

Explaining Sūrah an-Nāzi'āt

By: Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn

With Appendix:

The Believer and Disbeliever at the Time of Death

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Sūrah an-Nāzi'āt: Verses 1-14.....	2
The Explanation of Verses 1-14.....	4
Sūrah an-Nāzi'āt: Verses 15-26.....	16
The Explanation of Verses 15-26.....	17
Sūrah an-Nāzi'āt: Verses 27-33.....	32
The Explanation of Verses 27-33.....	33
Sūrah an-Nāzi'āt: Verses 34-41.....	38
The Explanation of Verses 34-41.....	39
Sūrah an-Nāzi'āt: Verses 42-46.....	49
The Explanation of Verses 42-46.....	50
Appendix: The Believer and Disbeliever at the Time of Death.....	57

Sūrah an-Nāzi'āt

Verses 1-14

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy.

1	By those who pull out with violence	﴿ وَالنَّازِعَاتِ غَرْقًا ﴾
2	By those who gently remove	﴿ وَالنَّاشِطَاتِ نَشْطًا ﴾
3	By those who glide (as if) swimming	﴿ وَالسَّابِحَاتِ سَبْحًا ﴾
4	And those who press forward as in a race	﴿ فَالسَّابِقَاتِ سَبْقًا ﴾
5	And those who arrange (each) matter	﴿ فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا ﴾
6	On the day everything will shake (from the horn's blast)	﴿ يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الرَّاجِفَةُ ﴾
7	There will follow it the next (blast)	﴿ تَتَّبِعُهَا الرَّادِفَةُ ﴾
8	Hearts that day will beat, trembling	﴿ قُلُوبٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاجِفَةٌ ﴾
9	Their eyes humbled	﴿ أَبْصَارُهَا خَاشِعَةٌ ﴾
10	They say, "Will we indeed be returned to (our) former state (of life)?	﴿ يَقُولُونَ أَأَنَّا لَمَرْدُودُونَ فِي الْحَافِرَةِ ﴾
11	Even if we should be decayed bones?"	﴿ أَأَنبَدًا كُنَّا عِظَامًا نَجْرَةً ﴾
12	They say, "In that case, it would be a losing return."	﴿ قَالُوا تِلْكَ إِذَا كَرَّةٌ خَاسِرَةٌ ﴾
13	But it will only be a single cry	﴿ فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ ﴾

14

And suddenly they will be awake upon the earth.¹

﴿فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ﴾

¹ The Quran, Sūrah an-Nāzi'āt, 79:1-14.

Note: Most footnotes are those of the translator.

The Explanation of Verses 1-14

Verse 1: ﴿ وَالنَّازِعَاتِ غَرْقًا ﴾²

﴿By those who pull out with violence﴾ They are the angels responsible for taking the souls of disbelievers at death, pulling their souls out ﴿with violence﴾ by yanking them out fiercely.³

Verse 2: ﴿ وَالنَّاشِطَاتِ نَشْطًا ﴾

﴿By those who gently remove﴾ These are the angels responsible for taking the souls of believers at death. They remove the soul gently similar to the pulling of a loosely-tied knot or loop. For example, if a loop were pulled at either end, it would loosen and become untied quickly and easily. In such a way, these angels will take out the believers' souls gently and with ease.⁴

² The main contents of this work is a translation of Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn's explanation of the seventy-ninth chapter of the Quran, Sūrah an-Nāzi'āt. The Arabic text is from Ibn al-'Uthaymīn's lectures and have been compiled in the book, "Tafsīr al-Qurān al-Karīm: Juz 'Amma" (pp.39-58), published by Dār ath-Thurayyā Publishers in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (2002).

³ In support of this, there occurs in an authentic ḥadīth from one of the companions, al-Barā Ibn 'Āzib, that the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

« فَيَنْتَزِعُهَا كَمَا يُنْتَزَعُ السَّفْوُ [الكثيرُ الشُّعْبِ] مِنَ الصُّوفِ الْمَبْلُورِ ، [فَتَقَطَّعَ مَعَهَا الْعُرُوقُ وَالْعَصَبُ] »

They will rip it out forcefully similar to how a skewer [with many forks] is yanked through wet wool. [Along with it (the soul), the veins and nerves will be ripped.]

See the full text of this ḥadīth in the Appendix.

⁴ About this and in the same ḥadīth referred to above, the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

« فَتَخْرُجُ تَسِيلًا كَمَا تَسِيلُ الْقَطْرَةُ مِنْ فِي السَّقَاءِ »

So the person's soul will come out (easily and gently) like a drop from a waterskin.

See the full ḥadīth in the Appendix.

When the angels responsible for taking the souls of disbelievers comes to a disbeliever, his or her soul is called forth to come out; the angels call out to it using the ugliest descriptions. They say, “Come out, oh filthy soul that was in a filthy body. Come out to the anger of Allah.” The soul will then flee and hide (in the body), not wanting to come out. It will scatter throughout the body until the angels rip it out violently. They will extract it so hard that the body will almost rip apart from the force of their pull.

As for the souls of believers – may Allah make me and you all from them – when the angles descend to remove it, they announce good news: “Come out, oh good soul that was in a good body. Come out to the pleasure of Allah,” and other similar words that will relieve and put the soul at ease as it is removed from the body. It will then be removed gently.⁵ For this, when the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

« مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ أَحَبَّ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ ، وَمَنْ كَرِهَ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ » ÷

Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him. And whoever hates to meet Allah, Allah hates to meet him.

After hearing this, ‘Āishah said, “Oh messenger of Allah, all of us hate death.” The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) replied:

⁵ The ḥadīth indicating this is recorded by Imām Aḥmad (4/287), Abū Dāwūd (no. 4753), and al-Ḥākim (1/37). al-Ḥākim said the ḥadīth is authentic according to the conditions of Muslim and adh-Dhahabī agreed with him. al-Albānī says it is authentic in “Aḥkām al-Janāiz” (pp. 156-159). For the full text, see the Appendix.

« لَيْسَ ذَلِكَ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ إِذَا حَضَرَهُ الْمَوْتُ بُشِّرَ بِرِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ وَكَرَامَتِهِ فَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْهِ مِمَّا أَمَامَهُ فَأَحَبُّ لِقَاءِ اللَّهِ وَأَحَبُّ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ » ÷

It is not like that. Rather, when death comes to the believer, he is given the good news of the pleasure of Allah and the honor He has for the person. So nothing will then be more beloved to that person than what is waiting ahead of him, so he loves to meet Allah and Allah loves to meet him.⁶

At that moment (when a believer is given the news of the pleasure of Allah), he will know that he is moving to a home that is much better than the one he is leaving. He will then be happy as one of you would be happy if he were told to leave some mud hut and move into a well-fortified, beautifully constructed palace. So a believer will rejoice and will love to meet Allah.

As for a disbeliever, his situation will be the very opposite: when he is given the news of anger and punishment (from Allah), he will certainly hate death and hate to meet Allah, and Allah will likewise hate to meet him.

Verse 3: ﴿وَالسَّائِحَاتِ سَبْحًا﴾

﴿By those who glide (as if) swimming﴾ These are the angels that move along by the command of Allah, meaning, they rush to fulfill His commands quickly as a swimmer may swim through water. Similarly, Allah (تعالى) says about the sun, moon, the night and the day:

⁶ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 6507).

﴿ كُلُّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴾

All (heavenly bodies) are in orbit, swimming.⁷

So the angels swim in this manner by the command of Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ), doing whatever Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) wants them to do.

The angels are also much stronger than Jinn, yet the Jinn are stronger than people. Look at the statement of Allah (تعالى), quoting Sulaymān (King Solomon):

﴿ قَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ • قَالَ عِفْرِيْتُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ مَقَامِكَ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ • قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ ﴾

He said, “Oh assembly (of Jinn), which of you will bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?” A powerful one from among the Jinn said, “I will bring it to you before you rise from your place, and indeed, I am for this (task) strong and trustworthy.” One who had knowledge of the Scripture (an angel) said, “I will bring it to you before your glance returns to you.”⁸

In other words, if you were to look at something, turn away, and then look at it again, I would bring her throne to you before you are able to return your glance to what you were looking at.

⁷ The Quran, Sūrah al-Anbiyā, 21:33.

⁸ The Quran, Sūrah an-Naml, 27:38-40.

﴿ فَلَمَّا رَأَاهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِنْدَهُ ﴾

And when he (Sulaymān) saw it placed before him

When he immediately saw it before him:

﴿ قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي أَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ ﴾

He said, “This is from the favors of my Lord to test me whether I will be grateful or ungrateful.”⁹

The scholars say that it was the angels that brought the Queen of Sheba’s throne instantly from Yemen to Sulaymān in Damascus. These verses show that the strength of the angels is much greater than that of Jinn, and the Jinn are stronger than the children of Ādam; no human being could bring the Queen of Sheba’s throne from Yemen to Damascus except after a very long time. In short, the angels swim or glide along according to the will of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), fulfilling whatever he commands them to do.

Verse 4: ﴿ فَالسَّائِقَاتِ سَبْقًا ﴾

﴿**And those who press forward as in a race**﴾ These are also angels that race to fulfill the command of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ). The angels are faster than the children of Ādam to carry out the commands of Allah and they do so more correctly than human beings can. Allah describes the angels guarding the fire of Hell:

⁹ The Quran, Sūrah an-Naml, 27:40.

﴿ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاطٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴾

Over it (Hell) are angels, harsh and severe. They do not disobey Allah in what He commands them to do; they do as they are commanded.¹⁰

And He (عزّ وجلّ) says:

﴿ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَلَا يَسْتَحْسِرُونَ • يُسَبِّحُونَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْتُرُونَ ﴾

And those near Him are not prevented by arrogance from His worship, nor do they tire. They exalt (Him) night and day and do not weaken.¹¹

So the angels race to carry out the commands of Allah in whatever He orders them to do. They never disobey and they do exactly as they are commanded out of their immense strength and capability in fulfilling Allah's commands.

Verse 5: ﴿ فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا ﴾

﴿**And those who arrange (each) matter**﴾ Again, Allah describes the angels as those who arrange matters and perform specific duties. For example, Jibrīl is responsible for revelations; he learns them from Allah then descends to deliver them to the messengers.¹²

¹⁰ The Quran, Sūrah at-Tahṛīm, 66:6.

¹¹ The Quran, Sūrah al-Anbiyā, 21:19-20.

¹² Allah says about the angel Jibrīl in Sūrah ash-Shu'arā (26:192):

Isrāfīl is responsible for blowing into the horn that will commence the Day of Resurrection. He will blow into the horn once and all people living on earth at that time will be horrified in shock and will fall down dead. He will then blow into it a second time and everyone will be resurrected.¹³ Isrāfīl is also one of the angels that carry the throne of Allah.¹⁴

﴿ وَإِنَّهُ لَتَنْزِيلُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ • نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ • عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ ﴾

And truly this (Quran) is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. The trustworthy spirit (Jibrīl) has brought it down upon your heart so that you may be one of the warners.

The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said about Jibrīl:

« أَتَانِي جِبْرِيلُ فِي أَوَّلِ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ فَعَلَّمَنِي الْوُضُوءَ وَالصَّلَاةَ »

Jibrīl came to me at the beginning of my revelation and taught me how to perform wuḍū and prayer.

The ḥadīth is recorded by Ibn Mājah, Aḥmad, and others. al-Albānī said it is authentic in “al-Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah” (no. 841).

