

النَّبَا An-Naba

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah derives its name from the word *an-Naba* in the second verse. This is not only a name but also a title of its subject matter, for *naba* implies the news of Resurrection and Hereafter and the whole Surah is devoted to the same theme.

Period of Revelation

As we have explained in the introduction to Surah Al-Mursalat, the theme of all the Surahs, from Al-Qiyamah to An-Naziat, closely resembles to one another, and all these seem to have been revealed in the earlier period at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is also same as of Surah Al-Mursalat, i.e. to affirm the Resurrection and Hereafter, and to warn the people of the consequences of acknowledging or not acknowledging it.

When the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) first started to preach Islam in Makkah, his message consisted of three elements:

(1) That none be held as an associate with Allah in Godhead.

(2) That Allah had appointed him as His Messenger.

(3) That this world will come to an end one day and then another world will be established when all the former and the latter generations will be resurrected with the same bodies in which they lived and worked in the world; then they will be called to account for their beliefs and deeds and those who emerge as believing and righteous in this accountability will go to Paradise and those who are proved to be disbelieving and wicked will live in Hell forever.

Of these although the first thing was highly unpleasant for the people of Makkah, yet in any case they were not disbelievers in the existence of Allah. They believed in His Being the Supreme Sustainer, Creator and Provider and also admitted that all those beings whom they regarded as their deities, were themselves Allah's creatures. Therefore, in this regard the only thing they disputed was whether they had any share in the attributes and powers of divinity and in the divine Being itself or not.

As for the second thing, the people of Makkah were not prepared to accept it. However, what they could not possibly deny was that during the 40 years of life that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had lived among them before his claim to Prophethood, they had never found him a lying deceitful person or the one who would adopt unlawful methods for selfish ends. They themselves admitted that he was a man possessed of wisdom, righteousness and moral superiority. Therefore, in spite of charging him with a

thousand false accusations, nothing to say of making others believe, they were finding it difficult even for themselves to believe that although he was an honest and upright man in every other affair and dealing of life, yet, God forbid, a liar only in his claim to be a Prophet.

Thus, the first two things were not in fact so perplexing for the people of Makkah as the third thing. When this was presented before them, they mocked it most of all, expressed unusual wonder at it, and regarding it as remote from reason and impossible, started talking against it as incredible, even inconceivable, in their assemblies. But in order to bring them to the way of Islam it was absolutely essential that the doctrine of the Hereafter should be instilled into their minds, for without belief in this doctrine, it was not at all possible that they could adopt a serious attitude with regard to the truth and falsehood, could change their standard of values in respect of good and evil, and giving up worship of the world, could be inclined to follow the way that Islam urged them to follow. That is why in the earlier Surahs revealed at Makkah the doctrine of the Hereafter has been impressed and stressed more than anything else. However, the arguments for it have been given in such a way that the doctrine of the Oneness of God (*Tauhid*) is also impressed on the minds automatically. This also contains brief arguments, here and there, to confirm the truth of the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah and the Quran.

After understanding well why the theme of the Hereafter has been so frequently repeated in the Surahs of this

period, let us now have a look at the subject matter of this Surah. In it first of all, allusion has been made to the common talk and the doubts that were being expressed in every street of Makkah and in every assembly of the people of Makkah on hearing the news about Resurrection. Then, the deniers have been asked: Don't you see this earth which We have spread as a carpet for you. Don't you see the high mountains which we have so firmly placed on the earth. Don't you consider your own selves how have We created you as pairs of men and women. Don't you consider your sleep by which We make you seek a few hours rest after every few hours labor and toil so as to keep you fit for work in the world. Don't you see the alternation of the night and day which We are so regularly perpetuating precisely according to your needs and requirements. Don't you see the strongly fortified system of the heavens above you. Don't you see the sun by means of which you are receiving your light and heat. Don't you see the rains which fall from the clouds and help produce corns and vegetables and luxuriant gardens. Do these things only tell you that the power of the Almighty Being Who has created them, will be unable to bring about Resurrection and establish the next world? Then, from the supreme wisdom which is clearly working in this world around you, do you only understand this that although each part of it and each function of it is purposive, yet life is meaningless. Nothing could be more absurd and meaningless that after appointing man to the office of foreman and granting him vast powers of appropriation, in this workhouse, when he leaves the world

after fulfilling his role, he should be let off without any accountability. He should neither be rewarded and granted pension on satisfactory work, nor subjected to any accountability and punishment on unsatisfactory performance of duty.

