

Surah Qari'ah, Chapter 101

(The Calamity)

Number of Verses: 11

[Contents of Surah Qari'ah](#)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah, on the whole, describes the Resurrection Day and its preliminary events. The style is alarming and awakening with some clear warnings. According to this Surah, people are divided into two definite groups: Those whose good deeds weigh heavy by the Divine Scales will rejoice in a pleasant life; and those whose good deeds weigh light will have the abyss as their abode.

The name of the Surah, Al-Qariah, is taken from the first verse.

[The Virtue of Studying this Surah](#)

On the virtue of reciting the Surah, a tradition from Imam Baqir (as) says:

"He who recites Al-Qari'ah, Allah secures him from the calamity of (believing in) Dajjal (the deceiver) and also from the hideousness of Hell on the Day of Judgement, Allah willing,"¹

[Surah Qari'ah, Verses 1-11](#)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

الْقَارِعَةُ

مَا الْقَارِعَةُ

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ

يَوْمَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوثِ

وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ

فَأَمَّا مَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ

فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ

فَأُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا هِيَ

نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ

1. "The Calamity"
2. "What is the Calamity?"
3. "And what makes you aware of what the Calamity is?"
4. "(It is) a Day whereon men will be like moths scattered about,"
5. "And the mountains will be like carded wool."
6. "So, he whose scales (of good deeds) are heavy,"
7. "He will be in a life well-pleasing."

8. ***“And he whose scales (of good deeds) are light,”***
9. ***“Then his abode will be Hawiyah’ (the abyss).”***
10. ***“And what makes you know what that (abyss) is?”***
11. ***“(It is) a Raging Fire.”***

The Calamity

In these verses, which are about the circumstances of the Judgement Day, first it says:

“The Calamity”

“What is the Calamity?”

The term /qari'ah/ is based on /qar'/ which means 'to beat or strike something on something else so that a sound is heard', hence 'whip' and 'hammer' are termed /miqra'ah/, and further, any important, grievous event is called /qari'ah/.

Regarding the senses put in verses 2 and 3 that even the holy Prophet (S) is told:

“And what makes you aware of what the Calamity is”,

clarifies the fact that this event is so great that no imagination can comprehend it.

In any event, many commentators have said that /qari'ah/ is one of the names of the Day of Judgement. They have not clarified that this sense refers to the events before the Hereafter when this world will be destroyed, the Sun and the Moon will become dark, and the seas will overflow. If it is so, the name selected for the event, Qari'ah, has a clear reason.

Or, if the purpose is the second stage, i.e., the resurrection of the dead and the new design in the world of being, the use of the word 'qari'ah' is for the reason that fear and terror of that Day will strike the hearts.

The verses following that verse partly agree with the incident of the world destruction, and partly refer to the resurrection of the dead, but, on the whole, the first probability seems more appropriate, though both incidents, in these verses, are mentioned one after another; (like many other verses of the Qur'an which inform about the Hereafter).

Then, to describe that amazing Day, it says:

“(It is) a Day whereon men will be like moths scattered about.”

The term /faras/ is the plural form of /farasah/. Many commentators have considered it as meaning 'moths' while some others have rendered it to mean 'locusts'.

The meaning of the word, itself, is the former one, of course, so they may have adapted it to the

meaning in Surah Qamar, No. 54, verse 7 in which people, on That Day, are likened to 'scattered locusts':

"They will come forth - their eyes humbled - from their graves, (torpid) like locusts scattered abroad."

It is probable that likening people to 'moths' is for the reason that the state of moths in a violent storm gives some idea of the confusion, distress, and helplessness of which men are overwhelmed with on the Day of Judgement.

Again, the question arises, here thus: is this confusion, distress and horrible helplessness because of the end of this physical world, or, is it because of the beginning of the spiritual world, the Hereafter?

The answer to the question is clearly found in what is said above.

Then, referring to another speciality of that Day, it says:

"And the mountains will be like carded wool."

The term /ihn/ means 'colored wool', and the term /manfus/, based on /nafs/, means 'teased, carded (wool)' which is usually done by special means on a wool-carder.

It was mentioned before that according to the different verses of Qur'an, at the threshold of the Hereafter, first, mountains will move, then, they will cleave as under and break into pieces, and finally they will turn into dust and scatter in the air, which, in this verse, is likened to colored-carded wool; the wool which travels with storms and will be seen only by its color. This is the last stage in the destruction of the mountains.

This idea may also refer to the various colors of the mountains, because the mountains, on the earth, range in color and each has a special color.

In any case, this meaning shows that the above verses speak about the first stage of the Hereafter; that is, the stage of destruction and the end of the world.

Then, reference is made to the Resurrection stage and the reviving of the dead and their division into two groups.

It says:

"So, he whose scales (of good deeds) are heavy,"

"He will be in a life well-pleasing."