Despite the high status the angel Jibrīl has with Allah, the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said of him:

« مَرَرْتُ بِجِبْرِيلَ لَيْلَةَ أُسْرِي بِي بِالْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى ، وَهُوَ كَالْحَلْسِ الْبَالِي مِنَ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ »

I passed Jibrīl on the night I was taken up to the heavens to the highest assembly (of angels), and he appeared similar to a worn-out cloth from the fear of Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ).

Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in “al-Awsaṭ”) and by al-Bazzār. al-Albānī said it is authentic in “al-Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah” (no. 2289).

¹³ The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said about the angel Isrāfīl:

« إِنَّ طَرْفَ صَاحِبِ الصُّورِ مُنْذُ وَكَلَّ بِهِ مُسْتَعِدٌّ ، يَنْظُرُ نَحْوَ الْعَرْشِ ، مَخَافَةً أَنْ يُؤْمَرَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْهِ طَرْفُهُ ، كَأَنَّ عَيْنَيْهِ كَوْكَبَانِ دُرِّيَّانِ »

Indeed, the eyesight of the horn blower is fixed ever since he was placed in charge of it. He is staring towards the throne, fearing (if he blinks or turns away) that he will be command (to blow) before his eyesight returns to him. His eyes are like two bright planets.

This ḥadīth is recorded by al-Ḥākim and al-Albānī said it is authentic in “al-Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah” (no. 1078).

The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) also said about Isrāfīl:

« كَيْفَ أَنْعَمُ وَقَدْ التَّقَمَ صَاحِبُ الْقَرْنِ الْقَرْنَ وَحَتَّى جِبْهَتُهُ وَأَصْعَى سَمْعُهُ ، يَنْتَظِرُ أَنْ يُؤْمَرَ أَنْ يَنْفُخَ فَيَنْفُخُ »

The angel Mīkāīl¹⁵ is responsible for the lands, the rain, and the plants. The Angel of Death¹⁶ is responsible for taking the souls of people at the time of death. Mālik¹⁷ is the keeper of the Hell-fire, and Riḍwān is the keeper of Paradise. On every person's left and right, there are also angels sitting and they are responsible for recording a person's deeds.¹⁸ Each angel manages whatever affair that Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ) has commanded him with.

How can I feel secure when the holder of the horn has already placed his mouth to the horn and bent his head? He is listening carefully, waiting to be commanded to blow, and then he will blow it.

Recorded by at-Tirmidhī (no. 2431) and al-Albānī said it is authentic in "al-Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah" (no. 1079).

¹⁴ Allah says in Sūrah Ghāfir (40:7) about the angels that carry the throne:

﴿ الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ﴾

Those (angels) who carry the throne and those around it exalt (Allah) with praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness for those who have believed.

¹⁵ In Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:98), Allah says about the angel Mīkāīl or Mīkāl as he is also called:

﴿ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِلَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَالَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴾

Whoever is an enemy to Allah, his angels, his messenger, Jibrīl and Mīkāl; surely Allah is an enemy to the disbelievers.

The prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) also said about Mīkāīl:

﴿ قُلْتُ لِجِبْرِيلَ: مَا لِي لَمْ أَرِ مِيكَائِيلَ ضَاحِكًا قَطُّ؟ قَالَ: مَا ضَاحِكُ مِيكَائِيلَ مُنْذُ خُلِقَتِ النَّارُ ﴾

I asked Jibrīl, "Why have I never seen Mīkāīl smile?" He replied, "Mīkāīl has not smiled since the fire was created."

This ḥadīth's chain of narrators is considered good (ḥasan) al-Albānī in "al-Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah" (no. 2511).

¹⁶ For a description of the Angel of Death's duties when a person dies, see the Appendix.

¹⁷ In Sūrah az-Zukhruf (43:77), Allah says about the angel Mālik:

﴿ وَنَادُوا يَامَالِكُ لِيَقْضِ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ مَاكِثُونَ ﴾

And they (the people in Hell) will call out, "Oh Mālik, let your Lord put an end to us!" He will reply, "You will indeed remain."

¹⁸ About these two recording angels, Allah says in Sūrah Qāf (50:17-18):

﴿ إِذْ يَتَلَقَى الْمُتَلَقِيَانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ • مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَقِيدٌ ﴾

When the two receiving (angels) seated on the right and on the left receive (deeds to write), he does not utter any word except that with him is an observer prepared (to write it).

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All of the previous descriptions (in verses 1-5) describe the angels according to their actions. Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) swears by the angels because they are some of the best of creation, and Allah does not swear by anything unless it occupies a high, honored status with Him either in and of itself or because it is one of the signs of Allah.

Verses 6 and 7: ﴿يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الرَّاجِفَةُ • تَتَّبِعَهَا الرَّادِفَةُ﴾

﴿On the day everything will shake (from the horn's blast). There will follow it the next (blast).﴾ This statement is connected with an absent, yet preceding subject which would be similar to: Mention, oh Muhammad, this great day and remind people of it, ﴿the day everything will shake (from the horn's blast). There will follow it the next (blast).﴾. These are the two times the horn is blown (by the angel Isrāfīl).¹⁹ After the first blast of the horn, all mankind alive at that time will tremble and become terrified. They will then die to the very last of them except whom Allah may spare. After the

The prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said about the angel on the left side:

« إِنَّ صَاحِبَ الشَّمَالِ لَيَرْفَعُ الْقَلَمَ سِتَّ سَاعَاتٍ عَنِ الْعَبْدِ الْمُسْلِمِ الْمُخْطِئِ ، فَإِنْ نَدِمَ وَاسْتَعْفَرَ اللَّهَ مِنْهَا أَلْقَاهَا ، وَإِلَّا كُتِبَتْ وَاحِدَةً »

Indeed, the companion on the left side lifts the pen for six hours for a sinful Muslim. If the person regrets and seeks Allah's forgiveness for the sin, the angel discards it. Otherwise, it is written as one sin.

Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī, al-Bayhaqī, and Abū Na'īm. al-Albānī said it is good (ḥasan) in "al-Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah" (no. 1209) and in "Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'" (2097).

¹⁹ About these two blows of the horn, Allah says in Sūrah az-Zumar (39:68):

﴿ وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَى فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴾

And the horn will be blown, and everyone in the heavens and on earth will fall dead except those whom Allah spares. Then it will be blown again, and at once they will all be standing looking around.

second horn blast, everyone will be resurrected from their graves with all mankind rising up at the same time.²⁰ Allah says about this:

﴿ فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ • فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ ﴾

But it will only be a single cry, and suddenly they will be awake upon the earth.²¹

At that time, when everything will shake from the first blast and the second one follows, people will become separated into two groups:

Verses 8-12:

﴿ قُلُوبٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاجِفَةٌ • أَبْصَارُهَا خَاشِعَةٌ • يَقُولُونَ أَئِنَّا لَمَرْدُودُونَ فِي الْحَافِرَةِ • أئِذَا كُنَّا

عِظَامًا نَخِرَةً • قَالُوا تِلْكَ إِذًا كَرَّةٌ خَاسِرَةٌ ﴾

²⁰ The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), in a long ḥadīth about the Anti-Christ recorded by Muslim (no. 2940), said about the two blasts of the horn:

« ثُمَّ يَنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا يَسْمَعُهُ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا أَصْعَى لِيْتَا وَرَفَعَ لِيْتَا ، وَأَوَّلُ مَنْ يَسْمَعُهُ رَجُلٌ يَلُوطُ حَوْضَ إِبِلِهِ ، فَيُصْعَقُ وَيُصْعَقُ النَّاسُ حَوْلَهُ ، ثُمَّ يُرْسِلُ اللَّهُ - أَوْ قَالَ : يُنْزِلُ اللَّهُ ٤ مَطْرًا كَأَنَّهُ الطَّلُّ - أَوْ الظَّلُّ ٤ فَتَنْبُتُ مِنْهُ أَجْسَادُ النَّاسِ ، ثُمَّ يَنْفَخُ فِيهِ أُخْرَى فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ »

The horn would then be blown and no one would hear it except that he would bend his neck to one side and raise it from the other side, and the first one to hear it would be a man who would be managing his camel's water trough. He would be so shocked that he will die and all the other people around him would also be shocked to death. Allah will then send rain which will be like dew and people's bodies will grow from it. Then the horn will be blow a second time and then everyone will be standing, looking around.

Also in a ḥadīth in "Šaḥīḥ Muslim" (no. 2937), the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said about the people upon whom the first horn will be blown:

« وَيَبْقَى شِرَارُ النَّاسِ يَتَهَارَجُونَ فِيهَا تَهَارُجَ الْحُمْرِ فَعَلَيْهِمْ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ »

There will remain only the worst people (on earth). They will fornicate in public like that of donkeys, and it is upon them that the hour will be established.

²¹ The Quran, Sūrah an-Nāzi'āt, 79:13-14.

﴿Hearts that day will beat, trembling, their eyes humbled. They say, “Will we indeed be returned to (our) former state (of life)? Even if we should be decayed bones?” They say, “In that case, it would be a losing return.﴾ These are the hearts of disbelievers. They will be ﴿trembling﴾ terrified with extreme fear, ﴿their eyes humbled.﴾ Their eyes will be humbled, unable to stare and or even look at anything except in a weak, faint manner. Rather, their eyesight will be lowered from humiliation as Allah says:

﴿ وَتَرَاهُمْ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا خَاشِعِينَ مِنَ الدُّلِّ يَنْظُرُونَ مِنْ طَرْفٍ خَفِيٍّ ﴾

And you will see them being exposed to it (the fire), humbled from humiliation, looking with a faint glance.²²

Verses 13 and 14: ﴿ فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ • فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ ﴾

﴿But it will only be a single cry and suddenly they will be awake upon the earth.﴾

It will be a single cry and they will be driven out, rising up from their graves all at the same time standing upon the earth's surface after they were just inside it. Allah (تبارك) says:

﴿ إِن كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ جَمِيعٌ لَدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُونَ ﴾

It will not be but a single blast, and at once they are all brought present before Us.²³

²² The Quran, Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42:45.

²³ The Quran, Sūrah YāSīn, 36:53.

All creations, upon this single word, will rise from their graves alive, and they will be presented before Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) so that He may judge them. For this, He says: **﴿But it will only be a single cry and suddenly they will be awake upon the earth.﴾** This is also similar to His statement (سبحانه وتعالى):

﴿ وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ ﴾

And Our command is but one, like a glance of the eye.²⁴

When Allah wants something to happen, He only says, “Be,” once and it happens; not a moment passes before it occurs just as Allah commands. His word **﴿is but one, like a glance of the eye.﴾** Nothing is beyond the capability of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ). And if the entire creation emerges from their graves and comes to Allah by a single word, this is the most evident proof that Allah is certainly capable of doing anything and that nothing in the heavens or earth is beyond His power. Allah also says:

﴿ وَمَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ لِيُعْجِزَهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيمًا قَدِيرًا ﴾

But Allah is not incapable of anything in the heavens or on the earth.

Indeed, He is ever-knowing and competent.²⁵

﴿But it will only be a single cry.﴾

²⁴ The Quran, Sūrah al-Qamar, 54:50.

²⁵ The Quran, Sūrah Fāṭir, 35:44.