After giving these arguments, it has been emphatically stated that the Day of Judgment shall certainly come to pass on its appointed time. No sooner is the Trumpet sounded than whatever is being foretold shall appear before the eyes, and whether you believe in it today, or not, at that time you will come out in your multitudes from wherever you would be lying dead and buried to render your account. Your denial cannot in any way avert this inevitable event.

Then, in verses 21-30; it has been stated that every single misdeed of those who do not expect any accountability to take place and have thus belied Our revelations, lies reckoned and recorded with Us, and Hell is ever lying in an ambush to punish them and punish them fully for all their doings. Then, in verses 31-36, the best rewards of those who lived as responsible people in the world and have provided for their Hereafter beforehand have been mentioned. They have been reassured that they will not only be rewarded richly for their services but in addition they will also be given sufficient gifts.

In conclusion, the divine court in the Hereafter has been depicted, making it plain that there will be no question of somebody's being adamant in the matter of getting his followers and associates forgiven, none will speak without

leave, and leave will be granted on the condition that intercession be made only for the one to whom leave of intercession will have been given, and the intercessor will say only what is right. Moreover, leave for intercession will be given only for those who had acknowledged the truth in the world but were sinners; rebels of God and rejectors of the truth will deserve no intercession at all.

The discourse has been concluded with this warning: The Day the coming of which is being foretold, shall certainly come to pass. Do not think it is yet far off, it is close at hand. Now, whoever wills, let him believe in it and take the way towards his Lord. But he who disbelieves, in spite of the warning, will have all his deeds placed before him, and he will exclaim regretfully, Oh, would that I were not born in the world.

1. About what are they inquiring.	عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿١﴾
2. About the great news.	عَنِ النَّبِإِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢﴾
3. That over which they are in disagreement.*1	الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٣﴾

*1 The great news: the news of the Resurrection and Hereafter, which the people of Makkah heard with amazement, then raised questions and doubts about it in their assemblies. When they met each other they would ask: Did you ever hear that the dead will be resurrected to life? Is it credible that life will be infused once again into the bones which have decayed and become rotten? Does it stand to reason that the former and the latter generations

will rise up and gather together at one place? Is it possible that these huge mountains which are so firmly set in the earth will fly about like flakes of wool? Can it so happen that the sun and the moon and the stars should be extinguished and the order and system of the world be overturned and upset? What has happened to him who was until yesterday a sane and wise man among us? Today he is giving us strange, impossible news. Where were this Hell and Heaven of which we had never heard from him before? Wherefrom have they appeared suddenly so that he has started depicting them so vividly before us? Another meaning of *fi-hi mukhtalifun* also can be: As these people themselves have not agreed on any one view about the end of the world, they hold varying views about it. Some one has been influenced by the Christian belief and believes in the life after death but thinks that the second life would not be a physical but only a spiritual life. Another does not deny the Hereafter absolutely but doubts whether it was possible or not. The Quran relates the view of these very people when it says: We do only guess: we are not certain. (Surah Al-Jathiyah, Ayat 32). And another plainly said: There is no other life than this present life, and we shall never be raised back to life after our death. (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 29). Then, there were some atheists, who said: Life is only this worldly life of ours. Here we shall die and live and nothing but the change of time destroys us. (Surah Al-Jathiyah, Ayat 24). There were some others who were not atheistic but they regarded the second life as impossible. According to them it was beyond the power of

God to raise the dead back to life. They said: Who will give life to these bones when they are rotten. (Surah YaSeen, Ayat 78). Their different views by themselves were a proof that they had no knowledge in this regard; they were only conjecturing and guessing. Had they any knowledge, they would have agreed on one view. (For further explanation, see E.N. 6 of Surah Adh-Dhariyat).

4. Nay,^{*2} they shall soon know.

كَلَّا سَيَعْمُونَ ﴿٤﴾

*2 That is, whatever they say about the Hereafter is false, and all their concepts about it are wrong.

5. Then nay, they shall soon know.^{*3}

ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْمُونَ ﴿٥﴾

*3 That is, the time is not far off when the same thing about which they are expressing all sorts of meaningless doubts and misgivings, will appear before them as a reality. Then they will realize that what the Messenger (peace be upon him) had foretold was absolutely true and what they were saying on the basis of conjecture and speculation had no truth in it.

