

Surah 56. Al-Waqi'a

56.1 When the event inevitable cometh to pass. ⁵²²²

56.2 Then will no (soul) entertain falsehood concerning its coming.

56.3 (Many) will it bring low (many) will it exalt; ⁵²²³

56.4 When the earth shall be shaken to its depths

56.5 And the mountains shall be crumbled to atoms ⁵²²⁴

56.6 Becoming dust scattered abroad

56.7 And ye shall be sorted out into three classes. ⁵²²⁵

56.8 Then (there will be) the Companions of the Right Hand what will be the Companions of the Right Hand?

56.9 And the Companions of the left hand what will be the Companions of the Left Hand?

56.10 And those Foremost (in Faith) will be Foremost (in the Hereafter). ⁵²²⁶

56.11 These will be those Nearest to Allah: ⁵²²⁷

56.12 In Gardens of Bliss:

56.13 A number of people from those of old ⁵²²⁸

56.14 And a few from those of later times.

56.15 (They will be) on Thrones encrusted (with gold and precious stones). ⁵²²⁹

56.16 Reclining on them facing each other. ⁵²³⁰

56.17 Round about them will (serve) youths of perpetual (freshness). ⁵²³¹

56.18 With goblets (shining) beakers and cups (filled) out of clear-flowing fountains:

56.19 No after-ache will they receive therefrom nor will they suffer intoxication: ⁵²³²

56.20 And with fruits any that they may select;

56.21 And the flesh of fowls any that they may desire.

56.22 And (there will be) Companions with beautiful big and lustrous eyes-- ⁵²³³

- 56.23 Like unto Pearls well-guarded. ⁵²³⁴
- 56.24 A Reward for the Deeds of their past (Life).
- 56.25 No frivolity will they hear therein nor any taint of ill ⁵²³⁵
- 56.26 Only the saying "Peace! Peace." ⁵²³⁶
- 56.27 The Companions of the Right Hand what will be the Companions of the Right Hand?
- 56.28 (They will be) among lote trees without thorns ⁵²³⁷
- 56.29 Among Talh trees with flowers (or fruits) piled one above another ⁵²³⁸
- 56.30 In shade long-extended
- 56.31 By water flowing constantly
- 56.32 And fruit in abundance
- 56.33 Whose season is not limited nor (supply) forbidden ⁵²³⁹
- 56.34 And on Thrones (of Dignity) raised high.
- 56.35 We have created (their Companions) of special creation. ⁵²⁴⁰
- 56.36 And made them virgin-pure (and undefiled)
- 56.37 Beloved (by nature) equal in age
- 56.38 For the companions of the Right Hand.
- 56.39 A (goodly) number from those of old ⁵²⁴¹
- 56.40 And a (goodly) number from those of later times.
- 56.41 The Companions of the Left Hand-what will be the Companions of the Left Hand?
- 56.42 (They will be) in the midst of a fierce Blast of Fire and in Boiling Water ⁵²⁴²
- 56.43 And in the shades of Black Smoke: ⁵²⁴³
- 56.44 Nothing (will there be) to refresh nor to please:
- 56.45 For that they were wont to be indulged before that in wealth (and luxury). ⁵²⁴⁴
- 56.46 And persisted obstinately in wickedness supreme!
- 56.47 And they used to say "what! when we die and become dust and bones shall we then indeed be raised up again? ⁵²⁴⁵
- 56.48 "(We) and our fathers of old?"

56.49 Say: "Yea those of old and those of later times

56.50 "All will certainly be gathered together for the meeting appointed for a Day Well-known. ⁵²⁴⁶

56.51 "Then will ye truly o ye that go wrong and treat (Truth) as Falsehood!

56.52 "Ye will surely taste of the Tree of Zaqqum. ⁵²⁴⁷

56.53 "Then will ye fill your insides therewith

56.54 "And drink Boiling Water on top of it:

56.55 "Indeed ye shall drink like diseased camels raging with thirst! ⁵²⁴⁸

56.56 Such will be their entertainment on the Day of Requit!

56.57 It is We Who have created you: why will ye not witness the Truth? ⁵²⁴⁹

56.58 Do ye then see? The (human seed) that ye throw out,

56.59 Is it ye who create it or are We the Creators?

56.60 We have decreed Death to be your common lot and We are not to be frustrated ⁵²⁵⁰

56.61 From changing your Forms and creating you (again) in (Forms) that ye know not.

56.62 And ye certainly know already the first form of creation: why then do ye not celebrate His praises?

56.63 See ye the seed that ye sow in the ground? ⁵²⁵¹

56.64 Is it ye that cause it to grow or are We the Cause?

56.65 Were it Our Will we could crumble it to dry powder and ye would be left in wonderment

56.66 (Saying) "We are indeed left with debts (for nothing): ⁵²⁵²

56.67 "Indeed are we shut out (of the fruits of our labor)."