Sūrah an-Nāzi'āt

Verses 15-26

15	Has there reached you the story of Mūsá (Moses)?	﴿ هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى ﴾
16	When his Lord called to him in the sacred valley of Ṭuwá	﴿ إِذِ نَادَاهُ رَبُّهُ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ﴾
17	Go to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed.	﴿ اذْهَبْ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى ﴾
18	And say to him, “Would you purify yourself?”	﴿ فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَى أَنْ تَزَكَّى ﴾
19	“And let me guide you to your Lord so you would fear (Him)?”	﴿ وَأَهْدِيكَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَى ﴾
20	And He showed him the greatest sign	﴿ فَأَرَاهُ الْآيَةَ الْكُبْرَى ﴾
21	But Pharaoh denied and disobeyed	﴿ فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصَى ﴾
22	Then he turned his back, striving	﴿ ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ يَسْعَى ﴾
23	And he gathered (his people) and called out	﴿ فَحَشَرَ فَنَادَى ﴾
24	And said, “I am your lord, the most high!”	﴿ فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَى ﴾
25	So Allah seized him in exemplary punishment for the last and the first (transgression)	﴿ فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى ﴾
26	Indeed in that is a warning for whoever fears (Allah)	﴿ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِمَنْ يَخْشَى ﴾

The Explanation of Verses 15-26

Allah (تعالی) then relates some things that happened to the nations before Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). Allah says:

Verse 15: ﴿ هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى ﴾

﴿Has there reached you the story of Mūsá (Moses)?﴾ As for ﴿Has there reached you﴾, here Allah is addressing the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and whomever the story may reach. In that case, the first meaning would be, “Has there reached you, oh Muhammad...” and the second would be, “Has there reached you, oh mankind...” ﴿the story of Mūsá?﴾ He is the son of ‘Imrān (عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَام) and one of the best prophets sent to the Israelites. He is also one of the five well-known steadfast prophets and they are: Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), Ibrāhīm (Abraham), Mūsá (Moses), ‘Īsá (Jesus), and Nūḥ (Noah) may peace and prayers be on all of them. These five prophets have been mentioned together in the Quran in two places, one is in Sūrah al-Aḥzāb in Allah’s statement:

﴿ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ﴾

And when We took from the prophets their covenant and from you, Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsá, and from ‘Īsá, the son of Maryam.²⁶

²⁶ The Quran, Sūrah al-Aḥzāb, 33:7.

The second place is in the statement of Allah (تعالیٰ):

﴿ شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّىٰ بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ ﴾

He has ordained for you of religion (the same of) which He enjoined upon Nūḥ and that which We have revealed to you, (Muhammad), and what We enjoined upon Ibrāhīm, Mūsá, and 'Īsá.²⁷

The story of Mūsá (عليه الصلاة والسلام) is frequently mentioned in the Quran, even more so than the stories of other former prophets. This is because Mūsá was the prophet sent to the Jews and there were many Jews in and around the city of Medina during the prophet's time. So for this, the stories of Mūsá are more frequently narrated to us, more often than the news concerning other prophets. Therefore, Mūsá's stories are more comprehensive and extensive than other stories.

Allah's statement, ﴿ **Has there reached you the story of Mūsá?** ﴾, produces within the listener a sense of anticipation to listen further to what exactly happened in that story.

Verse 16: ﴿ إِذْ نَادَاهُ رَبُّهُ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ﴾

﴿ **When his Lord called to him in the sacred valley of Ṭuwá** ﴾ Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ) called Mūsá with an actual, real calling in which he heard the voice of Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ).²⁸ Allah also says:

²⁷ The Quran, Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42:13.

²⁸ In another verse in Sūrah an-Nisā (4:164), Allah says:

﴿وَنَادَيْنَاهُ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ الْأَيْمَنِ وَقَرَّبْنَاهُ نَجِيًّا﴾

And We called him from the right side of the mountain and brought him near, confiding (to him).²⁹

﴿in the sacred valley﴾ This is between mountains, the valley being the place where water runs or once ran. Allah called this place “sacred” because it was here that the revelation came to Mūsá (عليه الصلاة والسلام). As for ﴿Tuwá﴾, that was the proper name of the valley.

Verse 17: ﴿اذهبْ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَى﴾

﴿Go to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed.﴾ Pharaoh was the king of Egypt at that time and he used to tell his people that he was their highest lord and that there was no other god but he.

﴿وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِي﴾

﴿وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا﴾

And Allah spoke directly to Mūsá

And the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said in a ḥadīth recorded by both al-Bukhārī and Muslim:

« مَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا سَيَكَلِّمُهُ رَبُّهُ لَيْسَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهُ تَرْجُمَانٌ وَلَا حِجَابٌ يَحْجِيهِ » ÷

There is not one of you except that his Lord will speak directly to him (on the Day of Resurrection); there will be no interpreter between Allah and the person and no screen separating him (from Allah).

Ibn al-'Uthaymīn says in his explanation of “Lum'ah al-'Itiqād,” “The Salaf all unanimously agree that the attribute of speech is affirmed to Allah. So one must believe it and affirm Allah’s characteristic of speech without rejecting it, without distorting it (to mean something other than speech), without asking or suggesting exactly *how* Allah speaks, and without believing or suggesting Allah’s speech is similar to the speech of anyone else. It is a real, actual speech that befits Allah and occurs according to the will of Allah, and it contains letters and sound that can be heard” (p. 72).

²⁹ The Quran, Sūrah Maryam, 19:52.

And Pharaoh said, “Oh eminent ones, I have not known you to have a god other than me.”³⁰

Pharaoh falsely claims what he has no right to say and rejects the true right which belongs to Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ). So Allah commanded his prophet, Mūsá (عليه الصلاة والسلام), to go to Pharaoh, and this is Mūsá's messenger-ship. Allah further clarifies the reason why He is sending Mūsá – it is because of the transgression and crime of this man, Pharaoh. In Sūrah ṬāHā, Allah also says (of Mūsá and his brother):

﴿ اذْهَبَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ ﴾

Go, both of you, to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed.³¹

These two verses (the verse above and verse 17 of Sūrah an-Nāzi'āt), though similar, do not contradict one another in any way. This is because Allah (تعالى) sent Mūsá alone at first. Then Mūsá (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) requested that his Lord support him with his brother, Hārūn (Aaron) (عليه الصلاة والسلام).³² So in the end, Mūsá and Hārūn were both sent as messengers to Pharaoh.³³ **﴿Indeed, he has transgressed.﴾** In other words, he

³⁰ The Quran, Sūrah Maryam, 28:38.

³¹ The Quran, Sūrah ṬāHā, 20:43.

³² About this, Allah also says in Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ (28:34-35):

﴿ وَأَخِي هَارُونُ هُوَ أَفْصَحُ مِنِّي لِسَانًا فَأَرْسَلْهُ مَعِيَ رِدْءًا يُصَدِّقُنِي إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُكَدِّبُونِي • قَالَ سَنُنْشِدُكَ بِأَخِيكَ وَنَجْعَلُ لَكَمَّا سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يَصِلُونَ إِلَيْكُمَا ﴾

And my brother, Hārūn, is more fluent than me in speech, so send him with me as support and so he can verify what I say. Indeed, I fear they will belie me. (Allah) said: We will strengthen you with your brother and grant you both supremacy so they will not reach either of you.

³³ Allah says in Sūrah ṬāHā, 20:47:

﴿ فَأَتِيَاهُ فَقُولَا إِنَّا رَسُولَا رَبِّكَ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلَا تُعَذِّبْهُمْ ﴾

exceeded his limits. The Arabic word used here طَغَى (ṭaghá) linguistically means “to increase or exceed” and it is used this way in the following verse:

﴿ إِنَّا لَمَّا طَغَى الْمَاءُ حَمَلْنَاكُمْ فِي الْجَارِيَةِ ﴾

Indeed, when the water overflowed (ṭaghá), We carried your ancestors in the sailing ship.³⁴

From this word also comes the word طَاغُوتٌ (ṭāghūt) which is anything worshipped other than Allah and this too is a form of exceeding the bounds.

Verse 18: ﴿ فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَى أَنْ تَزَكَّى ﴾

﴿And say to him, “Would you purify yourself?”﴾ This is a question that is meant to produce some sort of anticipation within Pharaoh in that he would purify himself from what he was upon of evil and corruption. The root of the Arabic word used here is similar to, زَكَاةٌ (zakāh) which linguistically means “to grow or to increase.” In other contexts, it may also mean Islam or Tawḥīd (worshipping Allah alone). An example of these later linguistic meanings of zakāh is the verse:

﴿ وَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُشْرِكِينَ • الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴾

And woe to those who associate others with Allah – those who do not fulfill zakāh, and in the hereafter they are disbelievers.³⁵

So go, both of you, to Pharaoh and say, “We are the two messengers from your Lord, so send with us the Children of Israel and stop tormenting them.”

³⁴ The Quran, Sūrah al-Ḥāqqah, 69:11.

³⁵ The Quran, Sūrah Fuṣṣilat, 41:6-7.

Another example is the verse:

﴿ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا • وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ﴾

He has succeeded who purifies (zakká) it (his soul). And he has failed who corrupts it.³⁶

Verse 19: ﴿ وَأَهْدِيكَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَى ﴾

﴿“And let me guide you to your Lord so you would fear (Him)?”﴾ As for ﴿“And let me guide you to your Lord”﴾, it means: I will direct you to your Lord, to the religion of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) which will lead you to Allah. ﴿“...so you would fear (Him)?”﴾, so you would fear Allah based on certain knowledge you have of Him. And this is the difference between the Arabic words خَشْيَةٌ (khashyah) and خَوْفٌ (khawf). The word khashyah (the verb of which is used in this verse) is a type of fear based on and connected with knowledge (of what is feared). If it is not based on knowledge, then it is simply fear – khawf. This is the difference between خَشْيَةٌ (khashyah) and خَوْفٌ (khawf) in the Arabic language; khashyah is based on knowledge just as Allah (تعالى) says in the verse (using a root of the word khashyah):

﴿ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ ﴾

Only those who fear Allah from His servants are those who have knowledge.³⁷

³⁶ The Quran, Sūrah ash-Shams, 91:9-10.

³⁷ The Quran, Sūrah Fāṭir, 35:28.

As for *khawf*, this is just fear – a person being afraid of something but perhaps not firmly based on knowledge. In this way, a person may become afraid of something he only imagines. For example, someone may see some vision on a dark night that he is afraid of but is actually nothing; this is nothing more than a natural fright based on assumption. But as for *khashyah*, it is based on certain knowledge.

So Mūsá (عليه الصلاة والسلام) went to Pharaoh and said to him what Allah commanded him to say: ﴿“**Would you purify yourself? And let me guide you to your Lord so you would fear (Him)?**”﴾. And since people do not believe or accept the claim of someone when he says he is a messenger (from Allah) except with an evident, miraculous sign—and this is known, people do not accept another’s claim except with proof—for this reason, Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) made for every messenger a convincing, miraculous sign to prove his truthfulness. And for this, Allah then says:

Verse 20: ﴿ فَأَرَاهُ الْآيَةَ الْكُبْرَى ﴾

﴿**And he showed him the greatest sign**﴾ Mūsá showed Pharaoh the greatest sign. So what was this sign? This sign was that Mūsá had a staff, a commonly known wooden stick made from a tree branch, but when he threw it to the ground, it became a slithering snake. When he picked it up, it returned back into a staff.³⁸ This is from the miraculous signs of Allah in that a solid, inanimate object, when put on the ground

³⁸ Allah says in Sūrah al-'Arāf (7:107):

﴿ فَأَلْقَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴾

So he threw his staff, and suddenly it was a serpent manifest.

becomes a slithering snake, and when picked up off the ground, instantly returns to its original state, a plain staff.

