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## Sūrah 86: at-Tāriq

### Period of Revelation

The style of its subject matter resembles that of the earliest Sūrahs revealed at Makkah, but this Sūrah was sent down at a stage when the disbelievers of Makkah were employing all sorts of devices and plans to defeat and frustrate the message of the Qurʾān and Muhammad.

### Theme and Subject Matter

It discusses two themes: first, that man has to appear before God after death; second, that the Qurʾān is a decisive Word which no plan or device of the disbelievers can defeat or frustrate.

First of all, the stars of the heavens have been cited as an evidence that there is nothing in the universe which may continue to exist and survive without a guardian over it. Then man has been asked to consider his own self as to how he has been brought into existence from a mere sperm drop and shaped into a living human being. Then it has been said that the God, Who has so brought him into existence, has certainly the power to create him once again, and this resurrection will be for the purpose to subject to scrutiny all the secrets of man which remained hidden in the world. At that time, man will neither be able to escape the consequences of his deeds by his own power, nor will anyone else come to his rescue.

In conclusion, it has been pointed out that just as the falling of rain from the sky and the sprouting of plants and crops from the earth is no child's play but a serious task, so also the truths expressed in the Qurʾān are no jest but a firm and unchangeable reality. The disbelievers are involved in the misunderstanding that their plans and devices will defeat the invitation of the Qurʾān, but they do not know that God too is devising a plan which will bring to nought all their scheming and planning. Then in one sentence the discourse has been summed up, with a word of consolation to the Prophet and a tacit warning to the disbelievers, saying: "Have patience for a while: let the disbelievers do their worst. Before long they will themselves realize whether they have been able to defeat the Qurʾān by their scheming or the Qurʾān has dominated them in the very place where they are exerting their utmost to defeat it."

**Sūrah 86: at-Tāriq**<sup>1770</sup>

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

1. By the sky and the night comer -
2. And what can make you know what is the night comer?
3. It is the piercing star<sup>1771</sup> -
4. There is no soul but that it has over it a protector.
5. So let man observe from what he was created.
6. He was created from a fluid, ejected,
7. Emerging from between the backbone and the ribs.
8. Indeed, He [i.e., God], to return him [to life], is Able.
9. The Day when secrets will be put on trial,<sup>1772</sup>
10. Then he [i.e., man] will have no power or any helper.
11. By the sky which returns [rain]
12. And [by] the earth which cracks open,<sup>1773</sup>
13. Indeed, it [i.e., the Qurʾān] is a decisive statement,
14. And it is not amusement.
15. Indeed, they are planning a plan,
16. But I am planning a plan.
17. So allow time for the disbelievers. Leave them awhile.<sup>1774</sup>

<sup>1770</sup> *At-Tāriq*: That Which Comes at Night.

<sup>1771</sup> Whose light pierces through the darkness.

<sup>1772</sup> i.e., exposed, examined and judged.

<sup>1773</sup> With the growth of plants.

<sup>1774</sup> i.e., Do not be in haste for revenge, for you will see what will become of them.