qur'anic Verses with the same theme are to be found, an instance of which is

***"And he puts forth for Us a parable and forgets his own creation. He says: "Who will give life to these bones after they are rotten and have become dust?"***<sup>8</sup>.

One of the disbelievers held a piece of rotten bone in his hand and aiming at belying Resurrection he asked the Noble Prophet:

***"Who will give life to these rotten bones?"***

It is noteworthy that the verbal form yahsabu ("think, imagine"), derived from the root h-s-b, implies that these disbelievers did not truly believe in their own words but they solely relied on unfounded claims and illusions.

Particular emphasis is herein laid on bones, since compared to other bodily organs, bones last longer such that when it turns into dust and be scattered, shallow people set less hopes in their assembly.

Furthermore, bones constitute the pillars of the body by which all human movements and activities may be possible. The diversity of the sizes and the forms of the bones is one of the wonders of Creation and the mere dysfunction of a tiny vertebra in the backbone may entail the paralysis of the whole body.

The Arabic plural nominal form *banan* denotes fingers and fingertips, both of which imply that not only God Almighty shall assemble the bones, but He shall put the smallest and the most delicate of the bones, namely the fingertips, in their original form.

The expression may be a delicate allusion to the fingerprints which are different in men. In other words, these fingerprints reflect human character. Thus, fingerprinting has turned into a discipline employed in criminology, such that if a burglar touches a door handle, window, lock, or box, a sample of his fingerprint may be taken to compare with the existing records of the thieves and criminals and lead to his arrest.

## Surah al-Qiyama – Verses 5-6

بَلْ يُرِيدُ الْإِنْسَانُ لِيَفْجُرَ أَمَامَهُ

يَسْأَلُ أَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ

**5. Nay! Man [entertains no doubts as to Resurrection, but he] desires to be free to continue committing sins all his life.**

**6. He asks: "When will be this Day of Resurrection?"**

The blessed Verse makes a reference to one of the true reasons lying behind belying Resurrection, saying that man does not entertain doubts concerning Divine Omnipotence to assemble the bones and raising the dead, but by his belying he aims at continuing to commit sins all his life. He desires to have absolute freedom to engage himself in concupiscent desires, sins, and wrong doing.

Thus, he aims to falsely satisfy his conscience and fail to regard himself answerable to Divine Creation, since believing in Resurrection, raising the dead, and Divine Tribunal of Justice serve as a great impediment to any form of disobedience and sin. He intends to enjoy absolute freedom to destroy such barrier and freely commit any sin.

It is not restricted to the people living in the past, but denial of Resurrection serves as a pretext for enjoying absolute freedom to commit sins, evading obligations and trespassing Divine Bounds, but the true reasons lying behind Origin and Resurrection are quite evident.

Regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question, it is mentioned in 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's Qur'an exegesis that reference is herein made to one who accords precedence to committing sins and procrastinates when he is supposed to repent from his sins.

Some Qur'an exegetes also maintain that the nominal plural form fujur herein implies belying, such that the blessed Verse is saying that man desires to belie the inevitable Day of Resurrection. Nonetheless, the former exegesis sounds to be further befitting.

The following Verse adds that he belier inquires about the time of the Day of Resurrection. By his rhetorical question, he intends to evade his obligations and pave the ground for committing further sins. It is worthy of note, however, that inquiring about the time of Resurrection does not imply that they believed in the Day of Resurrection and they inquired about the time of its arrival, but the truth is that such rhetorical question served as the prelude to their denial of the Day of Resurrection.

## Surah al-Qiyama – Verses 7-12

فَإِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصْرُ

وَحَسَفَ الْقَمْرُ

وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ

يَقُولُ الْإِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَيْنَ الْمَفْرُ

كَأَلَّا لَا وَزَرَ

## إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمُسْتَقَرُّ

7. *When the sight shall be dazed out of fear.*
8. *And the moon shall be eclipsed.*
9. *And the sun and moon shall be joined.*
10. *On that Day man shall inquire: "Where is the escape?"*
11. *No! There is neither refuge nor an escape!*
12. *Unto your Lord [Alone] shall be the final place of rest.*

The preceding blessed Verses closed with a rhetorical question as to the time of its arrival posed by those belying Resurrection. These Verses provide replies to the question.