Mūsá (عليه الصلاة والسلام) was sent with the sign of the staff as well as the sign of placing his hand inside his garment and then revealing it as bright, white, and shining not from any defect or disease (but from a miraculous radiance). It was radiant white and not from a natural whiteness similar to a disease such as leprosy. Rather, it was a whiteness in which Allah made it a miracle.³⁹ So Allah sent Mūsá with the miracles of his staff and his hand, and this was because during the time of Mūsá, magic and sorcery were widespread and commonly practiced. So Allah (عزّ وجلّ) sent him with something that would blatantly defeat the magicians who challenged Mūsá.

The scholars said that during the time of 'Īsá (Jesus) (عليه الصلاة والسلام), medicine and therapy was widespread, greatly admired, and practiced. So 'Īsá came with something that no healer or doctor would ever be capable of doing: anyone with any ailment or disability would be instantly cured when 'Īsá touched him. Just by touching or anointing a person, he would cure any disease or handicap by the permission of Allah.

﴿ وَتُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي ﴾

And you heal the blind and the leper with My permission.⁴⁰

³⁹ About this miracle, Allah says in Sūrah al-'Arāf (7:108):

﴿ وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ لِلنَّاظِرِينَ ﴾

And he drew out his hand and it was white (with radiance) for the observers.

⁴⁰ The Quran, Sūrah al-Māidah, 5:110.

At that time, there was no cure for leprosy, yet he would completely cure leprosy by the permission of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ). And he would also heal the blind person who was born without sight at all. Further, he would perform miracles greater and more miraculous than that: 'Īsá would give life to the dead by Allah permission.⁴¹ A dead body would be brought to 'Īsá who would then speak with the deceased and return him to life. And even more miraculous and clearly-convincing was that he could bring the dead out of their graves by the will of Allah. He would stop at a grave, call the inhabitant of the grave, and the person would come out alive. This is obviously something no medicine or treatment can accomplish. So the miracles of 'Īsá during that time were appropriate and corresponded perfectly to what the people were accustomed to.

The scholars also say that as for Allah's messenger, Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), he came to Arabs who used to boast of their eloquence in speech. They used to consider eloquence speech and purity of expression to be the greatest virtue a person could achieve. So Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) came with this amazing recitation, the Quran, which astonished even the most affluent and eloquent speakers at that time. They were unable to imitate or make up anything similar. Allah (تَعَالَى) says:

⁴¹ This miracle and others that 'Īsá performed by Allah's permission are mentioned in Sūrah Āli-'Imrān (3:49):

﴿ وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ أَنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدْخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾

And (Allah made 'Īsá) a messenger to the Children of Israel, (saying), "Indeed I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I design for you from clay the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by the Allah's permission. And I cure the blind and the leper, and I give life to the dead by the permission of Allah. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses. Indeed in that is a sign for you, if you are believers.

﴿ قُلْ لَّيِّنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ
وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا ﴾

Say: If mankind and the Jinn gathered together in order to produce the likes of this Quran, they could not produce anything similar to it, even if they all helped one another.⁴²

If they all assisted each other, they will still be unable to make up anything like it.

So in his time, Mūsá (عليه الصلاة والسلام) showed Pharaoh one of the greatest signs, but Pharaoh benefitted nothing from witnessing these miracles.

﴿ وَمَا تُغْنِي الْآيَاتُ وَالنُّذُرُ عَنْ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴾

But the signs and the warners are of no benefit to people who do not believe.⁴³

﴿ إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ مَنْ اتَّبَعَ الذِّكْرَ وَخَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ الْغَيْبَ ﴾

You can only warn someone who follows the reminder and fears the Most Merciful unseen.⁴⁴

Those who do not have the willingness in their hearts to accept guidance, they will never be guided even if they witnessed every miracle, and we seek Allah's protection from becoming like this.

⁴² The Quran, Sūrah al-Isrā, 17:88.

⁴³ The Quran, Sūrah Yūnus, 10:101.

⁴⁴ The Quran, Sūrah YāSīn, 36:11.

Verse 21: ﴿فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصَى﴾

﴿**But Pharaoh denied and disobeyed**﴾ Pharaoh denied the information (and signs Mūsá brought) and disobeyed the command (to purify himself and be guided). In other words, as for denying the information he was given, he said to Mūsá, “You are not a messenger.” Instead, he said (to his people):

﴿إِنَّ رَسُولَكُمْ الَّذِي أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ لَمَجْنُونٌ﴾

“Indeed, your ‘messenger’ who has been sent to you is certainly insane.”⁴⁵

As for disobeying the command, Pharaoh neither complied with Mūsá’s order, nor did he follow the religion and legislation Mūsá brought.

Verse 22: ﴿ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ يَسْعَى﴾

﴿**Then he turned his back, running**﴾ Pharaoh turned around and quickly ran.

Verse 23: ﴿فَحَشَرَ فَنَادَى﴾

﴿**And he gathered (his people) and called out**﴾ Pharaoh gathered his people together and called out to them in a loud voice so that his forbiddance of them to obey Mūsá would be even more apparent and harsh.

Verse 24: ﴿فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَى﴾

⁴⁵ The Quran, Sūrah ash-Shu'arā, 26:27.

﴿And said, “I am your lord, the most high.”﴾ Meaning: There is no one above me, because ﴿the most high﴾ is a superlative adjective form meaning “the highest.” Look at how this man became so arrogant and claimed what he had no right to say: ﴿“I am your lord, the most high.”﴾ He used to also boast of his rivers and his expansive kingdom to his people, saying to them:

﴿يَا قَوْمِ أَلَيْسَ لِي مُلْكُ مِصْرَ وَهَذِهِ الْأَنْهَارُ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِي أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ • أَمْ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ مَهِينٌ وَلَا يَكَادُ يُبِينُ﴾

“Oh my people, do I not own the kingdom of Egypt, and these rivers flowing beneath me? Do you not see? Or am I (not) better than this one who is despicable and can barely even speak clearly?”⁴⁶

So what happened to him? Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ) drowned Pharaoh with the same water he used to boast about.⁴⁷ And Allah let the same Israelites, whom Pharaoh used to oppress and enslave, inherit the kingdom of Egypt.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ The Quran, Sūrah az-Zukhruf, 43:51-52.

⁴⁷ About this, Allah says in Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:50):

﴿وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمْ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ﴾

And (recall) when We parted the sea for you and saved you and drowned the people of Pharaoh while you were looking.

⁴⁸ In Sūrah al-'Arāf (7:137), Allah says:

﴿وَأَوْرَثْنَا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يُسْتَضْعَفُونَ مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَعَارِبَهَا الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَى عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَدَمَرْنَا مَا كَانَ يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ وَقَوْمُهُ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْرِشُونَ﴾

And We caused the people who had been oppressed to inherit the eastern regions of the land and the western ones, which We had blessed. And the good word of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because of what they had patiently endured. And We destroyed (all) that Pharaoh and his people were producing and what they had been building.

Verse 25: ﴿ فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَىٰ ﴾

﴿So Allah seized him in exemplary punishment for the last and the first (transgression)﴾ Allah seized him with the seizure of One fully powerful and fully capable.⁴⁹ ﴿exemplary punishment for the last and the first (transgression)﴾ Allah punished Pharaoh severely, making an example out of him in the hereafter and in the first life. So he became a warning and a lesson during his time and a lesson for everyone thereafter until the Day of Resurrection. Everyone who reads the book of Allah and what Allah did with Pharaoh would certainly take that as a lesson and a warning; they can see how Allah destroyed this great, exalted king along with his arrogance, tyranny, and oppression so that he became completely insignificant before Allah and completely easy for Allah (to destroy).

Verse 26: ﴿ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّمَن يَخْشَىٰ ﴾

﴿Indeed in that is a warning for whoever fears (Allah)﴾ The statement: ﴿Indeed in that﴾ refers to what took place of sending Mūsá to Pharaoh, their dialog, Pharaoh's belittling of Mūsá, and Pharaoh's arrogance in refusing to obey Mūsá. That is certainly ﴿a warning for whoever fears﴾, meaning whoever fears Allah (عزّ وجلّ). Whoever has this fear (khashyah)⁵⁰ of Allah and reflects on what happened between Mūsá and Pharaoh and considers the end result of each of them, he will understand the lesson and warning in this story.

⁴⁹ Allah also says similarly in Sūrah al-Qamar (54:42):

﴿ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كُلِّهَا فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ أَخْذَ عَزِيزٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ ﴾

They denied Our signs, all of them, so We seized them with the seizure of One fully powerful and capable.

⁵⁰ See the explanation of verse 19 (p. 21 of this article) for a detailed explanation of the meaning of "khashyah."

The lessons to be learned from the story of Mūsá are many, and if someone were to collect the entire story from all the verses, from all chapters of the Quran and deduce all the lessons and examples contained in this story, that would be excellent. By that, I mean he gathers the entire story from all relevant verses, because in some of the chapters of the Quran there are parts of the story not found in other chapters. So someone should gather all the parts of this story from the Quran and say, for example, “The following lessons can be learned from this amazing story,” and then list them all out. For example, how and when exactly did Allah (عزّ وجلّ) send Mūsá to Pharaoh? How and why did Allah tell Mūsá and Hārūn: **﴿And both of you speak to him with gentle speech﴾**⁵¹ while this man was so malicious and arrogant? What was the result of that gentle speech? How is the incident in which Mūsá (عليه الصلاة والسلام) fled Egypt fearing for himself and fearing capture⁵² similar to the incident in which Allah’s messenger, Muhammad (عليه الصلاة والسلام), left Mecca fearing capture? The end result and success was eventually given to Muhammad and Mūsá (عليهما الصلاة والسلام). However, the end result and victory of the messenger of Allah, Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم), was given by his own actions and those of his companions; Allah punished their enemies by the hands of His messenger and his companions. As for the end result and victory of Mūsá, it occurred by the action of Allah (عزّ وجلّ).⁵³ These are, without doubt,

⁵¹ The Quran, Sūrah ṬāHā, 20:44.

⁵² After Mūsá accidentally killed a man, he left the city (in Egypt) fearing capture and persecution; Allah says about him:

﴿فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ قَالَ رَبُّ نَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

So he left it, fearing and expecting apprehension. He said, “My Lord, save me from the wrongdoing people.”

For details of this incident, see Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:15-21.

⁵³ About the splitting of the sea and drowning Pharaoh, Allah says in Sūrah ash-Shu'arā (26:65-66):

some of the valuable lessons within this story from which people could benefit and rectify themselves and their hearts.

﴿ وَأُنَجِّينَا مُوسَى وَمَنْ مَعَهُ أَجْمَعِينَ • ثُمَّ أَغْرَقْنَا الْآخَرِينَ ﴾

And we saved Mūsá and everyone with him, then We drowned the others.

Sūrah an-Nāzi'āt

Verses 27-33

27	Are you a more difficult creation or is the heaven? He constructed it.	﴿ أَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ السَّمَاءُ بَنَاهَا ﴾
28	He raised its height and equally proportioned it	﴿ رَفَعَ سَمَكَهَا فَسَوَّاهَا ﴾
29	And He darkened its night and brought out its brightness	﴿ وَأَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ ضُحَاهَا ﴾
30	And after that He spread the earth	﴿ وَالْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحَاهَا ﴾
31	He brought out from it its water and its pasture	﴿ أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءَهَا وَمَرْعَاهَا ﴾
32	And the mountains He set firmly	﴿ وَالْجِبَالَ أَرْسَاهَا ﴾
33	As provision for you and your grazing livestock	﴿ مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ ﴾

The Explanation of Verses 27-33

Verse 27: ﴿أَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ السَّمَاءُ بَنَاهَا﴾

﴿Are you a more difficult creation or is the heaven? He constructed it.﴾ The question: ﴿Are you a more difficult creation or is the heaven?﴾ is to remind of and establish the surety that people will be resurrected. The polytheists used to refuse to believe the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) when he spoke about the resurrection, they would say:

﴿مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ﴾

“Who can give life to bones while they are decayed?”⁵⁴

So Allah (عزّ وجلّ) asks, ﴿Are you a more difficult creation or is the heaven?﴾. The answer is obviously the heaven because Allah (تعالى) says:

﴿لَخُلُقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

The creation of the heavens and earth is greater than the creation of mankind, but most people do not know.⁵⁵

﴿He constructed it.﴾ This sentence is not connected to the previous one, and when reciting this verse, one should therefore pause after reciting, ﴿...or is the heaven?﴾

⁵⁴ The Quran, Sūrah YāSīn, 36:78.

