

Sūrah 69: al-Hāqqah

Period of Revelation

This too is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be revealed at Makkah. Its subject matter shows that it was sent down at the time when opposition to the Prophet had started but had not yet become tyrannical. Musnad Ahmad contains a hadith from Umar, saying: *“Before embracing Islām one day I came out of my house with a view to causing trouble to the Holy Prophet, but he had entered the Masjid al-Haram before me. When I arrived I found that he was reciting Sūrah Al-Haaqqah in the Prayer. I stood behind him and listened. As he recited the Qur’an I wondered at its literary charm and beauty. Then suddenly an idea came to my mind that he must be a poet as the Quraysh alleged. Just at that moment he recited the words: “This is the Word of an honourable Messenger: it is not the word of a poet.” I said to myself: Then, he must be a soothsayer, if not a poet. Thereupon he recited the words: “Nor is it the word of a soothsayer: little it is that you reflect. It is a Revelation from the Lord and Sustainer of the worlds. On hearing this Islam entered deep into my heart.”* This hadith of Umar shows that this Sūrah had been sent down long before his acceptance of Islām, for even after this event he did not believe for a long time, and he continued to be influenced in favor of Islām by different incidents from time to time, till at last in the house of his own sister he came by the experience that made him surrender and submit to the Faith completely.

Theme and Subject Matter

The first section (v. 1-37) is about the Hereafter and the second (v. 38-52) about the Qur’ān’s being a revelation from God and the Prophet’s being a true Messenger of God. The first section opens with the assertion that the coming of the Resurrection and the occurrence of the Hereafter is a truth which has to take place inevitably. Then in v. 4-12, it has been stated that the communities that denied the Hereafter in the past became worthy of God’s scourge ultimately. In v. 13-17 the occurrence of Resurrection has been depicted. In v. 18-37 the real object for which God has destined a second life for mankind after the present worldly life has been enunciated. In it we are told that on that Day all men shall appear in the Court of their Lord, where no secret of theirs shall remain hidden; each man’s record will be placed in his hand. Those who had spent lives in the world with the realization that one day they would have to render an account of their deeds before their Lord, and who had worked righteously in the world and provided beforehand for their well being in the Hereafter, will rejoice when they see that they have been acquitted and blessed with the eternal bliss of Paradise. On the contrary, those who neither recognized the rights of God, nor discharged the rights of men, will have no one to save them from the punishment of God, and they will be cast into Hell.

In the second section (v. 38-52) the disbelievers of Makkah have been addressed and told: *“You think this Qur’ān is the word of a poet or soothsayer, whereas it is a Revelation sent down by God, which is being presented by the noble Messengers. The Messenger by himself had no power to increase or decrease a word in it. If he forges something of his own composition into it, We will cut off his neck-vein (or heart-vein). For this is the Truth absolute and pure: and those who give it a lie, will have ultimately to regret and repent.”*

Sūrah 69: al-Hāqqah¹⁶⁰⁹

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

1. The Inevitable Reality -
2. What is the Inevitable Reality?
3. And what can make you know what is the Inevitable Reality?
4. Thamūd and ‘Aad denied the Striking Calamity [i.e., the Resurrection].
5. So as for Thamūd, they were destroyed by the overpowering [blast].
6. And as for ‘Aad, they were destroyed by a screaming,¹⁶¹⁰ violent wind
7. Which He [i.e., God] imposed upon them for seven nights and eight days in succession, so you would see the people therein fallen as if they were hollow trunks of palm trees.
8. Then do you see of them any remains?
9. And there came Pharaoh and those before him and the overturned cities¹⁶¹¹ with sin.
10. And they disobeyed the messenger of their Lord, so He seized them with a seizure exceeding [in severity].
11. Indeed, when the water overflowed, We carried you [i.e., your ancestors] in the sailing ship¹⁶¹²
12. That We might make it for you a reminder and [that] a conscious ear would be conscious of it.
13. Then when the Horn is blown with one blast
14. And the earth and the mountains are lifted and leveled with one blow [i.e., stroke] -
15. Then on that Day, the Occurrence [i.e., Resurrection] will occur,
16. And the heaven will split [open], for that Day it is infirm.¹⁶¹³
17. And the angels are at its edges. And there will bear the Throne of your Lord above them, that Day, eight [of them].
18. That Day, you will be exhibited [for judgement]; not hidden among you is anything concealed.¹⁶¹⁴
19. So as for he who is given his record in his right hand, he will say, “Here, read my record!
20. Indeed, I was certain that I would be meeting my account.”
21. So he will be in a pleasant life -
22. In an elevated garden,
23. Its [fruit] to be picked hanging near.
24. [They will be told], “Eat and drink in satisfaction for what you put forth¹⁶¹⁵ in the days past.”

¹⁶⁰⁹ *Al-Hāqqah*: The Inevitable Reality or That Which Manifests Realities – another name for the Resurrection.

¹⁶¹⁰ Or “cold.”

¹⁶¹¹ Those to which Lot was sent (see 11:82-83) or generally, all cities which were destroyed due to their denial of a messenger from God.

¹⁶¹² Which was constructed by Noah.

¹⁶¹³ i.e., weak, enfeebled and unstable.

¹⁶¹⁴ i.e., any person or any secret you might attempt to conceal.

¹⁶¹⁵ Literally, “advanced” in anticipation of reward in the Hereafter.

25. But as for he who is given his record in his left hand, he will say, "Oh, I wish I had not been given my record
26. And had not known what is my account.
27. I wish it [i.e., my death] had been the decisive one.¹⁶¹⁶
28. My wealth has not availed me.
29. Gone from me is my authority."
30. [God will say], "Seize him and shackle him.
31. Then into Hellfire drive him.
32. Then into a chain whose length is seventy cubits insert him."
33. Indeed, he did not used to believe in God, the Most Great,
34. Nor did he encourage the feeding of the poor.
35. So there is not for him here this Day any devoted friend
36. Nor any food except from the discharge of wounds;
37. None will eat it except the sinners.
38. So I swear by what you see
39. And what you do not see
40. [That] indeed, it [i.e., the Qur'ān] is the word of a noble Messenger.
41. And it is not the word of a poet; little do you believe.
42. Nor the word of a soothsayer; little do you remember.
43. [It is] a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.
44. And if he [i.e., Muhammad] had made up about Us some [false] sayings,
45. We would have seized him by the right hand;¹⁶¹⁷
46. Then We would have cut from him the aorta.¹⁶¹⁸
47. And there is no one of you who could prevent [Us] from him.
48. And indeed, it [i.e., the Qur'ān] is a reminder for the righteous.
49. And indeed, We know that among you are deniers.
50. And indeed, it will be [a cause of] regret upon the disbelievers.
51. And indeed, it is the truth of certainty.
52. So exalt the name of your Lord, the Most Great.

¹⁶¹⁶ i.e., ending life rather than being the gateway to eternal life.

¹⁶¹⁷ Another interpretation is "by [Our] right hand," i.e., God would have exacted revenge with might and power.

¹⁶¹⁸ Causing immediate death.