Making a reference to the occurrences to happen prior to Resurrection, namely the great developments to happen in the world and destroy its order, the blessed Verses 7–9 say:

***"When the sight shall be dazed out of fear. And the moon shall be eclipsed. And the sun and moon shall be joined."***

Qur'an exegetes have provided different exegeses as to the joining of the sun and the moon. Some hold that both of them rise in the east and set in the west and there are some who maintain that they share the characteristic of being eclipsed.

The moon may also approach the sun under the influence of the latter's gravity and finally join it, hence their being eclipsed.

It is noteworthy that mention is herein made of two of the most significant phenomena at the end of the world, namely the eclipse of the moon and the joining of the sun and the moon.

Similar references to the twain phenomena are more or less reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, an instance of which is:

***"When the sun is darkened"***<sup>9</sup>.

It is common knowledge that the moon reflects the light of the sun and when the sun is plunged into darkness, the moon is also darkened and the earth plunged into frightening shadows. Thus, the world shall come to an end with an immense development and it shall begin by another great development, namely the second blowing into the Trumpet as the breeze of life blown into the world.

Then, mankind shall be raised from the dead. In the blessed Verse 10, man shall ask:

***"Where is the escape?"***

Yes, the disbelievers and the sinners who had formerly belied the Day of Resurrection shall search for a safe haven out of shame and look for some escape from carrying the burden of sins and fear of torments; in the same manner that upon facing a perilous incident, they looked for an escape in this world. They falsely imagine that they can find some way out of the torments in the Hereafter.

As reflected in the blessed Verses 11 and 12, it shall be said unto them:

***"There is neither refuge nor an escape! Unto your Lord [Alone] shall be the final place of rest."***

Other exegeses have been suggested, instances of which are as follows: the Final Judgment shall be in God's Hands on that Day; the final abode in Paradise or Hell shall be decreed by God Almighty; mankind shall stand at His Threshold for Reckoning of their deeds and their Recompense. However, taking into account the following blessed Verse, what we have chose as the exegesis of the blessed Verse sounds further befitting.

Some Qur'an exegetes hold that the blessed Verse in question is one of the Qur'anic Verses treating of the everlasting path of human spiritual growth, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, e.g.

***"To Him is the Final Return"***<sup>10</sup>;

***"O man! You shall toil to return unto your Lord and you shall meet Him"***<sup>11</sup>;

***"And all shall return unto your Lord"***<sup>12</sup>.

In other words, man is like a traveler having departed from the bounds of non-existence for the realm of existence and is proceeding toward the Absolute and Boundless Existence of God Almighty to proceed on this path of spiritual growth everlastingly, entering different stages of closeness unto God Almighty, unless they deviate from their course, fall down, and finally perish.

## **Surah al-Qiyama – Verses 13-15**

يُنَبِّأُ الْإِنْسَانَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ

بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ

وَلَوْ أَلْقَىٰ مَعَاذِيرَهُ

**13. On that Day man shall be informed of what he sent forward and what he left behind.**

**14. Nay! Man shall be a witness against himself,**

**15. Even though he may [outwardly] put forth his excuses.**

The blessed Verse 13 says that man shall be informed of all the deeds he sent forwarded or delayed in doing them. Different exegeses have been suggested for these two expressions.

Some say that a reference is herein made to the deeds one has sent forward in his life time or the posthumous vestiges of his good and bad deeds left behind amongst the people who act upon them and he shall be recompensed by the good and evil consequences of their deeds. Such vestiges entailing good and evil consequences include the books, buildings, and offspring.

There are some exegetes who hold that a reference is herein made to the earliest and the last deeds done in lifetime. In other words, man shall be notified of all his deeds, the possessions he sent forward, and the possessions he left for his heirs.

It is also suggested that the blessed Verse makes alludes to the sins one put forward and the obedience delayed by him or vice versa. The first exegesis sounds further befitting, particularly when we taken into account a tradition narrated from the Noble Imam Baqir (as) regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question.

The Noble Imam (as) is narrated as saying:

*"On that Day man shall be informed of whatever good and evil deeds he sent forward or left behind, of his vestiges as traditions upon which the prospective generations will act. If such traditions happen to be evil, his recompense shall be equal to those who act upon them, without anything being decreased of their sins. Au contraire, if the traditions he left behind happen to be good, his rewards shall equal to theirs without anything being decreased of their Rewards. 13*

The blessed Verse 14 says:

***"Nay! Man shall be a witness against himself."***

The point is that God Almighty and the angels shall inform him of man's deeds, though there shall be no need to do so, since man shall be a witness against himself on that Day and he and his bodily organs shall testify then.