⁵⁵ The Quran, Sūrah Ghāfir, 40:57.

and resume with **﴿He constructed it﴾**. This sentence is to explain the greatness and impressiveness of the heaven. **﴿He constructed it﴾** means that Allah (عزّ وجلّ) built it, and in another verse in Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt, He explains that He built it with great strength:

﴿وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ﴾

And the heaven We constructed with strength and We are certainly expanding (it).⁵⁶

Verse 28: ﴿رَفَعَ سَمَكَهَا فَسَوَّاهَا﴾

﴿He raised its height and equally proportioned it﴾ Allah raised it up from the earth and this action of His was done without the need for pillars of any sort as Allah (تعالى) says:

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَاوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا﴾

It is Allah who raised the heavens without pillars that you (can) see.⁵⁷

As for **﴿and equally proportioned it﴾**, this means that Allah made it perfectly proportioned. He made the heavens complete and flawless and everything about them. Allah also uses the same Arabic word to describe how He created people, He says:

﴿يَأْيُهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّكَ رَبُّكَ الْكَرِيمُ • الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَلَكَ﴾

⁵⁶ The Quran, Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt, 51:47.

⁵⁷ The Quran, Sūrah ar-Ra'd, 13:2.

Oh mankind, what has deceived you concerning your Lord, the Generous?

Who created you, proportioned you, and balanced you?⁵⁸

Meaning: Allah has made mankind perfectly proportioned, created completely. Similarly, Allah (عزّ وجلّ) has perfectly proportioned and created the heaven flawless and complete.

Verse 29: ﴿ وَأَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ ضُحَاهَا ﴾

﴿And He darkened its night and brought out its brightness﴾ Allah has covered the night with darkness. Allah also says about the night:

﴿ وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ آيَاتَيْنِ فَمَحَوْنَا آيَةَ اللَّيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَا آيَةَ النَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً ﴾

And We have made the night and day two signs, and We erased the sign of the night and made the sign of the day visible.⁵⁹

﴿and brought out its brightness﴾ Allah brightens it (the heaven or the night) by bringing out the sun every day from its rising point and then it vanishes at its setting point.

Verse 30: ﴿ وَالْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحَاهَا ﴾

⁵⁸ The Quran, Sūrah al-Infīṭār, 82:6-7.

⁵⁹ The Quran, Sūrah al-Isrā, 17:12.

﴿And after that He spread the earth﴾ As for ﴿And after that﴾, meaning: after the creation of the heavens and earth, ﴿He spread the earth﴾. Allah further explains this spreading by his statement in the next verse:

Verse 31: ﴿أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءَهَا وَمَرْعَاهَا﴾

﴿He brought out from it its water and its pasture﴾ The earth was created before the heaven as Allah (تعالى) says in the following verses:

﴿قُلْ أَنتَكُم لَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَجْعَلُونَ لَهُ أَنْدَادًا ذَلِكَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ • وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِي مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَاءً لِّلسَّائِلِينَ • ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ • فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ﴾

Say, “Do you indeed disbelieve in He who created the earth in two days and then you consider others to be equal to Him? That is the Lord of the worlds.” And He placed on the earth firmly set mountains over its surface, and He blessed it and determined therein its (creatures’) sustenance in four days without distinction – for those who ask. Then He directed Himself to the heaven while it was smoke and said to it and to the earth, “Come (into being), willingly or by compulsion.” They said, “We come willingly.” And He completed them as seven heavens within two days.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ The Quran, Sūrah Fuṣṣilat, 41:9-12.

So the earth was created before the heavens but Allah spread it and brought out its water and pasture and this action of His was after the creation of the heavens.

Verse 32: ﴿وَالْجِبَالَ أَرْسَاهَا﴾

﴿**And the mountains He set firmly**﴾ Allah made the mountains firmly fixed and anchored into the earth to keep it still so that it does not tremble due to the other creations and creatures.

Verse 33: ﴿مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ﴾

﴿**As provision for you and your grazing livestock**﴾ Allah made all of that as a provision for our wellbeing, for us to enjoy and derive benefit from in what we eat and drink and for our livestock, meaning our cattle such as camels, cows, sheep, and other animals.

Sūrah an-Nāzi'āt

Verses 34-41

34	But when the greatest, overwhelming catastrophe comes	﴿ فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الطَّامَّةُ الْكُبْرَى ﴾
35	The day when man will remember that for which he strove	﴿ يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا سَعَى ﴾
36	And Hell will be shown for (all) those who see	﴿ وَبُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِمَنْ يَرَى ﴾
37	So as for he who transgressed	﴿ فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَى ﴾
38	And preferred the life of the world	﴿ وَآثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ﴾
39	Then indeed Hell will be (his) refuge	﴿ فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى ﴾
40	But as for he who feared standing before his Lord and prevented the soul from (forbidden) inclinations	﴿ وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَى ﴾
41	Then indeed Paradise will be (his) refuge	﴿ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى ﴾

The Explanation of Verses 34-41

After Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ) reminds his servants in the previous verses of the blessings that show the perfection of His power and capability, Allah then reminds them of their inevitable end results. He says next:

Verse 34: ﴿فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الطَّامَّةُ الْكُبْرَىٰ﴾

﴿But when the greatest, overwhelming catastrophe comes﴾ That is the establishment of the last hour (the Day of Resurrection). It is called a catastrophe because it is indeed a great disaster which will be worse than anything before it. As for ﴿the greatest﴾, this means that it is a calamity greater and worse than any other.

Verse 35: ﴿يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا سَعَىٰ﴾

﴿The day when man will remember that for which he strove﴾ This day, on which the greatest catastrophe will occur, people will remember what actions they did. They will recall those actions because they will actually be written down with him for him to read it himself as Allah (تعالى) says:

﴿وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنْشُورًا • اِقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا﴾

And We will produce for him on the Day of Resurrection a record which he will have spread open. (It will be said), “Read your record, you are sufficient against yourself today as an accountant.”⁶¹

When the person reads his book, he will remember what he strove for, meaning his actions. Yet today, we forget the things we do. We do so many things: good deeds, deeds producing no benefit, and even sins. And all of this, we forget about.⁶² But on the Day of Resurrection, all of these actions will be presented to us in a book and it will be said: ﴿“Read your record, you are sufficient against yourself today as an accountant.”﴾ At that time, every person will remember what he did.

﴿ إِنَّا أَنْدَرْنَاكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَا لَيْتَنِي
كُنْتُ تُرَابًا ﴾

And the disbeliever will say, “Oh, I wish I were dirt!”⁶³

Verse 36: ﴿ وَبُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِمَنْ يَرَى ﴾

﴿And Hell will be shown for (all) those who see﴾ Hell will be placed in full view. It will come pulled by seventy thousand reins, each rein with seventy thousand angels pulling it.⁶⁴ As for the wrongdoers:

⁶¹ The Quran, Sūrah al-Isrā, 17:13-14.

⁶² About this forgetfulness of ours, Allah says in Sūrah al-Mujādilah (58:6):

﴿ يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا عَمِلُوا أَحْصَاهُ اللَّهُ وَنَسُوهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴾

On the day when Allah will resurrect them all and inform them what they did. Allah had enumerated it while they forgot it, and Allah is a witness over all things.

⁶³ The Quran, Sūrah an-Naba, 78:40.

⁶⁴ The ḥadīth in support of this is in “Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim” (no. 2842); the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

﴿ وَإِذَا أُلْقُوا مِنْهَا مَكَانًا ضَيِّقًا مُقَرَّنِينَ دَعَوْا هُنَالِكَ ثُبُورًا ﴾

**And when they are thrown into a narrow place therein bound in chains,
they will cry out thereupon for destruction.⁶⁵**

They will pray for destruction because of what they witness which is so scary, it would terrify hearts and cause newborn babies to grow old.

Verse 37 and 38: ﴿ فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَى • وَآثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ﴾

﴿So as for he who transgressed and preferred the life of the world﴾ These are two characteristics of the people of the fire. As for transgression, it is to go beyond the permissible bounds. And preferring the life of this world is to give it preference, choosing it over the hereafter so that this life becomes a person's greatest concern. Transgression is to go beyond the bounds and the boundary of mankind is mentioned in the statement of Allah (تعال):

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴾

And I have not created Jinn and mankind except to worship Me.⁶⁶

﴿ يُؤْتَى بِجَهَنَّمَ ، لَهَا سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ زِمَامٍ ، مَعَ كُلِّ زِمَامٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ يُجْرُونَهَا ﴾

Hell will be brought having seventy thousand reins; each rein will be pulled by seventy thousand angels.

Allah says in Sūrah al-Furqān (25:12):

﴿ إِذَا رَأَتْهُمْ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ سَمِعُوا لَهَا تَغِيْطًا وَزَفِيرًا ﴾

When it (Hell) sees them from a distance, they will hear its fury and roaring.

⁶⁵ The Quran, Sūrah al-Furqān, 25:13.

⁶⁶ The Quran, Sūrah adh-Dhāryāt, 51:56.

So whoever goes beyond the limits of Allah and does not worship Him, such is a transgressor because he has transgressed the limit. You are created not simply to eat or for enjoyment and pleasure like animals. You are created for the worship of Allah so worship Him (عزّ وجلّ). If you refuse, then you have transgressed and this is the transgression mentioned – that a person does not worship of Allah. This characteristic and **﴿and preferred the life of the world﴾** are inseparable. The transgressor who refuses to worship Allah, in doing so, prefers this worldly life because he chooses it, allowing it to distract him from obeying Allah, amusing himself with it instead of obeying Allah. For example, when the call to the morning prayer is made, a person may prefer to sleep rather than pray. Or if it is said to him, “Remember Allah,” he prefers instead useless speech over the mention of Allah and other similar choices.

Verse 39: ﴿فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى﴾

﴿Then indeed Hell will be (his) refuge﴾ Hell will be his refuge, his resort, and his final abode and what an evil abode Hell is – may Allah protect us from it.

