

Surah 69. Al-Haqqa

69.1 OH, THE LAYING-BARE of the truth!¹

69.2 How awesome that laying-bare of the truth!

69.3 And what could make thee conceive what that laying-bare of the truth will be?²

69.4 THE LIE gave [the tribes of] Thamud and 'Ad to [all tidings of] that sudden calamity!³

69.5 Now as for the Thamud - they were destroyed by a violent upheaval [of the earth];⁴

69.6 and as for the 'Ad - they were destroyed by a stormwind furiously raging,

69.7 which He willed against them for seven nights and eight days without cease, so that in the end thou couldst see those people laid low [in death], as though they were so many [uprooted] trunks of hollow palm trees:

69.8 and dost thou now see any remnant of them?

69.9 And there was Pharaoh, too, and [many of] those who lived before him, and the cities that were overthrown⁵ - [all of them] indulged in sin upon sin

69.10 and rebelled against their Sustainer's apostles: and so He took them to task with a punishing grasp exceedingly severe!

69.11 [And] behold: when the waters [of Noah's flood] burst beyond all limits, it was We who caused you⁶ to be borne [to safety] in that floating ark,

69.12 so that We might make all this⁷ a [lasting] reminder to you all, and that every wide-awake ear might consciously take it in.

69.13 Hence, [bethink yourselves of the Last Hour,] when the trumpet [of judgment] shall be sounded with a single blast,

69.14 and the earth and the mountains shall be lifted up and crushed with a single stroke!

69.15 And so, that which must come to pass⁸ will on that Day have come to pass;

69.16 and the sky will be rent asunder⁹ for, frail will it have become on that Day -;

69.17 and the angels [will appear] at its ends,¹⁰ and, above them, eight will bear aloft on that Day the throne of thy Sustainer's almightiness....¹¹

69.18 On that Day you shall be brought to judgment: not [even] the most hidden of your deeds will remain hidden.

69.19 Now as for him whose record shall be placed in his right hand,¹² he will exclaim: "Come you all! Read this my record!

69.20 Behold, I did know that [one day] I would have to face my account!"¹³

69.21 And so he will find himself in a happy state of life,

69.22 in a lofty paradise,

69.23 with its fruits within easy reach.

69.24 [And all who are thus blest will be told:] "Eat and drink with good cheer in return for all [the good deeds] that you have sent ahead in days gone by!"

69.25 But as for him whose record shall be placed in his left hand,¹⁴ he will exclaim: "Oh, would that I had never been shown this my record,

69.26 and neither known this my account!

69.27 Oh, would that this [death of mine] had been the end of me!

69.28 Of no avail to me is all that I have [ever] possessed,

69.29 [and] all my power of argument has died away from me!"¹⁵

69.30 [Thereupon the command will go forth:] "Lay hold of him, and shackle him,¹⁶

69.31 and then let him enter hell,

69.32 and then thrust him into a chain [of other sinners like him¹⁷ - a chain] the length whereof is seventy cubits.¹⁸

69.33 for, behold, he did not believe in God, the Tremendous,

69.34 and did not feel any urge¹⁹ to feed the needy:

69.35 and so, no friend has he here today,

69.36 nor any food save the filth

69.37 which none but the sinners eat!"²⁰

69.38 BUT NAY! I call to witness all that you can see,

69.39 as well as all that you cannot see!"²¹

69.40 Behold, this [Qur'an] is indeed the [inspired] word of a noble apostle,

69.41 and is not - however little you may [be prepared to] believe it - the word of a poet;

69.42 and neither is it - however little you may [be prepared to] take it to heart - the word of a soothsayer:

69.43 [it is] a revelation from the Sustainer of all the worlds.

69.44 Now if he [whom We have entrusted with it] had dared to attribute some [of his own] sayings unto Us,

69.45 We would indeed have seized him by his right hand,²²

69.46 and would indeed have cut his life-vein,

69.47 and none of you could have saved him!

69.48 And, verily, this [Qur'an] is a reminder to all the God-conscious.²³

69.49 And, behold, well do We know that among you are such as will give the lie to it:

69.50 yet, behold, this [rejection] will indeed become a source of bitter regret for all who deny the truth [of God's revelation] -

69.51 for, verily, it is truth absolute!

69.52 Extol, then, the limitless glory of thy Sustainer's mighty name!

Author Comments

1 - I.e., the Day of Resurrection and Judgment, on which man will become fully aware of the quality of his past life and, freed from all self-deception, will see himself as he really was, with the innermost meaning of all his past doings - and thus of his destiny in the hereafter - blindingly revealed. (Cf. [37:19](#), the last sentence of [39:68](#), and {50:21-22}.)

2 - Implying that this sudden perception of the ultimate reality will be beyond anything that man can anticipate or imagine: hence, no answer is given to the above rhetorical question.

