

Sūrah 51: adh-Dhāriyāt

Period of Revelation

The subject matter and the style clearly show that it was sent down in the period when persecution had not yet started. Although the Prophet's invitation was being resisted and opposed with denial and ridicule and false accusations stubbornly. Therefore, this Sūrah also seems to have been revealed in the same period in which the Sūrah Qaf was revealed.

Subject Matter and Topics

The Sūrah mostly deals with the Hereafter, and in the end it presents the invitation to Tawhid. In addition, the people have also been warned that refusal to accept the message of the Prophets and persistence in the concepts and creeds of ignorance have proved to be disastrous for those nations themselves which have adopted this attitude and way of life in the past.

About the Hereafter what this Sūrah presents in short but brief sentences is this: The people's different and conflicting beliefs about the end of human life are themselves an express proof that none of these beliefs and creeds is based on knowledge. Everyone by himself has formed an ideology on the basis of conjecture and made the same his creed. Someone thought that there would be no life-after-death; someone believed in the life-after-death, but in the form of the transmigration of souls; someone believed in the life hereafter and the meting out of the rewards and punishments but invented different sorts of props and supports to escape retribution. About a question of such vital and fundamental importance a wrong view of which renders man's whole life-work wrong and waste and ruins his future for ever, it would be a disastrous folly to build an ideology only on the basis of speculation and conjecture, without knowledge. It would mean that man should remain involved in a grave misunderstanding, pass his whole life in the heedlessness of error, and after death should suddenly meet with a situation for which he had made no preparation at all. There is only one way of forming the right opinion about such a question, and it is this: Man should seriously ponder over the knowledge about the Hereafter that the Prophet of God is conveying to him from Him, and should study carefully the system of the earth and heavens and his own existence. One should see whether the evidence of that knowledge's being sound and correct is afforded by everything around him or not. In this regard, the arrangement of the wind and rain, the structure of the earth and the creatures found on it, man's own self, the creation of the heavens and of everything in the world in the form of pairs have been presented as evidence of the Hereafter, and instances have been cited from human history to show that the temper of the empire of the Universe requires that the law of retribution must operate here.

In this very connection, it has also been stated that whenever the Prophets of God have been opposed and resisted, they have not been opposed and resisted on the basis of any rational ground but on the basis of the same obduracy and stubbornness and false pride that is being shown against the Prophet Muhammad, and there is no other motive for it than rebellion and arrogance. Then the Prophet has been instructed not to bother about the rebels but to go on performing his mission of invitation and admonition, for it is useful and beneficial for the believers although it may not be so for the other people. As for the wicked people who still persist in their rebellion, they should know that their predecessors who followed the same way of life, have already received their shares of the punishment, and these people's share of the punishment has been made ready for them.

Sūrah 51: adh-Dhāriyāt¹⁴²⁹

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate,
the Most Merciful

1. By those [winds] scattering [dust] dispersing [it]
2. And those [clouds] carrying a load [of water]
3. And those [ships] sailing with ease
4. And those [angels] apportioning [each] matter,
5. Indeed, what you are promised is true.
6. And indeed, the recompense is to occur.
7. By the heaven containing pathways,¹⁴³⁰
8. Indeed, you are in differing speech.¹⁴³¹
9. Deluded away from it [i.e., the Qur'ān] is he who is deluded.
10. Destroyed are the falsifiers¹⁴³²
11. Who are within a flood [of confusion] and heedless.
12. They ask, "When is the Day of Recompense?"
13. [It is] the Day they will be tormented over the Fire
14. [And will be told], "Taste your torment. This is that for which you were impatient."
15. Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs,
16. Accepting what their Lord has given them. Indeed, they were before that doers of good.
17. They used to sleep but little of the night,¹⁴³³
18. And in the hours before dawn they would ask forgiveness,
19. And from their properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived.
20. And on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith]
21. And in yourselves. Then will you not see?
22. And in the heaven is your provision and whatever you are promised.
23. Then by the Lord of the heaven and earth, indeed, it is truth - just as [sure as] it is that you are speaking.
24. Has there reached you the story of the honoured guests of Abraham?¹⁴³⁴ -
25. When they entered upon him and said, "[We greet you with] peace." He answered, "[And upon you] peace; [you are] a people unknown."
26. Then he went to his family and came with a fat [roasted] calf
27. And placed it near them; he said, "Will you not eat?"