6. Have We not made the earth a resting place.^{*4}

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهْدًا ﴿٦﴾

*4 Enough light has been thrown at several places in the meaning of the Quran on the supreme wisdom and power of Allah that underlies His making the earth a carpet, i.e. an abode of perfect peace and rest. For explanation, see E.Ns 73, 74, 81 of Surah An-Naml; E.N. 29 of Surah YaSeen; E.Ns 90, 91 of Surah Al-Momin; E.N. 7 of Surah

Az-Zukhruf; E.N. 7 of Surah Al-Jathiyah; E.N. 18 of Surah Qaaf.

7. And the mountains as stakes.*5

 وَالْجِبَالِ أَوْتَادًا

***5 For the wisdom of creating mountains on the earth, see E.N. 12 of Surah An-Nahl; E.N. 74 of Surah An-Naml; E.N. 15 of Surah Al-Mursalat.**

8. And We have created you as pairs.*6

 وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا


***6 For explanation of the supreme wisdom that underlies the creation of men and women into pairs, see E.N. 69 of Surah Al-Furqan; E. Ns 28 to 30 of Surah Ar-Room, E.N. 31 of Surah YaSeen; E.N. 77 of Surah Ash-Shura; E N. 12 of Surah Az-Zukhruf; E.N. 25 of Surah Al-Qiyamah.**

9. And We have made your sleep (a means) for rest.*7


 وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا

***7 The explanation of the wisdom for which Allah Almighty has placed a desire for sleep in man's nature in order to make him fit for work in the world, and which impels him to a few hours' sleep after every few hours of work, has been given in E.N. 33 of Surah Ar-Room.**

10. And We have made the night as a covering.

 وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا

11. And We have made the day for livelihood.*8

 وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا

***8 That is, the night has been made dark so that protected from light, you could enjoy a peaceful sleep more easily and made the day bright for the reason that you could work for**

your livelihood with greater ease and facility. Reference has been made to only one benefit out of countless benefits of the continuous alternation of night and day regularly on the earth to tell that all this is not happening without a purpose or accidentally, but there is supreme wisdom underlying it, which has a deep connection with your own immediate interests. The darkness that was needed for the peace and rest of your body in view of its structure has been provided in the night and the light that was needed for earning livelihood has been provided in the day. This arrangement that has been made precisely in accordance with your needs by itself testifies that it could not be possible without the wisdom of a Wise Being. (For further explanation, see E.N. 65 of Surah Yunus; E.N. 32 of Surah YaSeen; E.N. 85 of Surah Al-Momin; E.N. 4 of Surah Az-Zukhruf).

12. And We have built above you seven strong (heavens).^{*9}

وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا



***9** Strong, in the sense that their boundaries are so strongly fortified that no change whatever occurs in them, nor does any of the countless stars and planets in the heavens, violating these boundaries, collide with the other, nor falls down to the earth. (For further explanation, see E.N. 34 of Surah Al-Baqarah; E.N. 2 of Surah Ar-Raad; E.Ns 8, 12 of Surah Al-Hijr; E.N. 15 of Surah Al-Mominoon; E.N. 13 of Surah Luqman; E.N. 37 of Surah YaSeen; E.Ns 5, 6 of Surah As-Saaffat; E.N. 90 of Surah Al-Momin; E.Ns 7, 8 of Surah Qaaf).

13. And We have made a bright, blazing lamp.*10

وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا

*10 A bright, blazing lamp: the sun. The word *wahhaj* used for the sun means both intensely hot and intensely bright. Hence our rendering. In this brief sentence, allusion has been made to a most wonderful and glorious sign of Allah Almighty's power and wisdom which the sun is. Its diameter is 109 times that of the earth's and its size more than 333,000 times that of the earth's. Its temperature is 14,000,000°C. In spite of shining 93,000,000 miles away from the earth, its light and brightness is dazzling, and man can look at it with the naked eye only at the risk of losing his eye-sight. As for its heat, temperature in some parts of the earth reaches 140°F because of its radiation. It is only Allah Who by His wisdom has placed the earth at the right distance from it, neither it is too hot for being close to it, nor too cold for being very far away from it. For this very reason life of man, animal and vegetable became possible on it. Measureless treasures of energy from it are reaching the earth and sustaining life. It helps ripen our crops to provide sustenance to every creature; its heat causes vapors to rise from the seas, which spread to different parts of the earth by means of the winds and fall as rain. In the sun Allah has kindled such a mighty furnace that has been constantly radiating light, heat and different kinds of rays throughout the entire solar system since millions and millions of years.