Verse 40: ﴿وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَى﴾

﴿But as for he who feared standing before his Lord and prevented the soul from (forbidden) inclinations﴾ As for: ﴿he who feared standing before his Lord﴾, he is afraid of the time when he will stand right in front of Him. On the Day of Resurrection, Allah (عزّ وجلّ) will make a person confess his sins saying, “You did this and you did that,” as has come in an authentic ḥadīth. After he has confessed his sins, Allah will tell him:

« فَإِنِّي قَدْ سَتَرْتُهَا عَلَيْكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا ، وَأَنَا أَعْفِرُهَا لَكَ الْيَوْمَ »

I certainly concealed them (your sins) for you in the worldly life, and I forgive them for you today.⁶⁷

That is the person who fears standing before his Lord at that time **and prevented the soul from (forbidden) inclinations**, meaning: he restrained his own soul. The soul often urges one to do sins, it inclines to commit evil. But there is another type of soul that opposes this – it is the reassured or peaceful soul. People have one of three types of souls: the peaceful soul, the soul constantly inclined to sin, and the reproaching or blameworthy soul; these are all mentioned in the Quran. As for the peaceful soul, it is mentioned in the verse:

⁶⁷ This ḥadīth is in “Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī” (no. 2441) “Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim” (no. 2768) and the full text is:

« يُدْنِي الْمُؤْمِنُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ حَتَّى يَضَعَ كَنَفَهُ عَلَيْهِ ، فَيَقْرَرُهُ بِدُنُوبِهِ ، فَيَقُولُ : أَتَعْرِفُ ذَنْبَ كَذَا ؟ أَتَعْرِفُ ذَنْبَ كَذَا ؟ فَيَقُولُ : رَبِّ أَعْرِفُ ، قَالَ : فَإِنِّي قَدْ سَتَرْتُهَا عَلَيْكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا ، وَأَنَا أَعْفِرُهَا لَكَ الْيَوْمَ ، فَيُعْطَى صَحِيفَةً حَسَنَاتِهِ » ÷

The believer will be brought close to his Lord on the Day of Resurrection until He envelops him in His mercy. He will then make him confess his sins, saying, “Do you remember this sin, do you know that sin?” The believer will reply, “My Lord, I remember.” Allah will say, “I certainly concealed them for you in the worldly life, and I forgive them for you today.” The believer will then be given the record of his good deeds.

In a similar ḥadīth, also recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 1417) and Muslim (no. 1016), the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

« مَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا سَيَكَلِّمُهُ رَبُّهُ لَيْسَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهُ تَرْجَمَانٌ ، فَيَنْظُرُ أَيَمَنَ مِنْهُ فَلَا يَرَى إِلَّا مَا قَدَّمَ ، وَيَنْظُرُ أَشْأَمَ مِنْهُ فَلَا يَرَى إِلَّا مَا قَدَّمَ ، وَيَنْظُرُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ فَلَا يَرَى إِلَّا النَّارَ تَلْقَاءَ وَجْهِهِ ، فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ وَلَوْ بِشِقِّ تَمْرَةٍ » ÷

There is not one of you except that his Lord will speak directly to him, there being no interpreter between them. He will look to his right and see nothing but what (deeds) he has sent forth. He will look to his left and see nothing but what (deeds) he has sent forth. And he will look in front of him and see nothing but the fire in front of his face. So, fear the fire even with half a date (given in charity).

﴿ يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ • ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً • فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي •
وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي ﴾

**Oh reassured, peaceful soul, return to your Lord well-pleased and pleasing
to Him. And enter among My servants, enter My Paradise.⁶⁸**

As for the soul inclined to sin, that which encourages evil, it is mentioned in the verse:

﴿ وَمَا أُبْرِيٓ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّي ﴾

**And I do not acquit myself. Indeed, the soul is persistently encouraging evil
except those upon whom my Lord has mercy.⁶⁹**

And as for the reproaching soul, the soul that reproaches and blames itself, it is mentioned in the statement of Allah (تعالى):

﴿ لَا أُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ • وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ﴾

**I swear by the Day of Resurrection. And I swear by the self-reproaching
soul.⁷⁰**

People often realize these types of souls in themselves. For example, sometimes a person finds within himself a tendency to do good, to love good deeds, and so he does it – this is the reassured, peaceful soul. Other times, he has a tendency to sin and so he sins – this is the soul that persistently encourages evil. Afterwards comes the self-

⁶⁸ The Quran, Sūrah al-Fajr, 89:27-30.

⁶⁹ The Quran, Sūrah Yūsuf, 12:53.

⁷⁰ The Quran, Sūrah al-Qiyāmah, 75:1-2.

reproaching, self-blaming soul; it causes one to reprimand and blame himself and regret what sin he has done. Or maybe another type of self-blaming soul may even reprimand oneself for what it has done of good. Some people may blame themselves for doing good, for accompanying the good people, saying, “Why was I ever with those people who prevented me from living my life, from my enjoyment, my entertainment?” So the self-blaming soul may blame oneself, the soul inclined to sin, for committing a sin, or it may blame oneself, the peaceful soul, for performing a good deed. It is actually a state between two states of a soul: it blames the soul inclined to sin when it sins thereby causing one to regret the sin, and it blames the good, peaceful soul when it does good.

Verse 41: ﴿ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى ﴾

﴿Then indeed Paradise will be (his) refuge﴾ Paradise is the home of happiness⁷¹ which Allah (عزّ وجلّ) has prepared for His close friends. In it there are things no eye has seen, no ear has heard of, and no human heart has ever imagined. Allah (تعالى) says:

﴿ فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ ﴾

And no soul knows what has been hidden for them (in Paradise) of comfort for eyes.⁷²

⁷¹ The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said about Paradise in a ḥadīth collected in “Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim” (no. 2837):

« إِذَا دَخَلَ أَهْلُ الْجَنَّةِ الْجَنَّةَ يُنَادِي مُنَادٍ: إِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَحْيَوْا، فَلَا تَمُوتُوا أَبَدًا، إِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَصِحُّوا، فَلَا تَسْقُمُوا أَبَدًا، وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَشَبُّوا فَلَا تَهْرَمُوا أَبَدًا، وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَنْعَمُوا، فَلَا تَبْأَسُوا أَبَدًا »

When the dwellers of Paradise enter Paradise, an announcer will call out, “You will all live and never die. You will all remain healthy and never get sick. You will all remain young and never get old. And you will all remain happy and never be sad.”

⁷² The Quran, Sūrah as-Sajdah, 32:17.

That is the how it has been mentioned in the Quran. It has also been mentioned in a divine ḥadīth in which Allah says:

« أَعَدَدْتُ لِعِبَادِي الصَّالِحِينَ مَا لَا عَيْنٌ رَأَتْ ، وَلَا أُذُنٌ سَمِعَتْ ، وَلَا خَطَرَ عَلَى قَلْبٍ

بَشَرٍ »

I have prepared for my righteous servants what no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard about, and what no human heart has ever imagined.⁷³

And this Paradise, a person will perceive it even before he has actually died. When the time of his death arrives and the angels call his soul to come forth saying, “Come out,

⁷³ This ḥadīth is recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 3244) and Muslim (no. 2824). In a similar ḥadīth in “Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim” (no. 186) and “Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī” (no. 6571), the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

« سَأَلَ مُوسَى رَبَّهُ : مَا أَذْنَى أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ مَنْزِلَةٌ ؟ قَالَ : هُوَ رَجُلٌ يَجِيءُ بَعْدَ مَا أُدْخِلَ أَهْلُ الْجَنَّةِ الْجَنَّةَ ، فَيُقَالُ لَهُ : ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ . فَيَقُولُ : أَيُّ رَبِّ ، كَيْفَ وَقَدْ نَزَلَ النَّاسُ مَنَازِلَهُمْ ، وَأَخَذُوا أَخْدَاتِهِمْ ؟ فَيُقَالُ لَهُ : أَتَرْضَى أَنْ يَكُونَ لَكَ مِثْلُ مُلْكِ مَلِكٍ مِنْ مُلُوكِ الدُّنْيَا ؟ فَيَقُولُ : رَضِيْتُ رَبِّ ، فَيَقُولُ : لَكَ ذَلِكَ وَمِثْلُهُ وَمِثْلُهُ وَمِثْلُهُ ، فَيَقُولُ فِي الْخَامِسَةِ : رَضِيْتُ رَبِّ ، فَيَقُولُ : هَذَا لَكَ وَعَشْرَةٌ أَمْثَالِهِ ، وَلَكَ مَا اشْتَهَتْ نَفْسُكَ وَلَدَّتْ عَيْنُكَ . فَيَقُولُ : رَضِيْتُ رَبِّ . قَالَ : رَبِّ فَأَعْلَاهُمْ مَنْزِلَةٌ ؟ قَالَ : أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أَرَدْتُ ؛ غَرَسْتُ كَرَامَتَهُمْ بِيَدِي ، وَخَتَمْتُ عَلَيْهَا ، فَلَمْ تَرَ عَيْنٌ ، وَلَمْ تَسْمَعْ أُذُنٌ ، وَلَمْ يَخْطُرْ عَلَى قَلْبِ بَشَرٍ » ÷

Mūsá (Moses) asked his Lord, “Who amongst the people of Paradise will be the lowest in rank?” He said: “It will be a person who will be admitted into Paradise after all the other dwellers of Paradise have entered Paradise. It will be said to him, ‘Enter Paradise,’ but he will say, ‘Oh my Lord how, when the people have settled in their places and taken their shares?’ It will be said to him, ‘Will you be satisfied and pleased if you have a kingdom like that of a king of the world?’ He will reply, ‘I will be pleased, my Lord’. Allah will say, ‘That is for you and twice as much, and twice as much as that, and twice as much as that, and twice as much as that.’ On the fifth time, the person will say, ‘I am pleased, my Lord.’ Allah will then say, ‘All of that is for you and ten times more like it, and you will have whatever your soul desires and whatever your eyes could delight in.’ He will say, ‘I am pleased, my Lord.’” Mūsá then asked, “My lord, and the highest of them in rank?” Allah said, “They are those whom I want. I have established their honor with My own hand, and I have sealed it. So no eye has ever seen it, no ear has ever heard about it, and no human heart has ever imagined it.”

oh safe and reassured soul, to the pleasure of Allah,”⁷⁴ then at that time, the believer will have received the good news of Paradise. Allah (تعالى) also says:

﴿ الَّذِينَ تَتَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ طَيِّبِينَ يَقُولُونَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾

Those whom the angels take in death while they are good and pure, (the angels) will say, “Peace be upon you. Enter Paradise for what you used to do.”⁷⁵

At the time of the believer’s death, the angels tell him: ﴿**“Peace be upon you. Enter Paradise for what you used to do.”**﴾, so he will have received news of Paradise. His soul will then come out gently and easily being well-pleased. For this, whenever the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, “Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him, and whoever hates to meet Allah, Allah hates to meet him,” ‘Āishah said, “Oh messenger of Allah, all of us hate death.” The prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) then explained that this was not the meaning. All of us would dislike dying naturally, but when a believer is given the good news at the time of his death, he will then love to meet Allah, love that he died, and it will be made easy for him.⁷⁶

But as for a disbeliever, when he is given the bad news at the time of his death, news that will terrify and sadden him – and we seek protection from Allah – at that time, he will hate to meet Allah and his soul will try to escape, scattering and hiding throughout

⁷⁴ See the full text of this ḥadīth in the Appendix.

⁷⁵ The Quran, Sūrah an-Nahl, 16:32.

⁷⁶ For the full ḥadīth, see pages 4-5 of this article.

his body until the angels rip it out violently like a skewer is yanked through wet wool. When a forked skewer is pulled through wet wool, which is well-known by those who work as weavers or with yarn, it will rip the wool from the force of the pull. Similarly, the soul of a disbeliever will disperse throughout his body because it will receive the news of punishment and will become terrified.⁷⁷

So within Paradise, there are delights that no eye has seen, no ear has heard of, and no human has ever imagined. And a person can receive the good news of Paradise from the angels before he actually dies. Further, it is also possible that a person could actually perceive something of Paradise even before death, as the companion Anas Ibn Naḍr (رضي الله عنه) said during the Battle of Uḥud, “Oh messenger of Allah, by Allah I surely can smell the fragrance of Paradise near the mountain of Uḥud!” The meaning of this is not an imagined feeling or an inward, emotional sensation. Rather it was an actual sense (in that this companion actually smelled the fragrance of Paradise). About this, Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمه الله) said that some people may actually perceive something of the hereafter while alive in this life. As for Anas Ibn Naḍr mentioned above, after smelling the fragrance of Paradise, he went into battle, fought, and was eventually killed (رضي الله عنه).⁷⁸

To conclude, Paradise contains delights that no eye has seen, no ear has heard of, and no human heart can ever imagine.

