

Sūrah 75: al-Qiyāmah

Period of Revelation

Although there is no tradition to indicate its period of revelation, yet there is in the subject matter of this Sūrah an internal evidence, which shows that it is one of the earliest Sūrahs to be sent down at Makkah. After verse 15 the discourse is suddenly interrupted and the Prophet told: “Do not move your tongue to remember this Revelation hastily. It is Our responsibility to have it remembered and read. Therefore, when We are reciting it, listen to its recital carefully. Again, it is Our responsibility to explain its meaning.” Then, from verse 20 onward the same theme which was interrupted at verse 15, is resumed. This parenthetical passage, according to both the context and the traditions, has been interposed here for the reason that when the Angel Gabriel was reciting this Sūrah to the Prophet, the Prophet, lest he should forget its words later, was repeating them at the same moment. This in fact happened at the time when the coming down and receipt of Revelation was yet a new experience for him and he was not yet fully used to receiving it calmly. There are two other instances also of this in the Qur’ān. First, in Sūrah Ta-Ha the Prophet has been told: “And see that you do not hasten to recite the Qur’ān before its revelation is completed to you.” (v. 114). Then, in Sūrah al-A’la, it has been said: “We shall enable you to recite; then you shall never forget.” (v. 6). Later, when the Prophet became fully used to receiving the Revelation well, there remained no need to give him any such instruction. That is why except for these three, there is no other instance of this in the Qur’ān.

Theme and Subject Matter

Most of the Sūrahs, from here till the end of the Qur’ān, in view of their content and style, seem to have been sent down in the period when after the first seven verses of Sūrah al-Muddathir, revelation of the Qur’ān began like a shower of rain: Thus, in the successively revealed Sūrahs Islām and its fundamental concepts and moral teachings were presented so forcefully and effectively in concise, brief sentences and the people of Makkah warned so vehemently on their errors and deviations that the Quraysh chiefs were utterly confounded. Therefore, before the next Hajj season came they held the conference for devising schemes to defeat the Prophet as has been mentioned in the introduction to Sūrah al-Muddathir previously.

In this Sūrah, addressing the deniers of the Hereafter, replies have been given to each of their doubts and objections, strong arguments have been given to prove the possibility, occurrence and necessity of the Resurrection and Hereafter, and also it has been pointed out clearly that the actual reason of the people’s denying the Hereafter is not that they regard it as impossible rationally but because their selfish motives do not allow them to affirm it. At the same time, the people have been warned, as if to say: “The event, the occurrence of which you deny, will inevitably come: all your deeds will be brought and placed before you. As a matter of fact, even before any of you sees his record, he will be knowing fully well what he has done in the world, for no man is unaware of himself, no matter what excuses and pretenses he may offer to deceive the world and deceive himself in respect of his misdeeds.”

Sūrah 75: al-Qiyāmah¹⁶⁷⁰

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

1. I swear by the Day of Resurrection
2. And I swear by the reproaching soul¹⁶⁷¹ [to the certainty of resurrection].
3. Does man think that We will not assemble his bones?
4. Yes. [We are] Able [even] to proportion his fingertips.
5. But man desires to continue in sin.¹⁶⁷²
6. He asks, "When is the Day of Resurrection?"
7. So when vision is dazzled
8. And the moon darkens
9. And the sun and the moon are joined,
10. Man will say on that Day, "Where is the [place of] escape?"
11. No! There is no refuge.
12. To your Lord, that Day, is the [place of] permanence.
13. Man will be informed that Day of what he sent ahead¹⁶⁷³ and kept back.¹⁶⁷⁴
14. Rather, man, against himself, will be a witness,¹⁶⁷⁵
15. Even if he presents his excuses.
16. Move not your tongue with it, [O Muhammad], to hasten with it [i.e., recitation of the Qur'ān].
17. Indeed, upon Us is its collection [in your heart] and [to make possible] its recitation.
18. So when We have recited it [through Gabriel], then follow its recitation.
19. Then upon Us is its clarification [to you].
20. No! But you [i.e., mankind] love the immediate
21. And leave [i.e., neglect] the Hereafter.
22. [Some] faces, that Day, will be radiant,
23. Looking at their Lord.¹⁶⁷⁶
24. And [some] faces, that Day, will be contorted,
25. Expecting that there will be done to them [something] backbreaking.
26. No! When it [i.e., the soul] has reached the collar bones¹⁶⁷⁷
27. And it is said, "Who will cure [him]?"
28. And he [i.e., the dying one] is certain that it is the [time of] separation

¹⁶⁷⁰ *Al-Qiyāmah*: The resurrection.

¹⁶⁷¹ i.e., that of the believer, which blames him when he falls into sin or error.

¹⁶⁷² Literally, "to sin ahead of him." This refers to the disbeliever, who denies the Day of Account.

¹⁶⁷³ i.e., his deeds, which await him in the Hereafter.

¹⁶⁷⁴ i.e., that which he did not do or which he delayed.

¹⁶⁷⁵ As described in 36:65 and 41:20-23.

¹⁶⁷⁶ The people of Paradise will actually see their Creator in the Hereafter.

¹⁶⁷⁷ At the time it is about to leave the body when one is on the verge of death.

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29. And the leg is wound about the leg,¹⁶⁷⁸
30. To your Lord, that Day, will be the procession.¹⁶⁷⁹
31. And he [i.e., the disbeliever] had not believed, nor had he prayed.
32. But [instead], he denied and turned away.
33. And then he went to his people, swaggering [in pride].
34. Woe to you, and woe!
35. Then woe to you, and woe!
36. Does man think that he will be left neglected?¹⁶⁸⁰
37. Had he not been a sperm from semen emitted?
38. Then he was a clinging clot, and [God] created [his form] and proportioned [him]
39. And made of him two mates, the male and the female.
40. Is not that [Creator] Able to give life to the dead?

¹⁶⁷⁸ From the difficulties the person faces at death or his sudden awareness of the realities of both this world and the Hereafter. It may also refer to his shrouding after death.

¹⁶⁷⁹ Literally, “driving” or herding” or “the place to which one is driven.”

¹⁶⁸⁰ i.e., to no end, without responsibility, or without being returned to the Creator for judgement.