56.68 See ye the water which ye drink?

56.69 Do ye bring it Down (in rain) from the Cloud or do We?

56.70 Were it Our Will We could make it salt (and unpalatable): then why do ye not give thanks? ⁵²⁵³

56.71 See ye the Fire which ye kindle?

56.72 Is it ye who grow the tree which feeds the fire or do We grow it? ⁵²⁵⁴

56.73 We have made it a memorial (of our handiwork) and an article of comfort and convenience for the denizens of deserts. ^{5255 5256}

56.74 Then celebrate with praises the name of the Lord the Supreme: ⁵²⁵⁷

56.75 Furthermore I call to witness the setting of the Stars ⁵²⁵⁸

56.76 And that is indeed a mighty adjuration if ye but knew ⁵²⁵⁹

56.77 That this is indeed a Qur'an most honorable ⁵²⁶⁰

56.78 In a Book well-guarded

56.79 Which none shall touch but those who are clean:

56.80 A Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds.

56.81 Is it such a Message that ye would hold in light esteem? ⁵²⁶¹

56.82 And have ye made it your livelihood that ye should declare it false? ⁵²⁶²

56.83 Then why do ye not (intervene) when (the soul of the dying man) reaches the throat ⁵²⁶³

56.84 And ye the while (sit) looking on ⁵²⁶⁴

56.85 But We are nearer to him than ye and ye see not

56.86 Then why do you not if you are exempt from (future) account ⁵²⁶⁵

56.87 Call back the soul if ye are true (in your claim of Independence)? ⁵²⁶⁶

56.88 Thus then if he be of those Nearest to Allah ⁵²⁶⁷

56.89 (There is for him) Rest and Satisfaction and a Garden of Delights. ⁵²⁶⁸

56.90 And if he be of the Companions of the Right Hand ⁵²⁶⁹

56.91 (For him is the salutation) "Peace be unto thee" from the Companions of the Right Hand. ⁵²⁷⁰

56.92 And if he be of those who treat (truth) as Falsehood who go wrong ⁵²⁷¹

56.93 For him is Entertainment with Boiling Water.

56.94 And burning in Hell-Fire.

56.95 Verily this is the Very Truth and Certainty. ⁵²⁷²

56.96 So celebrate with praises the name of thy Lord the Supreme. ⁵²⁷³

Author Comments

5222 - The Event Inevitable is the Hour of Judgment. People may doubt now whether it will come. But

when it comes, as it will come, suddenly upon them, it will come with such tremendous reality that it will be burnt deep into the experience of every soul. No one can then be deceived or entertain false notions about it.

5223 - There will be a sorting out of Good and Evil. Or rather, (verse 7 below), there will be three main classes. Among the Good there will be the specially exalted class, those nearest to Allah (muqarrabun, lvi. 11-26), and the righteous people generally, called the Companions of the Right Hand (Ashab-ul-maimana, lvi. 27-40). And there will be those in agony, the Companions of the Left Hand (Ashab-ul-mash-ama, lvi. 41-56). Many who were high and mighty in this life will be brought low for their sins, and many who were lowly but virtuous will be exalted to various ranks and degrees. The old landmarks will be lost in the inner world, as they will be in the outer world.

5224 - The old physical world will disappear in the New Creation.

5225 - See n. 5223 above.

5226 - Foremost (in Faith)": there are two meanings, and both are implied (1) Those who have reached the highest degree in spiritual understanding, such as the great prophets and teachers of mankind, will also take precedence in the Hereafter. (2) Those who are the first in time-the quickest and readiest-to accept Allah's Message-will have the first place in the Kingdom of Heaven. Verses 8, 9 and 10 mention the three main categories or classifications after Judgment. In the subsequent verses their happiness or misery are described. This category, Foremost in Faith, is nearest to Allah.

5227 - See n. 5223 above. Nearness to Allah is the test of the highest Bliss.

5228 - Of great Prophets and Teachers there were many before the time of the holy Prophet Muhammad. As he was the last of the Prophets, he and the great Teachers under his Dispensation will be comparatively fewer in number, but their teaching is the sum and flower of all mankind's spiritual experience.

5229 - Cf. xv. 47; xxxvii. 44, lii. 20, and xxxviii. 13.

5230 - But they will not be separate each in his own corner. They will face each other. For they are all one, and their mutual society will be part of their Bliss.