⁷⁷ See the full text of the ḥadīth explaining this in the Appendix.

⁷⁸ The ḥadīth is recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 4048).

Sūrah an-Nāzi'āt

Verses 42-46

42	They ask you about the (last) hour, when it will come	﴿ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا ﴾
43	In what position are you that you should mention it?	﴿ فِيمَ أَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرَاهَا ﴾
44	To your Lord belongs (knowledge of) its term	﴿ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ مُنْتَهَاهَا ﴾
45	You are only a warner for those who fear it	﴿ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ مَّن يَخْشَاهَا ﴾
46	It will be, on the day they see it, as though they had not remained (in the world) except for an afternoon or a morning thereof	﴿ كَانَهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَهَا لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحَاهَا ﴾

The Explanation of Verses 42-46

Verse 42: ﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا﴾

﴿They ask you about the (last) hour, when it will come﴾ People ask you (Muhammad) as Allah (تعالى) says in another verse:

﴿يَسْأَلُكَ النَّاسُ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ﴾

People ask you concerning the hour. Say, “Knowledge of it is only with Allah.”⁷⁹

The questioning of people about the last hour (the end of this life and the beginning of the hereafter) is of two types: the first is the type of questioning in that one considers the last hour far away, considering it impossible, or denying it will actually happen. This is disbelief and it is the same type of questioning of the polytheists when they asked the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) when the last hour will occur and when they mockingly asked for it to be hastened. Allah says about these people:

﴿يَسْتَعْجِلُ بِهَا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مُشْفِقُونَ مِنْهَا وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهَا الْحَقُّ﴾

Those who do not believe in it are impatient for it, but those who believe are fearful of it and know that it is the truth.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ The Quran, Sūrah al-Aḥzāb, 33:63.

The second type of questioning about the last hour is the type in which a person asks when the hour is in order to prepare for it, and there is no problem with this type of questioning. In this way, a man once asked the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), “Oh messenger of Allah, when is the last hour?” The prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) asked him:

« مَاذَا أَعَدَدْتَ لَهَا؟ »

What have you prepared for it?

The man replied, “The love of Allah and His messenger.” The prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) then said:

« الْمَرْءُ مَعَ مَنْ أَحَبَّ »

A person will be with those whom he loves.⁸¹

So people asked the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) about the last hour but their intentions for doing so differed. Regardless of their questioning or their intentions, still the knowledge of when the last hour will occur is with Allah alone, and because of this, He says next:

Verses 43 and 44: ﴿ فِيمَ أَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرَاهَا • إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ مُنْتَهَاهَا ﴾

﴿In what position are you that you should mention it? To your Lord belongs (knowledge of) its term.﴾ Meaning: It is not possible that he tell them when the last

⁸⁰ The Quran, Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42:18.

⁸¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 6167) and Muslim (no. 2639).

hour will occur because the knowledge of its exact time is only with Allah as He says in another verse:

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ﴾

Say, "Knowledge of it is only with Allah."⁸²

Even when the angel Jibrīl, the most knowledgeable of all angels, asked (as a way of teaching) the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), the most knowledgeable of all humans, about the last hour, saying, "Tell me about the last hour," the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) replied:

« مَا الْمَسْئُولُ عَنْهَا بِأَعْلَمَ مِنَ السَّائِلِ »

The one asked about it knows no more than the questioner.⁸³

In other words, if you yourself are unaware of it, then I surely too know nothing more about it. So if the most knowledgeable angel and the most knowledgeable human both have no idea when the last hour will occur, than what about those less than them in knowledge? Because of this, we know for sure that the rumors some people spread around about the last hour being on this or that day, specifying a certain time, all of these rumors are lies. We know with certainty they are lies because no one knows when the last hour will be except Allah (عزّ وجلّ).

Verse 45: ﴿ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ مَّنْ يَخْشَاهَا ﴾

⁸² The Quran, Sūrah al-Aḥzāb, 33:63.

⁸³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 50) and Muslim (no. 1).

﴿**You are only a warner for those who fear it**﴾ Meaning: You have no knowledge about the last hour, but you are a warner ﴿**for those who fear it**﴾, meaning they fear it and they are believers. As for those who deny it, considering it unlikely to ever happen or to be a lie, warning such people is of no benefit.

﴿وَمَا تُغْنِي الْآيَاتُ وَالنُّذُرُ عَنْ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

But of no benefit will the signs or the warners be for people who do not believe.⁸⁴

So do not ask when and where you will die because such questioning is pointless. Death is certain yet beyond questioning. There is no escape from death however long you remain in this life. In the end, it will be as if you remained in this life only a single day, or rather it will be just as Allah (تعالی) says:

Verse 46: ﴿كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَهَا لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحَاهَا﴾

﴿**It will be, on the day they see it, as though they had not remained (in the world) except for an afternoon or a morning thereof**﴾ However, the question that must be presented to one's soul, the question for which the answer must always be with you is: In what condition will you die? I do not mean in what condition will you be: rich or poor, strong or weak, or will you have descendants or not. Instead, in what condition will you die with regards to your actions? If you constantly ask yourself this question, then you would likely constantly prepare (for death) because you never know when death will suddenly come upon you. How many times do people leave their homes, get in their

⁸⁴ The Quran, Sūrah Yūnus, 10:101.

cars and drive, yet return only carried upon others' shoulders (as corpses)? How often have people asked their families to prepare lunch or dinner but never eaten it? How often has a person put on his shirt, buttoned it up, yet it is only unbuttoned by those who wash his body? These are all unexpected incidents we witness all the time.

So look right now and think about how and in what condition you may die. For this, you must constantly ask for Allah's forgiveness as much as you can.⁸⁵ In seeking forgiveness, there is relief from every distress and a way out from every difficulty. Some scholars even say that anytime someone asks you for a religious verdict or opinion, seek Allah's forgiveness before judging and giving your ruling because it is possible that the sinning of some (deceitful) people be supported by guidance. They deduce this advice from the statement of Allah (تبارك وتعالى):

﴿ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَكُنْ
لِلْخَائِنِينَ خَصِيمًا • وَاسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴾

⁸⁵ Allah says in Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:199):

﴿ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾

And ask forgiveness from Allah. Surely, Allah is forgiving, merciful

The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said in a ḥadīth recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 6306 and 6323):

« سَيِّدُ الْاِسْتِغْفَارِ أَنْ تَقُولَ : اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّي ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ ، خَلَقْتَنِي وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ ، وَأَنَا عَلَى عَهْدِكَ وَوَعْدِكَ مَا
اسْتَطَعْتُ ، أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ ، أُبُوءُ لَكَ بِنِعْمَتِكَ عَلَيَّ ، وَأُبُوءُ لَكَ بِذُنُوبِي ، فَاعْفِرْ لِي فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ
إِلَّا أَنْتَ » ÷

The best way to seek forgiveness is to say, "Oh Allah, you are my lord. There is no god worthy of worship but you. You created me and I am your servant. And I abide by your covenant and promise as much as I can. I seek refuge with you from the evil of what I have done, I acknowledge before you your favors on me, and I confess to you my sin. So forgive me because surely no one can forgive sins except you."

Indeed, We have revealed to you the book in truth so you may judge between people the way Allah has shown you. And do not be a supporter for the deceitful people. And seek forgiveness from Allah. Indeed, Allah is ever forgiving, merciful.⁸⁶

And this is an excellent deduction. It is also possible to deduce this from His statement:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَآتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ﴾

And those who are guided, He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness.⁸⁷

Seeking forgiveness is a part of guidance. So I advise you all to constantly monitor yourselves, to increase in asking for Allah's forgiveness, and to continually take yourselves to account so we may all be in a state of preparedness, ready for death and fearing that it might take us by surprise. We ask Allah to make our final deeds good.

As for the explanation of **﴿It will be, on the day they see it﴾**, meaning when they see and witness their resurrection, it will be **﴿as though they had not remained (in the world) except for an afternoon or a morning thereof﴾**. The afternoon is from the time when the sun is at its highest point until it sets and the morning is from the time of sunrise until the sun reaches its peak in the sky. So in other words, it will be as if they remained in life only half a day. This is just as it is in reality. If we wonder now how

⁸⁶ The Quran, Sūrah an-Nisā, 4:105-106.

⁸⁷ The Quran, Sūrah Muḥammad, 47:17.

many years have passed us, do we feel it has actually been many years or more like a single day? For sure, it feels now as if only a day has passed.

People are now between three different states: yesterday and this is gone, tomorrow and he does not know if he will reach it or not, and the present time and this is what he will be questioned about. As for the past, it is gone and what is gone is dead; the past has passed you. As for the future, no one knows whether he will see it or not. And as for the present, this is the time you will be questioned about.

We ask Allah, the Most High, to make our end result good and praiseworthy and our final consequence one of happiness, indeed He is kind and generous.

Appendix

The Believer and Disbeliever at the Time of Death

From "Aḥkām al-Janāiz" by Muḥammad Nāṣir ad-Dīn al-Albānī⁸⁸

A Believer at the Time of Death	59
A Disbeliever at the Time of Death	65

⁸⁸ This appendix is comprised of a single ḥadīth that, when presented with the various wordings and additions, illustrate with clear descriptions the distinction between a believer and a disbeliever at the time of death. This ḥadīth, though recorded in earlier ḥadīth collections, was translated from "Aḥkām al-Janāiz wa Bidau'hā" (no. 105, pp. 198-202) by Muḥammad Nāṣir ad-Dīn al-Albānī (published by Maktabah al-Ma'ārif (1992) in Riyadh) with the scholar's accompanying notes included.

Introduction

It is permissible to sit around the grave at the time of burial and remind those present of death and what occurs after a person dies.

This is based on the ḥadīth of al-Barā Ibn 'Āzib (رضي الله عنه) who said: We went out with the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) for the funeral of a man from the Anṣār.⁸⁹ When we reached the grave and the body was placed inside, the messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) sat [facing the direction of the Ka'bah in Mecca.]⁹⁰ We all sat around him and we were so still and quiet that it was as if birds were sitting undisturbed on our heads. The prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) had in his hand a stick with which he was scratching the ground. [He began looking up to the sky and then back down to the ground, raising his gaze and lowering it, and he did this three times.] He then repeated two or three times:

« اِسْتَعِيْذُوْا بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ » ÷

Seek refuge with Allah from the punishment of the grave.

[He then said:

« اللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ » ÷

⁸⁹ The Anṣār, or “supporters,” were the residents of Medina who supported the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and his companions from Mecca when they migrated to Medina.

⁹⁰ From here on, additional wordings taken from the various narrations of this same ḥadīth will appear in brackets – each recorded difference in wording appearing in a separate set of brackets.

Oh Allah, I seek refuge with you from the punishment of the grave.]

[And he said that three times.]

The prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) then said...