"And he whose scales (of good deeds) are light,"

"Then his abode will be 'Hawiyah' (the abyss)."

"And what makes you know what that (abyss) is?"

"(It is) a Raging Fire."

The term /mawazin/ is the plural form of /mizan/ which means 'scales, balance'; an instrument which was used for weighing material things, at first, and then, figuratively, was used for measuring spiritual things, too.

Some believe that, on That Day, the deeds of Man will appear in the form of corporeal beings which can be weighed, and they will actually be weighed by deed-scales.

It is also considered that the record, itself, may be weighed and if it contains good deeds recorded, it weighs heavy, otherwise, it is light or weightless.

But, apparently, it does not need these explanations.

The instrument for measuring deeds is not necessarily the ordinary weighing which is done with two scales, but it can be by any means of weighing, as a tradition says:

*"Amir-al-Mo'mineen and other Imams from his descendents (as) are the scales by which our deeds are measured."*²

A tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) denotes that when he was asked about the meaning of /mizan/ he answered:

*"The scales and Justice are the same."*³

Thus, with the existence of Allah's saints and /or the divine laws of justice by which the deeds of Man are compared, will be weighed and valued due to their similarity and adaptability to them.

By the way, the term /mawazin/, in its plural form, shows that the saints of Allah and the divine laws are individually separate scales of measurement, otherwise, the variety of the form and kind of Man's attributes and deeds demand different means of measurement.

Raqib cites in Mufradat:

"In the Holy Qur'an Imizan/ is sometimes used in the singular and sometimes in the plural form; the former refers to the One Who reckons, the Lord, and the latter refers to those who are reckoned with."

The term

'Isat-ir-raqiyah/ 'a life well-pleasing'

used in the verse, is a very interesting sense about the favourable life of the good-doers in Heaven which is thoroughly calm and peasant.

It is so pleasant that the life, itself, is

'well-pleasing',

which is the subjective case, instead of being 'well-pleased', which is the objective case.

This great privilege is only for the next life, because however much happy, favourable, safe, and pleasant the life of this world may be, it is still not free from many unpleasant factors. It is only the next-world-life that is thoroughly favourable, happy, and pleasant with full safety, tranquility and bounty.

The word

/ummi/ 'mother',

mentioned in the verse, is for the reason that mother is generally a shelter for the child when. There is trouble and here it indicates that the sinner whose scale of good actions is light has no shelter, but Hell, and woe unto the one whose shelter is 'Hell'.

The term /hawiyah/ is based on /hawaya/ in the sense of 'to fall' and it is one of the names of Hell, because sinners fall into it and also, it denotes to the depth of the blazing fire of Hell.

The term /hamiyah/ is based on /hamy/ with the meaning of 'violent heat', and /hamiyah/, here refers to the extraordinary burning, hot fire of Hell.

In any case, the phrase

"And what makes you know what that (abyss) is?"

"(It is) a Raging Fire"

is an emphasis on the idea that chastisement of the Hereafter and the fire of Hell is beyond the consideration of all men.

Weighing the Good Deeds; the Deciding Factors

No doubt, the values of the deeds of good-doers are not the same. They are very different from each other. So, some good actions, which are the cause of the scales of deeds being heavier on the Day of Judgement, are emphasized on more than others.

(According to a tradition, commenting on the phrase

'there is no god, but Allah'

the holy Prophet (S) said:

*"It points to the Oneness of Allah and no action is accepted by Allah without it. It is the word of virtue by which the scales of deeds will be weighed heavy on the Day of judgement."*⁴

In another tradition, from Hazrat Ali (as) about the attestation to the Oneness of Allah and the prophecy of the holy Prophet (S) he has said:

“The scales by which deeds are measured without these two are light and they are heavy with them.”⁵

Another tradition from Imam Baqir or Imam Sadiq (as) says:

“There is nothing on the scales heavier than the benediction upon Prophet Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad”.

Then, he continues saying:

“On the Day of Judgement some people will come for their account whose scale of (good) deeds are light, but, these will become heavy when the 'benediction upon Prophet Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad is added to it.”⁶

Supplication

O Lord! Change the scales of our good deeds to heavy from our love for Muhammad (S) and the progeny of Muhammad (as).

O Lord! It is impossible for us to approach the state of 'being in a life well-pleasing', but by Your Favor. Might You, Yourself, help us to reach it.

O Lord! The Fire of Hell is a blazing inferno and we cannot bear it. By Your Grace keep us far from it.

¹. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 530.

². Bihar-al-Anwar, vol. 7, p. 251.

³. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 2, p. 5.

⁴. Nuruth Thaqalayn. vol. 5, p. 659, tradition 12.

⁵. Nur-uth- Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 659, tradition 8.

⁶. Ibid. , tradition 7.

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