5231 - Cf. lii. 24, and n. 5058. The youth and freshness with which the attendants will serve is a symbol of true service such as we may expect in the next world. That freshness will be perpetual, and not subject to any moods, or chances, or changes.

5232 - The Feast of Reason and the Flow of Soul are typified by all that is best in the feasts in this imperfect world, but there will be none of the disadvantages incident to such feasts in this world, such as satiety, aches, excess, a sense of exhaustion, or loss of senses, etc. Cf. xxxvii. 47, and n. 4063. A goblet is a bowl without handles; a beaker has a "lip" and a stem; "cup" is a general term.

5233 - Cf. xlv. 54, and n. 4729. The companionship of Beauty and Grace is one of the highest pleasures of life. In this bodily life it takes bodily form. In the higher life it takes a higher form.

5234 - Cf. lii. 24, where this description is applied to the youths who serve. See also n. 5058 there. In lvi. 78 below the adjective *maknun* is applied to the Qur-an, "the well guarded Book".

5235 - Cf. lii. 23. Apart from physical ills worldly feasts or delights are apt to suffer from vain or frivolous discourse, idle boasting, foolish flattery, or phrases pointed with secret venom or moral mischief. The negation of these from the enjoyment of the Garden.

5236 - *Qil* is best translated "saying", rather than "word". For the saying is an act, a thought, a fact, which

may be embodied in a word, but which goes far beyond the word. The "Peace of Allah" is an atmosphere which sums up Heaven even better than "Bliss".

5237 - Lote-trees: see xxxiv. 16 n. 3814.

5238 - Talh: some understand by this the plantain or banana tree, of which the fruit is borne in bunches, one tier above another; but the banana tree does not grow in Arabia and its ordinary Arabic name is Mauz; perhaps it is better to understand a special kind of Acacia tree, which flowers profusely, the flowers appearing in tiers one above another.

5239 - As it is not like earthly fruit, its season is not limited, nor is there any prohibition by law or custom or circumstance as to when or how it is to be consumed.

5240 - The pronoun in Arabic is in the feminine gender. It is made clear that these maidens for heavenly society will be of special creation, -of virginal purity, grace, and beauty, inspiring and inspired by love, with the question of time and age eliminated,

5241 - This class-the righteous-will be a large company in Heaven, belonging to all the ages of the world. Cf. n. 5228 to lvi. 13 above. Such is the unbounded Bounty of Allah.

5242 - Notice the parallelism in the contrast between those in Bliss and those in Misery. The description in each case pursues the idea of contrast. The fierce Blast of Fire and the Boiling Water are in contrast to the happy Lote-tree and the flowers and fruits in verses 28-29 above.

5243 - Even the Shades get a different quality in the Abode of Misery: shades of black smoke in contrast to the cool and refreshing long extended shades of trees by brooks in verses 30-31 above.

5244 - Cf. xxxiv. 34, and xliii. 23. We must read verses 45-46 together. They had wealth and the good things of life, but they used them in self-indulgence and shameless crime, and now they are in humiliation. A) Wickedness supreme: i.e. their associating others with Allah in His divinity.

5245 - Their want of belief and ridicule of Allah's Message contrasts with the stern reality which they see around them now.

5246 - In xxvi, 38 (see n. 3159) the phrase "a day well-known" is used for a solemn day of festival, when the multitude of people gather together. The Day of Judgment is such a day in the supreme sense of the word.

5247 - This is the Cursed Tree mentioned in xvii, 60, where see n. 2250. Cf. also xxxvii. 62, n. 4072; and xlv. 43-46 and n. 4722.

5248 - A terrible picture of Misery in contrast to the Companionship of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, on raised couches, for the Companions of the Right Hand, in verses 34-38 above.

5249 - Man is apt to forget his Creator, and even the fact that he, man, is a created being. The seed of his body, out of which his physical life starts, is not created by man, but by Allah in the process of the unfoldment of the world. Why will not man recognise and bear witness of this fact by a life of obedience to Allah's Law?

5250 - Just as Allah has created this life that we see, so He has decreed that Death should be the common lot of all of us. Surely, if He can thus give life and death, as we see it, why should we refuse to believe that He can give us other forms when this life is over? The Future Life, though indicated by what we know now, is to be on a wholly different plane.

5251 - Having appealed to our own nature within us, He appeals now to the external nature around us, which should be evidence to us (1) of His loving care for us, and (2) of its being due to causes other than those which we produce and control. Three examples are given : (1) the seed which we sow in the soil; it is Allah's processes in nature, which make it grow; (2) the water which we drink; it is Allah's processes in nature, that send it down from the clouds as rain, and distribute it through springs and rivers: (3) the fire which we strike; it is again a proof of Allah's Plan and Wisdom in nature.