3 - I.e., the Last Hour (see note [1] on [101:1](#). For particulars of the pre-Islamic tribes of 'Ad and Thamud, see {7:65-79} and the corresponding notes.

4 - Cf. [7:78](#).

5 - I.e., Sodom and Gomorrah, the cities of Lot's people see {11:69-83}.

6 - I.e., metonymically (in the consensus of all classical commentators), "your ancestors".

7 - Alluding to the punishment of evildoers and the saving grace bestowed upon the righteous.

8 - I.e., the end of the world as we know it, followed by resurrection and the Last Judgment.

9 - The term as-sama' may denote here "the sky" or "skies", i.e., the visible firmament, or "heaven" in its allegorical sense, or the aggregate of cosmic systems comprised in the concept of "the universe" (cf. surah {2}, note [20]). Its being "rent asunder" is perhaps a metaphor for a total breakdown of the cosmic order.

10 - Or: "at its sides".

11 - Since God is infinite in space as well as in time, it is obvious that His "throne" ('arsh) has a purely metaphorical connotation, circumscribing His absolute, unfathomable sway over all that exists or possibly could exist (cf. note [43] on [7:54](#)). Hence, too, the "bearing aloft" of the throne of His almightiness cannot be anything but a metaphor - namely, an allusion to the full manifestation of that almightiness on the Day of Judgment. The Qur'an is silent as to who or what the "eight" are on whom this manifestation rests. Some of the earliest commentators assume that they are eight angels; others, that they are eight ranks of angels; while still others frankly admit that it is impossible to say whether "eight" or "eight thousand" are meant (Al-Hasan al-Basri, as quoted by Zamakhshari). Possibly, we have here an allusion to eight (unspecified) attributes of God or aspects of His creation; but, as the Qur'an states elsewhere, "none save God knows its final meaning" (see [3:7](#) and the corresponding note [8]).

12 - I.e., whose record shows that he was righteous in his life on earth: cf. [17:71](#), as well as the symbolic expression "those on the right hand" in [74:39](#). The linguistic origin of the symbolism of "right" and "left" as "righteous" and "unrighteous" is explained in note [3] on {56:8-9}.

13 - Implying that he had always been conscious of resurrection and judgment, and had tried to behave accordingly.

14 - Thus signifying that he had been unrighteous in his earthly life, in contrast with those "whose record will be placed in their right hand" (see verse {19} and note [12] above).

15 - The term sultan, which primarily signifies "power" or "authority", has here - as in many other places in the Qur'an - evidently the meaning of "argument", synonymous with hujjah (Ibn 'Abbas, 'Ikrimah, Mujahid, Ad-Dahhak, all of them quoted by Tabari): in this case, an argument or arguments against the idea of life after death and, hence, of divine judgment.

16 - For an explanation of the allegory of "shackles", see note [13] on [13:5](#), note [44] on the last but one sentence of [34:33](#), and notes [6] and [7] on [36:8](#).

17 - See [14:49](#) - "on that Day thou wilt see all who were lost in sin (al-mujrimin) linked together in fetters" - and the corresponding note [64], which explains my above interpolation of the phrase, "of other sinners like him".

18 - I.e., a chain exceedingly long - the number "seventy" being used here metonymically, as is often done in classical Arabic, in the sense of "very many" (Zamakhshari); hence "of a measure the length whereof is known only to God" (Tabari; also Al-Hasan, as quoted by Razi).

19 - Lit., "did not urge", i.e., himself.

20 - The noun ghislin, which appears in the Qur'an only in this one instance, has been variously - and very contradictorily - explained by the early commentators. Ibn 'Abbas, when asked about it, frankly answered, "I do not know what grisly denotes" (Razi). The term "filth" used by me contains an allusion to the "devouring" of all that is abominable in the spiritual sense: cf. its characterisation in the next verse as "[that] which none but the sinners eat" - i.e., (metaphorically) in this world and, consequently, in the hereafter as well.

21 - The phrase "all that you can see" comprises all the observable phenomena of nature - including man himself and the organic conditions of his own existence - as well as the configuration of human society and the perceptible rules of its growth and decay in the historical sense; whereas "that which you cannot see" relates to the intangible spiritual verities accessible to man's intuition and instinct, including the voice of his own conscience: all of which "bears witness", as it were, to the fact that the light which the divine writ (spoken of in the sequence) casts on the innermost realities and interrelations of all that exists objectively - or, as the case may be, manifests itself subjectively in man's own psyche - must be an outcome of genuine revelation, inasmuch as it goes far beyond anything that unaided human intellect could ever achieve.

22 - I.e., deprived him of all ability to act - the "right hand" symbolizing power.

23 - Sc., "who believe in [the existence of] that which is beyond the reach of human perception": cf. {2:2-3}.

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