The blessed Verse 15 says:

***"Even though he may [outwardly] put forth his excuses."***

The same theme is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, e.g.

***"Their hearing and their eyes and their skins shall testify against them as to what they used to***

do"<sup>14</sup>;

***"This Day We shall seal up their mouths, and their hands shall speak unto Us, and their legs shall bear witness to what they used to do"***<sup>15</sup>.

Therefore, the best witnesses testifying against one's deeds at the Great Tribunal on the Day of Resurrection shall be man himself, since he knows best about his own deeds, though God Almighty has assigned numerous other witnesses to provide him with further testimonies.

The Arabic infinitive or participial form *basira* denotes "insight, knowledge" and "knowledgeable" respectively. Thus, some exegetes suggest that the word implies enlightening argument and reason. The Arabic nominal form *ma'adhir* is the plural form of *ma'dhara* originally denoting what effaces the vestiges of sin which may imply true excuse and at times outward excuse.

It is also suggested that *ma'adhir* is the plural form of *mi'dhar* denoting veil and covering. Based on the later suggestion, the blessed Verse would suggest that man is aware of himself, even though he may cast a veil on his deeds. However, the first exegesis sounds further befitting.

God Almighty shall reckon the deeds on that Great Day and He is All-Aware of the inward and outward secrets and He shall leave man to reckon his own deeds, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

***"Read your book. You yourself are sufficient as a one who reckons against himself this Day"***<sup>16</sup>.

The blessed Verses in question all treat of Resurrection, though reference is also made to this world.

## **Surah al-Qiyama – Verses 16-19**

لَا تُحَرِّكُ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ

فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَاهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ

ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ

- 16. Move not your tongue hastily in reciting it [i.e. the Holy Qur'an].**  
**17. Its collection and recitation is upon Us.**  
**18. And when We have recited it unto you, then follow its recitation.**  
**19. Then, it is for Us to make it clear.**

The same theme is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

**"Be not in haste with the recitation of the Qur'an before its Revelation is completed to you"<sup>17</sup>.**

The Holy Qur'an in its entirety was revealed unto the Noble Prophet (S) on Night of Decree (laylat al-qadr) then its Verses were revealed in time within a period of twenty three years of his Prophetic call.

Thus, the blessed Verse

**"Be not in haste with the recitation of the Qur'an"**

reflects that the Noble Prophet (S) had been already aware of the Revelation of the blessed Verses.

Thus, in the blessed Verse 18, God Almighty says unto him:

**"And when We have recited it unto you, then follow its recitation."**

Some of the Qur'anic Verses concern the manner of the Revelation unto the Noble Prophet (S) and its Recitation by the people. In such Verses, God Almighty says unto His Messenger (S) to refrain from recitation upon the Revelation prior to its completion and be no in haste with His Word.

There is no room for concern as to consigning them to oblivion, since their preservation is upon Him. Thus, he is asked to let the Revelation be completed; then, he may recite the blessed Verses. Therefore, it is for God Almighty to clarify the Revelation to the Noble Prophet (S).

It is worthy of note that these Verses reflect the originality of the Holy Qur'an and its preservation from any distortion, since God Almighty has promised to collect, recite, and clarify it. It is narrated that when Gabriel was sent down to the Noble Prophet (S) to reveal the Verses unto him, he kept utter silence and upon the departure of Gabriel, he commenced the recitation of the blessed Verses.<sup>18</sup>

## **Surah al-Qiyama – Verses 20-21**

كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ

وَتَذُرُونَ الْآخِرَةَ

**20. It is not as you imagine [that you regard as concealed the reasons lying behind Resurrection], but you love the fleeting life [of this world and absolute indulgence in the pleasures of the flesh],**  
**21. And neglect the Hereafter.**

The blessed Verses in question continues the discussions as to Resurrection and enumerates further characteristics of Resurrection and the unfounded arguments suggested to belie it, saying that it is not the case that the reasons lying behind Resurrection be concealed as a consequence of which you fail to comprehend its veracity, but the truth is that you love this fleeting worldly life for which you neglect the Hereafter.

The main reason suggested for the denial of Resurrection does not lie in entertaining doubts as to Divine Omnipotence in assembling the scattered dust of the rotten bones but your intense love for mammon and unchecked concupiscent desires lead you to remove all impediments. Now, since acknowledging Resurrection and acting upon Divine Injunctions entail numerous obstacles, you rise to belie to question in principle and totally neglect the Hereafter.