14. And We have sent down from the rain clouds

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً

abundant water.

ثُمَّ جَاءَ
١٤

15. That We may produce
thereby grain and
vegetation.

لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا
١٥

16. And gardens of thick
growth.*11

وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا
١٦

*11 For the details of the wonderful manifestations of Allah Almighty's power and wisdom in making arrangements for the rain and the growth of vegetation thereby, see E.N. 53 (a) of Surah An-Nahl; E.N. 17 of Surah Al-Mominoon; E.N. 5 of Surah Ash-Shuara; E.N. 35 of Surah Ar-Room; E.N. 19 of Surah Fatir; E.N. 29 of Surah YaSeen; E.N. 20 of Al-Momin; E.Ns 10, 11 of Surah Az-Zukhruf; E.Ns 28 to 30 of Surah Al-Waqiah. After presenting a number of the signs and testimonies, one after the other, in these verses, the deniers of the Resurrection and Hereafter have been exhorted, so as to say: If you consider the earth and the mountains and your own creation, your sleep and wakefulness, and the system of the day and night intelligently, and consider the well-fortified system of the universe and the shining sun in the heavens, the rain falling from the clouds and the vegetables growing thereby, you will see two things very clearly: first, that all this could neither come into existence without a mighty power, nor continue to exist and function so regularly; second, that in each of these great wisdom is working and nothing that happens here is purposeless. Now, only a foolish person could say that the Being Who by His power has brought

these things into existence, does not have the power to destroy them and create them once again in some other form, and this also could be said only by an unreasonable person that the Wise Being Who has not done anything without purpose in this universe, has given to man in His world understanding and intelligence, discrimination between good and evil, freedom to obey or disobey, and powers of appropriation over countless of His creatures, without any purpose and design: whether man uses and employs the things granted by Him in the right way or the wrong way, it does not make any difference; whether man continues to do good throughout life till death, he will end up in the dust, or continues to do evil till death, he will likewise end up in the dust. Neither the virtuous man will receive any reward for the good deeds nor the bad man will be held accountable for his evil deeds. These very arguments for life after death and Resurrection and Hereafter have been given here and there in the Quran, e.g. see E.N. 7 of Surah Ar-Raad; E.N. 9 of Surah Al-Hajj; E.N. 6 of Surah Ar-Room; E.Ns 10, 12 of Surah Saba; E.Ns 8, 9 of Surah As-Saaffat.

17. Indeed, the Day of Decision is an appointed time.

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا ﴿١٧﴾

18. The day when the Trumpet is blown, and you shall come forth in multitudes. *12

يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَتَأْتُونَ أَفْوَاجًا ﴿١٨﴾

*12 This implies the final sounding of the Trumpet at which

all dead men will rise back to life forthwith. You implies not only those who were the addressees at that time but all those humans who will have been born from the beginning of creation till Resurrection. (For explanation, see E.N. 57 of Surah Ibrahim; E.N. 1 of Surah Al-Hajj; E.Ns 46, 47 of Surah YaSeen; E.N. 79 of Surah Az-Zumar).

19. And the heaven will be opened, so will be as gates.

وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا



20. And the mountains are moved, so will be as a mirage.^{*13}

وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا



***13** One should bear in mind the fact that here also, as at many other places in the Quran, the different states of Resurrection have been mentioned all together. In the first verse, mention has been made of what will happen at the final sounding of the Trumpet and in the following two verses of the state which will appear at the second sounding of the Trumpet. This we have already explained in E.N. 10 of Surah Al-Haaqqah above. The heavens shall be opened means: All obstacles in the heavens will be removed and every heavenly calamity from every side will befall freely as though all doors for it were open and no door had remained closed to obstruct its happening. The mountains will be set in motion till they become as a mirage means: In no time will the mountains be uprooted from their places and then will be scattered away in particles leaving nothing but vast, empty sand plains behind. This same state has

been described in Surah TaHa, thus: They ask you, well, where will the mountains go on that Day? Say to them: My Lord will reduce them to fine dust and scatter it away. He will turn the earth into an empty level plain, wherein you will neither see any curve nor crease. (verses 105-107 and the corresponding E. N . 83).