5252 - The cultivator contracts debts for seed and gives labour for ploughing, sowing, watering, and weeding, in the hope of reaping a harvest. Should he not give thanks to Allah when his harvest is in?

5253 - The wonder of the two streams of water, one sweet and the other salt, constantly mingling, and yet always separate, is referred to more than once. The never-ending circuit is established by streams and rivers mingling with the ocean, the ocean sending forth mists and steam through a process of evaporation which forms clouds, and the clouds by condensation pouring forth rain to feed the streams and rivers again: see notes 3111-2 to xxv. 53, and n. 5185 to lv. 19, and the further references given there.

5254 - The relation of Fire to Trees is intimate. In nearly all the fire that we burn, the fuel is derived from the wood of trees. Even mineral coal is nothing but the wood of prehistoric forests petrified under the earth through geological ages. Fire produced out of green trees is referred to in xxxvi. 80; and n. 4026 there gives instances.

5255 - That is, the ordinary fire in this world is a reminder of the Great Fire of the next world to all those who heed and reflect.

5256 - A fire in a desert is a sign of human habitation; by following it you may get human society and human comfort. A fire, or light, or beacon in many places directs a traveller or the way. Lighthouses at sea and beacons in modern aerodromes serve the same purpose for mariners and airmen. Another parable about fire will be found in ii. 17-18, and n. 38.

5257 - Seeing all these Signs in nature man must turn to Allah and do His Will.

5258 - Cf. liii. 1.

5259 - The glory of the firmament as it exists, and the wonder of its passing away, are both evidence, to the discerning mind, of the Future which Allah has prepared, but this evidence can only be effective if men but knew, ie., turned their earnest attention to it.

5260 - Your attention is drawn to the momentous issues of the Future by the Qur-an. It is a Revelation described by four characteristics. (1) It is most honourable, karim, which implies, besides the fact that it is worthy of receiving honour, that it confers great favours on those who receive it. (2) It is well-guarded, maknun; precious in itself, and well- preserved in its purity; see n. 5234 to lvi. 23; see also xv. 9, and n. 1944. (3) None but the clean shall touch it,-dean in body, mind, thought, intention, and soul; only such can achieve real contact with its full meaning. (4) It is a Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds, and therefore universal for all.

5261 - The Message being such as is described in the last note, how can any one ignore it or treat it with contempt or refuse to allow it to improve his life?

5262 - The worst indictment of an enemy of Revelation would be that he should make Falsehood a source of filthy lucre for himself, or that he should let his precious life be corrupted by such unholy occupation.

5263 - There is a hiatus after "why do ye not?"-and two parenthetical clauses,-after which the clause "why do ye not?" is resumed again in verse 86 below, with its complement in verse 87. It is permissible to the translator to add some such word as "intervene" here, to make the translation run smoothly.

5264 - The dying man's friends, relatives, and companions may be sitting round him and quite close to him in his last moments, but Allah is nearer still at all times for He is nearer than the man's own jugular vein (l. 16), and one of Allah's own titles is "Ever Near" (xxxiv. 50).

5265 - These words resume the sentence begun at verse 83 above and interrupted by the two parenthetical clauses in verses 84 and 85. See n. 5263 above.

5266 - The sentence may now be briefly paraphrased. 'If you disbelieve in Revelation and a future Judgment, and claim to do what you like and be independent of Allah, how is it you cannot call back a dying man's soul to his body when all of you congregate round him at his death-bed? But you are not independent of Judgment. There is a Day of Account, when you will have to be judged by your deeds in this life.'

5267 - See above. lvi. 11-26 and notes.

5268 - Raihan: sweet-smelling plants, as in lv. 12. Here used as an indication of Satisfaction and Delight.

5269 - See above, lvi. 27-38 and notes.

5270 - In lvi. 26 above the salutation of "Peace, Peace!" is addressed to those Nearest to Allah. Here we learn that it is also addressed to the Companions of the Right Hand. Both are in Gardens of Bliss; only the former have a higher Dignity than the latter.

5271 - Cf. above, lvi. 51-55.

5272 - "The assurance of the Hereafter" is one of the strongest features of Faith. For without it the apparent inequalities and injustices of this Life cannot be satisfactorily explained.

5273 - Cf. Ivi. 74 above. That was the conclusion of the argument about the Future from the examples of Allah's goodness in nature. Now we have the conclusion of the same argument from Allah's revelation through His inspired Messengers.

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