As mentioned above, one of the most significant factors leading to materialism and denial of Origin and Resurrection is enjoy absolute freedom in indulging in committing sin and the pleasures of the flesh. Compared to the past, it is further clearly reflected in our modern world.

The twain blessed Verses in question actually lay emphasis on the preceding Verses:

**"Nay! Man [entertains no doubts as to Resurrection, but he] desires to be free to continue committing sins all his life. He asks: "When will be this Day of Resurrection?"**

## **Surah al-Qiyama – Verses 22-23**

وُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاضِرَةٌ

إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ

**22. Some faces that Day shall be happy,**

**23. Looking at their Lord.**

The blessed Verses treat of the states of the good doing believers and the evil doing disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection, saying:

**"Some faces that Day shall be happy, looking at their Lord."**

The Arabic participial form nadhira, cognate with nadhra, connotes a particular kind of happiness which is consequent to affluence and welfare and is accompanied by felicity, beauty, and splendor. In other words, their appearance reflects their great happiness consequent to being endowed with Divine Bounties.

The same theme is to found elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

***"You shall recognise in their faces [those of the people of Paradise] the splendor of delight"***<sup>19</sup>.

The blessed Verses 22 and 23 reflect the material and spiritual Bounties respectively. The blessed Verse 23 says that they only look at the Pure Essence of their Lord with their eye of heart and through inward intuition.

Such glance makes them absorbed in the Unique Essence and the Absolute Perfection and Beauty, such that one single moment of their exalted state is far superior to what exists in this world. In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Ridha (as) that they await their Lord's Rewards.<sup>20</sup>

It is noteworthy that the precedence of

***"at their Lord"***

over

***"happy"***

restricts the meaning, namely they solely look at Him not at anyone else.

## **Surah al-Qiyama – Verses 24-25**

وُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِسِيرَةٍ

تَظُنُّ أَنْ يُفْعَلَ بِهَا فَاقِرَةٌ

***24. And some faces, that Day, will be gloomy.***

***25. Aware that some excruciating torment is in store for them.***

Attachment to mammon and neglecting the Hereafter shall entail gloominess of appearance on the Day of Resurrection. The disbelievers with their gloomy appearance shall stand before the believers with happy faces.

The Arabic participial form basira denotes "unripe, undue" and the nominal form busr is applied to unripe fruit and to gloominess of appearance, as a consequence of reaction against the angst against the torments in store for the disbelievers. Therefore, when they notice the tokens of torments and the records of their deeds imbued with sins and devoid of good righteous deeds, they entertain intense sorrow and frown at their unfavorable state.

The blessed Verse 25 says that they are aware that some excruciating torment is in store for them. The Arabic nominal form faqira denotes vertebrae or backbone, though it connotes any harsh incident that crushes the backbone.

The cognate form faqir ("poor, indigent") is applied to one who is burdened to the extent that his back has been crushed. The expression reflects the harsh torments awaiting the disbelievers in Hell.

They await painful torments, whereas the aforesaid group await Divine Graciousness and meeting with the Beloved. One group awaits the most painful torments and the other look forward to receiving the best material and spiritual Bounties.

## Surah al-Qiyama – Verses 26–30

كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِيَ

وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقٍ

وَضَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ

وَالْتَفَّتِ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ

إِلَى رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ

**26. Nay, he will not believe till his soul reaches the collar bone,**

**27. And it will be said: "Who can cure him?"**

**28. And he becomes certain of parting from the world;**

**29. And one leg will twist around the other [in the throes of death].**

**30. The path shall be, on that Day, toward your Lord [’s Tribunal].**

The blessed Verses treat of the throes of death opening a window to the other world, saying that he shall never believe till his soul reaches his throat. It will be on that Day that his purgatory eyes will open, the veils will be cast asunder, and he shall see the tokens of torment and chastisement. He will be aware of his deeds and will intend to believe, though it will be of no avail to him.

The Arabic word taraqi is the plural form of tarquwa ("collar bone"). The expression "the soul reaches the collar bone or throat" connote the throes of death, the last breath, and the last moments of life, since when the soul leaves the body, the organs further remote from the heart, e.g. hands and feet, fail to function earlier than other organs, as if the soul gradually leaves the body till it reaches the throat.