21. Indeed, Hell is a place of ambush.*¹⁴

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا

***14** An ambush: a place contrived to entrap game by surprise. Hell has been described as an ambush, because the rebels of God are fearless of it and are enjoying life thinking that the world is a haven of bliss for them. They do not know that Hell is lying in ambush for them, which will trap them suddenly and keep them trapped.

22. For the rebellious, a dwelling place.

لِلطَّٰغِيْنَ مَعَابَاً

23. They shall remain lodged therein for ages.*¹⁵

لَيَبِثْنَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا

***15** The word *ahqab* as used in the original means successive periods of long time appearing continuously one after the other. From this word some people have tried to argue that there will be eternity in the life of Paradise but no eternity in the life of Hell. For however long these ages may be, they will not be endless but will come to an end at some time. But this argument is wrong for two reasons. First, that lexically, the word *haqab* (sing. of *ahqab*) itself contains the meaning that one *haqab* should be closely followed by another *haqab*; therefore, *ahqab* will necessarily be used only for such periods of time as

continue to appear successively one after the other and there should be no period which is not followed by another period. Second, that as a rule it is wrong to put a meaning on a verse of the Quran pertaining to a particular theme which clashes with other statements of the Quran pertaining to the same theme. At 34 places in the Quran the word *khulud* (eternity) has been used concerning the dwellers of Hell. At three places not only the word *khulud* has been used but the word *abadan* (for ever and ever) also has been added to it; and at one place it has been clearly stated: They will wish to get out of Hell but shall not be able to come out of it and theirs shall be an everlasting torment. (Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 37). At another place it has been said: Therein they shall abide forever, as long as the earth and the heavens shall last, unless your Lord ordains otherwise. And the same thing has been said about the dwellers of Paradise too: They shall dwell in Paradise forever, as long as the earth and the heavens shall last, unless your Lord wills something else. (Houd, Ayats 107-108). After these explanations, how can one argue, on the basis of the word *ahqab*, that the stay of the rebels of God in Hell will not be eternal, but it will come to an end at some stage in time?

24. They shall not taste therein any coolness, nor drink.

لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا



25. Except boiling water and the discharge from

إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا



wounds.*16

*16 The word *ghassaq* as used in the original applies to pus, blood, pus-blood and all those fluids that flow out from the eyes and skins as a result of a grievous penalty. Besides, this word is also used for a thing which stinks and gives out horrid, offensive smell.

26. An appropriate recompense.

جَزَاءٌ وَّفَاقًا ﴿٣٦﴾

27. Indeed, they were not expecting any reckoning.

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا

﴿٣٧﴾

28. And they had denied Our verses as utterly false.*17

وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا ﴿٣٨﴾

*17 This is the reason for which they will deserve this dreadful penalty of Hell. Firstly, they lived in the world thinking that the time will never come when they will have to appear before God and render an account of their deeds; second, that they utterly refused to accept and acknowledge the revelations that Allah had sent through His Prophets for their instruction and treated them as falsehood.

29. And all things have We recorded in a Book.*18

وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ كِتَابًا

﴿٣٩﴾

*18 That is, We were continuously preparing a complete record of their sayings and doings, their movements and occupations, even of their intentions, thoughts and aims in life and nothing was being left un-recorded, whereas the

foolish people in their heedlessness thought that they were living in a lawless kingdom where they were free to do whatever they pleased and desired, and there was no power to call them to account.

30. So taste, for We shall never increase you except in torment.

فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا عَذَابًا



31. Indeed, for the righteous^{*19} (there is) an abode of success.

إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا



*19 Here, the word righteous has been used in contrast to those who did not expect any accountability and who had belied Allah's revelations. Therefore, this word inevitably implies those people who believed in Allah's revelations and lived in the world with the understanding that they had to render an account of their deeds ultimately.

32. Gardens and grapevines.

حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا



33. And maidens of equal age.^{*20}

وَكَوَاعِبَ أُنثَرَابًا



*20 This may mean that they will be of equal age among themselves as well as that they will be of equal age with their husbands. This same theme has already occurred in Surah Suad, Ayat 52 and Surah Al-Waqiah, Ayat 37.