¹⁴²⁹ *Adh-Dhāriyāt*: The Scattering Winds.

¹⁴³⁰ Explained as tracks, layers or orbits.

¹⁴³¹ About Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'ān.

¹⁴³² Or "May they be destroyed" or "cursed."

¹⁴³³ i.e., spending a portion of the night in prayer and supplication.

¹⁴³⁴ Who were angels given honoured positions by God.

28. And he felt from them apprehension.¹⁴³⁵ They said, “Fear not,” and gave him good tidings of a learned boy.
29. And his wife approached with a cry [of alarm] and struck her face and said, “[I am] a barren old woman!”
30. They said, “Thus has said your Lord; indeed, He is the Wise, the Knowing.”
31. [Abraham] said, “Then what is your business [here], O messengers?”
32. They said, “Indeed, we have been sent to a people of criminals¹⁴³⁶
33. To send down upon them stones of clay,
34. Marked in the presence of your Lord for the transgressors.”
35. So We brought out whoever was in them [i.e., the cities] of the believers.
36. And We found not within them other than a [single] house of Muslims.¹⁴³⁷
37. And We left therein a sign for those who fear the painful punishment.
38. And in Moses [was a sign], when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority.
39. But he turned away with his supporters and said, “A magician or a madman.”
40. So We took him and his soldiers and cast them into the sea, and he was blameworthy.
41. And in ‘Aad [was a sign], when We sent against them the barren wind.¹⁴³⁸
42. It left nothing of what it came upon but that it made it like disintegrated ruins.
43. And in Thamūd, when it was said to them, “Enjoy yourselves for a time.”
44. But they were insolent toward the command of their Lord, so the thunderbolt seized them while they were looking on.
45. And they were unable to arise, nor could they defend themselves.
46. And [We destroyed] the people of Noah before; indeed, they were a people defiantly disobedient.
47. And the heaven We constructed with strength, and indeed, We are [its] expander.
48. And the earth We have spread out, and excellent is the preparer.
49. And of all things We created two mates [i.e., counterparts]; perhaps you will remember.
50. So flee to God.¹⁴³⁹ Indeed, I am to you from Him a clear warner.
51. And do not make [as equal] with God another deity. Indeed, I am to you from Him a clear warner.
52. Similarly, there came not to those before them any messenger except that they said, “A magician or a madman.”

¹⁴³⁵ See footnote to 11:70.

¹⁴³⁶ i.e., those who defied Lot.

¹⁴³⁷ i.e., Lot and his family, excepting his wife.

¹⁴³⁸ Barren of any benefit, i.e., evil.

¹⁴³⁹ i.e., turn to God and take refuge in Him from disbelief and sin, thereby escaping His punishment.

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53. Did they suggest it to them?¹⁴⁴⁰ Rather, they [themselves] are a transgressing people.
54. So leave them, [O Muhammad], for you are not to be blamed.
55. And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.
56. And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.
57. I do not want from them any provision, nor do I want them to feed Me.
58. Indeed, it is God who is the [continual] Provider, the firm possessor of strength.
59. And indeed, for those who have wronged is a portion [of punishment] like the portion of their companions [i.e., predecessors], so let them not impatiently urge Me.
60. And woe to those who have disbelieved from their Day which they are promised.

¹⁴⁴⁰ i.e., Did the former disbelievers pass on these words to the Makkans so that they repeat the same expressions?