The blessed Verse 27 says that then the people around the person in the throes of death will hastily look for some way out, saying:

**"Who can cure him?"**

They utter the words desperately, though they know that it is all over and physicians may not cure him. The Arabic word raq, derived from r-q-y, denotes climbing and ascending and the cognate word ruqya implies the prayers and invocations leading to cure. The cognate raqi is used in the sense of physician, since he delivers man from diseases.

Therefore, the blessed Verse says that those surrounding the patient and at times the patient himself cry out of severe angst and inquire whether there is one to say a prayer and cure the patient.

It is also suggested that the blessed Verse inquires:

**"Which of the angels take his soul to the heaven, those in charge of torment or those of mercy?"**

However, the former exegesis sounds to be further befitting and accurate.

The blessed Verse 28 makes a reference to the total despair of the person in the throes of death, saying:

**"He totally loses his hope and becomes certain of parting from the world."**

The blessed Verse 29 says:

**"And one leg will twist around the other [in the throes of death]."**

Such twisting is owing to the intensity of the angst cause by the soul leaving the body or it may reflect

that the limbs are rendered dysfunctional as the soul is leaving them.

Further exegeses have been suggested for the blessed Verse, an instance of which includes a tradition narrated from the Noble Imam Baqir (as):

*"The world twists around the Hereafter."*

The tradition is to be found in 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's exegetic work.<sup>21</sup>

The blessed Verse 30 says:

***"The path shall be, on that Day, toward your Lord [’s Tribunal]."***

Everyone shall return unto Him to attend His Tribunal of Justice. All paths will lead unto Him. The blessed Verse lays further emphasis on Resurrection and raising all His servants from the dead. It may also reflect the orientation of the spiritual growth of the servants toward the Pure and Boundless Divine Essence.

Some traditions have been narrated in this respect, three instances of which include:

It is narrated from the Noble Imam Zayn al-‘Àbidin (as) that in reply to a question concerning death he said:

*"Death to the believer is like taking off a filthy garment infected with insects, unfettering heavy shackles and turning them into the best attires, the most sweet smelling perfume, the most convenient of the mounts, and the most comfortable homes; the similitude of death to the disbeliever includes taking off a majestic attire, and departing from comfortable homes and turning them into the filthiest and the coarsest of garments, the most horrible homes, and the most excruciating torments."*<sup>22</sup>

It is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) that he was inquired regarding a depiction of death.

The Imam (as) replied:

*"It is like a sweet scent to the believer by which he falls into a state of sleep in which he is totally untouched by pain and torment, but to the disbeliever, it is like the bites of serpents and scorpions or even more painful than them."*<sup>23</sup>

It is worthy of note that death is like a door to the world of survival. In this respect, it is narrated from the Noble Imam 'Ali (as) as saying:

*"Every house has a door and that of the Hereafter is death."*<sup>24</sup>

It is narrated from the Noble Imam Sadiq (as) as saying:

*"Remembrance of death effaces the concupiscent desires and eradicates negligence from the heart. It*

*inspires hopes and softens human disposition, withers the tokens of following the desires of the flesh, quenches the fire of avarice, and belittles the world in the eyes.”*

This is what the Noble Prophet (S) intended by saying that one hour spent on reflection is worth one year spent on worshipping.<sup>25</sup> The Prophetic tradition applies to one of the clear instances of reflection rather than the exclusive reference to the topic.

## **Surah al-Qiyama – Verses 31-33**

فَلَا صَدَّقَ وَلَا صَلَّىٰ

وَلَكِن كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ

ثُمَّ زَهَبَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ يَتَمَطَّىٰ

**31. So he neither believed nor established ritual prayer.**

**32. But on the contrary, he belied and turned away.**

**33. Then he walked in conceit to his family.**

Proceeding with the discussion on death as the first step taken on the path toward the Hereafter, the blessed Verses in question say that the disbelievers lack the provisions required for the journey.

The first two blessed Verses say that one who belied Resurrection might neither believe, nor acknowledge Divine Revelation, nor establish ritual prayers for Him, but he followed the path of denial and turned away from Divine Command.

The Arabic clause *fa-la saddaqa* implies that he did not acknowledge Resurrection, reckoning of deeds, Divine Revelation, monotheism, and the Prophetic Call of Allah’s Messenger (S).

Some exegetes suggests that a reference is herein made to the disbelievers ceasing from expending in Allah’s Cause, as it is accompanied by the establishment of ritual prayers. However, the second Verse clearly indicates that denial is the opposite of such acknowledgement. Therefore, the first exegesis sounds more accurate.