34. And a full cup.

وَكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا



35. They shall not hear therein idle talk, nor

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا كِدَابًا

falsehood.*21



*21 At several places in the Quran this has been counted as among the major blessings of Paradise. Human ears there will remain secure against idle, false and indecent talk. There will be no nonsensical, meaningless gossiping in Paradise; no one will tell lies nor belie others; nor will there be any use of abusive language, slandering; calumnies and false accusations which are so common in the world. (For further explanations, see E.N. 28 of Surah Maryam, E.Ns 13, 14 of Surah Al-Waqiah).

36. A reward from your Lord, a generous gift*22 (due by) account.

جَزَاءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءٌ حِسَابًا

*22 A reward and generous gift: that is, they will not only be given their due rewards which they will deserve for their good deeds, but over and above these they will be given additional and generous gifts and prizes as well. Contrary to this, in respect of the dwellers of Hell it has been said: They will be recompensed fully for their misdeeds. That is, they will neither be punished less than what they will deserve for their crimes nor more. This theme has been explained at length at many places in the Quran, for example, see Surah Yunus, Ayats 26-27; Surah An-Naml, Ayats 89-90; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 84; Surah Saba, Ayats 33-38; Surah Al-Momin, Ayat 40.

37. Lord of the heavens and the earth, and whatever is between them, the Beneficent,

رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا

none can have the power before Him to speak. *23

بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمَنُ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ
خِطَابًا



*23 That is, the court of Allah Almighty will be so awe-inspiring that no one, whether belonging to the earth or to the heavens, will dare open his mouth of his own will before Allah, nor interfere in the court's work and proceedings.

38. The Day when the Spirit *24 and the angels shall stand in ranks. They shall not speak except the one whom the Merciful permits, and who speaks what is right. *25

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا
لَّا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ
الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا



*24 According to most commentators, the Spirit implies the Angel Gabriel, who has been mentioned separately from the angels because of his high rank and position with Allah. (For further explanation, see E.N. 3 of Surah Al-Maarij).

*25 To speak: to intercede, and intercession has been made conditional upon two things:

(1) That the person who is granted permission by Allah to intercede for a sinner will alone be allowed to intercede and for the particular sinner only.

(2) That the intercessor will say only what is right and proper, and nothing derogatory, and the one for whom he is interceding should have at least acknowledged the truth in the world. That is, he should only be a sinner, not an unbeliever. (For further explanation, see E.N. 281 of Surah Al-Baqarah; E.N. 5 of Surah Yunus; E.N. 106 of Surah

Houd; E.N. 52 of Surah Maryam; E.Ns 85, 86 of Surah TaHa; E.N. 27 of Surah Al-Anbiya; E.Ns 40, 41 of Surah Saba; E.N. 32 of Surah Al-Momin; E.N 63 of Surah Az-Zukhruf; E N. 21 of Surah An-Najm; E.N. 36 of Surah Al-Muddaththir).

39. That is the True Day. So whoever wills, let him take the path to his Lord.

ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ
إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَعَابًا ﴿٣٩﴾

40. Indeed, We have warned you of the torment near (at hand),*²⁶ the Day when man will see all that his hands have sent forward, and the disbeliever will say: “Would that I were mere dust.”*²⁷

إِنَّا أَنْذَرْنَاكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا يَوْمَ
يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ
وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَلَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا ﴿٤٠﴾

***26** Apparently, one might think that the people who were the audience of this verse died fourteen centuries ago, and even now it cannot be said how many hundreds or thousands or millions of years Resurrection will take to come. Then, in what sense has it been said: The torment of which you have been warned, has approached near at hand? And what is the meaning of saying in the beginning of the Surah: Soon they shall know? The answer is that man can have the feeling of time only until he is passing a physical life in the world within the bounds of space and time. After death when only the soul will survive, he will lose every feeling and consciousness of time, and on the Day of Resurrection when man will rise back to life, he will feel

as though some one had aroused him from sleep suddenly. He will not at all be conscious that he has been resurrected after thousands of years. (For further explanation, see E.N. 26 of Surah An-Nahl; E.N. 56 of Surah Bani Israil; E.N. 80 of Surah TaHa; E.N. 48 of Surah YaSeen).

***27** Would that I were mere dust: "Would that I had not been born in the world, or had become mere dust after death, and thus reduced to nothingness.