The blessed Verse 33 says that he walked arrogantly to his family. Having imagined that he attained to a

great triumph though indifference and belying the Noble Prophet (S) and Divine Revelation, he walked in conceit to his family to recount, as usual, his glorious deeds and in doing so, the manner of his gait was indicative of such arrogance and self-conceit.

The Arabic verbal form yatammata, derived from the root m-t-w, originally denotes "he stretched his body," though it herein implies that he walked proudly, strutted, or swaggered. The word may also connote walking listlessly and lethargically, though the former sense fits the context herein.

## Surah al-Qiyama – Verses 34-36

أَوْلَىٰ لَكَ فَأَوْلَىٰ

ثُمَّ أَوْلَىٰ لَكَ فَأَوْلَىٰ

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى

**34. Divine torment is further befitting you, further befitting!**

**35. Then, Divine torment is further befitting you, further befitting!**

**36. Does man think that he will be left in vain?**

Addressing such disbelievers, the first two blessed Verses in question recurrently warn them:

**"Divine torment is further befitting you, further befitting."**

Different suggestions have been provided for the clause

**thumma awla la-ka fa-awla ("Divine torment is further befitting you, further befitting"),**

including: it is a warning to them against Divine torment; you deserve such entanglement, you deserve it; it would be more befitting to reproach you, it would be further befitting; woe unto you, woe unto you; may the worldly rewards be far from you, may the rewards in the Hereafter be far from you; may you be entangled with torments and afflictions, may you suffer the torments and afflictions; it is more befitting for you to suffer the torments which you notice in the battlefield of Badr, and the torments in the grave and on the Day of Resurrection are more befitting for you.

However, it is needless to say that the majority of such interpretations imply one comprehensive

meaning, namely warning against the torments and the evil consequences of misdeeds awaiting the sinners in this world, in the purgatory, and on the Day of Resurrection.

It is reported in a number of traditions that the Noble Prophet (S) met Abu Jahl and gave him pieces of advice. Abu Jahl said:

*"You warn me, but neither you nor your Lord may harm me. I am the most powerful of the inhabitants of this land."*

It was on that occasion that these Qur'anic Verses were sent down to the Noble Prophet (S).<sup>26</sup>

The blessed Verse 36 treats of two appealing arguments concerning Resurrection, one of which is indicative of the goal behind human creation and also Divine Wisdom, and the other reflects His Omnipotence through making reference to the development of semen in the different embryonic stages.

The blessed Verse says:

***"Does man think that he will be left in vain?"***

The Arabic adverb of manner suddan denotes "in vain, aimlessly." The Arabic phrase ibl-u sudda is applied to a camel left unattended that may graze wherever it likes. The Arabic nominal form insan connotes that man who belies Resurrection.

The blessed Verse implies such questions: How may he believe that God Almighty creates the vast world with such majesty and so many wonders for man without any goal? Each and every organ is created for some particular goal or goals, e.g. eyes for seeing, ears for hearing, heart for pumping food, oxygen, and water to all the cells of the body, even there is a reason lying behind the creation of fingerprints.

How may one believe that there is no goal behind the creation of man and his is created in vain, without any plans, any obligations, e.g. as to enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. If a man manufactures something aimlessly, he will be criticized and he will not be regarded as having a sound mind.

How may have God Almighty, the All-Wise, created the world in vain? If it be said that the goal lies in the fleeting life of man, aiming at recurrent feeding, rest, and entanglement with innumerable pains, such great creation may not be logically justified. Consequently, we may draw the conclusion that man is created for a greater purpose, namely the everlasting life in proximity to the Mercy of the Truth and incessant and endless spiritual growth.<sup>27</sup>

## **Surah al-Qiyama – Verses 37-40**

أَلَمْ يَكْ نُطْفَةً مِّن مَّنِيِّ يَمْنَىٰ

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ

فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ

أَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَىٰ

**37. Was he not a discharge of semen emitted into the womb?**

**38. Then he became a clot. Then, [Allah] shaped and fashioned [him] in due proportion.**

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

**40. Is He not Able to give life to the dead?**

Creation is the first token of Omnipotence. The blessed Chapter opened with swearing by Resurrection and it closes with Divine Omnipotence to raise the dead on Day of Resurrection.

Alluding to the second argument mentioned in the preceding Verse, the blessed Verse 37 asks:

**"Was he not a discharge of semen emitted into the womb?"**

The following two Verses respond:

**"Then he became a clot. Then, [Allah] shaped and fashioned [him] in due proportion. And made of him two sexes, male and female."**

It is in the last Verse (40) that the rhetorical question is posed:

**"Is He not able to give life to the dead?"**

Is He, who creates the little and worthless drop of semen anew each and every day in the dark womb and gives a new life and a novel form to it until it finally changes into a male or female human being and is born, not Able to give life to the dead?

It is actually a response to those who oftentimes belie the question of material Resurrection and refute being raised from the dead. In order to substantiate the veracity of Resurrection, the Holy Qur'an makes

references to the threshold of human existence and the wondrous embryonic stages of development and thereby reflects Divine Omnipotence.

In other words, the best argument to substantiate the contingency of some object is its actualization. It is worthy of note that God Almighty has also demonstrated other instances of His Omnipotence through the recreations at the hands of His Messengers in this world. Prophet Jesus (as) breathed into two birds which he had made of clay and gave them life.

Prophet Abraham (as) called the birds which he had smashed and minced and thereby gave them a new life. Prophet Moses' (as) seventy companions who had accompanied him to the Mount Sinai (Tur) and had died following Divine Manifestation there, were given new lives by God Almighty.

Those who belie Resurrection have not truly gained some knowledge concerning God Almighty, since if human deeds be effaced upon his death, doubt will be cast upon Divine Wisdom, as it is reflected in the blessed Verses:

***"Does man think that he will be left in vain?"***<sup>28</sup>;

***"Did you think that We had created you in vain and that you would not be brought back unto Us?"***<sup>29</sup>.

The blessed Verses firstly treat of Divine Wisdom in raising the dead on the Day of Resurrection and secondly to Divine Omnipotence in the Creation of man, reflecting the contingency of his recreation.

The Arabic nominal form *nutfa* originally denotes trickle of water or pure water, though it is applied to semen discharge in the process of reproduction. The embryonic stages of development of semen constitute some of the most surprising phenomena in the world of existence, studied in the discipline of embryology, many of whose secrets have been unveiled in recent centuries.

The interesting point is that the Holy Qur'anic Verses had recurrently made references to such questions and had laid emphasis on them as tokens of Divine Omnipotence when such discoveries were not made yet.

They are the tokens of the Majesty and Glory of the Great Heavenly Book. It is noteworthy that the blessed Verses in question make mention of some of the embryonic stages, though further stages are to be found elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an in the opening Verses of Chapters 22 and 23, the exegetic details of which may be found above.

It is worthy of note that the Arabic pronoun

***dhalika*** ("*that*")

implies pointing at some object lying afar. The pronoun herein implies Divine Majesty and Greatness, connoting that His Divine Pure Essence is so Exalted that it lies beyond human reflection.

It is narrated that the Noble Prophet was reciting

***"Glorious art Thou! O Lord! Thou possess such Omnipotence!"***

when the blessed Verse 40,

***"Is He not Able to give life to the dead?"***

was revealed unto him.

In this respects, some traditions have been narrated from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as).<sup>30</sup>

*O Lord! We testify that You are Omnipotent to raise all the dead and grant them new lives in one single moment. There exists no impediment to Your Omnipotence.*

*O Lord! On that day when the souls reach the collarbones and we lose our hopes of all things besides you, we set our hopes on Your Pure Essence. Forgive us and grant us Your Mercy and Grace.*

*Amen! O Lord of the worlds!*

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1. Ghurar al-Hikam.
  2. 12:18
  3. Usul Kafi, vol. 3, p. 346.
  4. 20:14
  5. 13:28
  6. 89:27-30
  7. Tafsir Maraghi; Ruh al-Ma'ani; Tafsir Safi.
  8. 36:78
  9. 81:1
  10. 64:3
  11. 84:6
  12. 53:42
  13. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, p. 406; Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 1, p. 1891.
  14. 41:20
  15. 36:65
  16. 17:14
  17. 20:114
  18. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
  19. 83:24
  20. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
  21. Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 465.
  22. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 6, p. 155.
  23. Ibid.
  24. Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid's Commentary on the Nahj al-Balagha, vol. 20, p. 345.
  25. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 6, p. 133.
  26. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 401.

27. For further details, see above under 23:115.
28. 75:36
29. 23:115
30. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.

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