A Believer at the Time of Death

« إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ الْمُؤْمِنَ إِذَا كَانَ فِي انْقِطَاعٍ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا ، وَإِقْبَالٍ مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ ، نَزَلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَائِكَةٌ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ ، بَيَضُ الْوُجُوهُ ، كَأَنَّ وُجُوهُهُمْ الشَّمْسُ ، مَعَهُمْ كَفَنٌ مِنْ أَكْفَانِ الْجَنَّةِ ، وَحَنُوطٌ⁹¹ مِنْ حَنُوطِ الْجَنَّةِ ، حَتَّى يَجْلِسُوا مِنْهُ مَدَّ الْبَصَرِ ، ثُمَّ يَخْبِي مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ⁹² حَتَّى يَجْلِسَ عِنْدَ رَأْسِهِ فَيَقُولُ : أَيَّتْهَا النَّفْسُ الطَّيِّبَةُ (وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ : الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ) ، أَخْرِجِي إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ » ÷

Indeed the believing servant, when he comes to the departure of this life and the arrival of the hereafter, angels come down to him from the sky, their faces so white and bright, it is as if their faces were the sun. They will have with them a shroud from Paradise and embalms⁴ from Paradise, and they will sit as far away from the deceased as the eye can see. Then the Angel of Death⁵ (عليه السلام) will come and sit beside his head and say, “Oh good soul (In another narration: “Oh soul, safe and peaceful”), come out to forgiveness and pleasure from Allah.”

The prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) continued:

⁹¹ The Arabic word here, حَنُوطٌ (ḥanūt), or embalms, as explained by al-Albānī, is a mixture of perfume which is applied to the shroud of the deceased or directly to his body.

⁹² al-Albānī explains: This is his name in the Quran and Sunnah, “Malak al-Mawt” or the “Angel of Death.” As for the name, “Izrāil,” there is no basis for it and it is contradictory to the well-known name that people know (“Angel of Death”). And perhaps it is from the past narrations of the Jews. ÷

« فَتَخْرُجُ تَسِيلٌ كَمَا تَسِيلُ الْقَطْرَةُ مِنْ فِي السَّقَاءِ ، فَيَأْخُذُهَا ، (وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ : حَتَّى إِذَا خَرَجَتْ رُوحُهُ صَلَّى عَلَيْهِ كُلُّ مَلَكٍ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ ، وَكُلُّ مَلَكٍ فِي السَّمَاءِ ، وَفُتِحَتْ لَهُ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ ، لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَابٍ إِلَّا وَهُمْ يَدْعُونَ اللَّهَ أَنْ يُعْرِجَ بِرُوحِهِ مِنْ قِبَلِهِمْ) ، فَإِذَا أَخَذَهَا لَمْ يَدْعُوهَا فِي يَدِهِ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ حَتَّى يَأْخُذُوهَا فَيَجْعَلُوهَا فِي ذَلِكَ الْكَفَنِ ، وَفِي ذَلِكَ الْحَنُوطِ ، [فَذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى : ﴿ تَوَفَّيْتُهُ رُسُلْنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفَرِّطُونَ ﴾]⁹³ ، وَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا كَأَطْيَبِ نَفْحَةٍ مِسْكٍ وَجِدَتْ عَلَى وَجْهِ الْأَرْضِ » ÷

The believer's soul then comes out (easily and gently) like a drop flows from the spout of a waterskin. The Angel of Death will then take it. (And in another narration: And when his soul is taken out, every angel between the heavens and earth and every angel in the heavens send prayers upon him. The gates of heaven are opened to him and all gatekeepers will call upon Allah, asking that his soul ascend by way of them.) The Angel of Death will take the soul and when he has taken it, the other angels do not leave it in his hand even for the blink of an eye before they place it in that shroud and embalm (from Paradise). [And that is like the statement of Allah: **﴿Our messengers take him and they do not fail (in their duties).﴾**⁶ And there will come from the soul a scent like the best, most fragrant perfume found on earth.

Allah's messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) continued:

« فَيَصْعَدُونَ بِهَا فَلَا يَمْرُونَ ۚ يَعْنِي ۚ بِهَا عَلَى مَلَأٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ إِلَّا قَالُوا : مَا هَذَا الرُّوحُ الطَّيِّبُ؟ فَيَقُولُونَ : فَلَانُ ابْنُ فَلَانٍ ۚ بِأَحْسَنِ أَسْمَائِهِ الَّتِي كَانُوا يُسَمُّونَهُ بِهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا ،

⁹³ The Quran, Sūrah al-An'ām, 6:61.

حَتَّى يَنْتَهُوا بِهَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا ، فَيَسْتَفْتِحُونَ لَهُ ، فَيُفْتَحُ لَهُمْ ، فَيَشِيعُهُ مِنْ كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ مُقَرَّبُوهَا ، إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الَّتِي تَلِيهَا ، حَتَّى يَنْتَهِيَ بِهِ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ السَّابِعَةِ ، فَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: اُكْتُبُوا كِتَابَ عَبْدِي فِي عِلِّيِّينَ ، ﴿وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا عَلِيُّونَ كِتَابٌ مَرْقُومٌ يَشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ﴾⁹⁴ فَيَكْتُبُ كِتَابَهُ فِي عِلِّيِّينَ ثُمَّ يَقَالُ : [أَعِيدُوهُ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ، فَإِنِّي [وَعَدْتُهُمْ أَنِّي] مِنْهَا خَلَقْتُهُمْ ، وَفِيهَا أُعِيدُهُمْ وَمِنْهَا أُخْرِجُهُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى ، قَالَ: فَ [يُرَدُّ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ، وَ] تُعَادُ رُوحُهُ فِي جَسَدِهِ ، [قَالَ : فَإِنَّهُ يَسْمَعُ خَفَقَ نِعَالِ أَصْحَابِهِ إِذَا وَلَّوْا عَنْهُ] [مُدْبِرِينَ]] ÷

The angels will ascend with the believer's soul and will pass no group of angels except that they will ask, "Who is this good soul?" The other angels will answer, "He is So-and-So, the son of So-and-So," calling him the best names people used to call him in life. The angels will continue rising with the soul until they come to the end of the sky of this world. They will seek permission for the next heaven to open for him (the soul) and it will be opened for them. The best angels of every heaven will accompany him until they reach to the next heaven, and they will continue in this manner until they reach the seventh heaven. Then Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) will say, "Write my servant's book (of deeds) in 'Illiyūn." **﴿And what will make you know what 'Illiyūn is? A register inscribed. Which is witnessed by those (angels) brought near (to Allah).﴾**⁷ So his book will be recorded in 'Illiyūn.] Then it will be said, "Return him to the earth, for surely [I promised them that] from it I created them, to it I will return them, and from it I will bring them out once again." So [he will then be returned to earth and] his soul will be returned to his body. [He will then be able to hear the footsteps of his companions' shoes as they turn from him and walk away] [leaving him behind].

⁹⁴ The Quran, Sūrah al-Muṭaffifīn, 83:19-21.

He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) continues:

« فَيَأْتِيهِ مَلَكَانِ [شَدِيدَ الْإِنْتِهَارِ] فَ [يَنْتَهَرَانِهِ ، وَ] يُجْلِسَانِهِ فَيَقُولَانِ لَهُ : مَنْ رَبُّكَ؟ فَيَقُولُ : رَبِّي اللهُ ، فَيَقُولَانِ لَهُ : مَا دِينُكَ؟ فَيَقُولُ : دِينِي الْإِسْلَامُ ، فَيَقُولَانِ لَهُ : مَا هَذَا الرَّجُلُ الَّذِي بُعِثَ فِيكُمْ؟ فَيَقُولُ : هُوَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، فَيَقُولَانِ لَهُ : وَمَا عَمَلُكَ؟ فَيَقُولُ : قَرَأْتُ كِتَابَ اللهِ ، فَآمَنْتُ بِهِ ، وَصَدَّقْتُ ، فَيَنْتَهَرُهُ فَيَقُولُ : مَنْ رَبُّكَ؟ مَا دِينُكَ؟ مَنْ نَبِيُّكَ؟ وَهِيَ آخِرُ فِتْنَةٍ تُعْرَضُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِ ، فَذَلِكَ حِينَ يَقُولُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ﴿يُثَبِّتُ اللهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا﴾⁹⁵ ، فَيَقُولُ : رَبِّي اللهُ ، وَدِينِي الْإِسْلَامُ ، وَنَبِيِّ مُحَمَّدٌ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، فَيُنَادِي مُنَادٍ فِي السَّمَاءِ : أَنْ صَدَقَ عَبْدِي ، فَأَفْرِشُوهُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ ، وَأَلْسُوهُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ ، وَافْتَحُوا لَهُ أَبَابًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ ، قَالَ : فَيَأْتِيهِ مِنْ رَوْحِهَا وَطِيْبِهَا ، وَيُفْسَحُ لَهُ فِي قَبْرِهُ مَدَّ بَصَرِهِ » ÷

Two angels [harsh in reprimanding] will then come to him. They [will reprimand him and] will sit him up and ask, “Who is your lord?” The believer will reply, “My lord is Allah.” They will further ask, “What is your religion?” to which he will reply, “My religion is Islam.” The two angels will then ask, “Who was that man who was sent to you?” He will reply, “He is the messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم).” They will finally ask him, “And what did you do?” The person will say, “I read the book of Allah, I believed in it, and I considered it to be true.” So he will rebuke him and ask, “Who is your lord? What is your religion? Who is your prophet?” and that is the last trial the believer will experience. And that is as Allah (عزَّ وَجَلَّ) says: **Allah keeps firm those who believe with the firm word in the worldly life and in the hereafter.**⁹⁵ So the person will answer, “My lord is Allah, my religion is Islam, and my prophet is Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم).” Then a

⁹⁵ The Quran, Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 14:27.

caller from the heaven will call out, “My servant has spoken the truth. So give him furnishings from Paradise, clothe him from Paradise, and open for him a door to Paradise.” The pleasant and refreshing breeze of Paradise and its fragrance will then come to the person, and his grave will be made spacious, spread out as far as his eye can see.

Allah’s messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) continued:

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« قَالَ : وَيَأْتِيهِ [وَفِي رَوَايَةٍ : يُمَثَّلُ لَهُ] رَجُلٌ حَسَنُ الْوَجْهِ ، حَسَنُ الثِّيَابِ ، طِيبُ الرَّيْحِ ، فَيَقُولُ : أَبَشِّرُ بِالَّذِي يَسُرُّكَ ، [أَبَشِّرُ بِرِضْوَانٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ ، وَجَنَاتٍ فِيهَا نَعِيمٌ مُقِيمٌ] ، هَذَا يَوْمُكَ الَّذِي كُنْتَ تُوعَدُ ، فَيَقُولُ لَهُ : [وَأَنْتَ فَبَشَّرَكَ اللَّهُ بِخَيْرٍ] مَنْ أَنْتَ؟ فَوَجْهَكَ الْوَجْهُ يَجِيئُ بِالْخَيْرِ ، فَيَقُولُ : أَنَا عَمَلُكَ الصَّالِحُ [فَوَاللَّهِ مَا عَلِمْتُكَ إِلَّا كُنْتَ سَرِيعًا فِي إِطَاعَةِ اللَّهِ ، بَطِيئًا فِي مَعْصِيَةِ اللَّهِ ، فَجَزَاكَ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا] ، ثُمَّ يُفْتَحُ لَهُ بَابٌ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ ، وَبَابٌ مِنَ النَّارِ ، فَيُقَالُ : هَذَا مَنْزِلُكَ لَوْ عَصَيْتَ اللَّهَ ، أَبَدَلَكَ اللَّهُ بِهِ هَذَا ، فَإِذَا رَأَى مَا فِي الْجَنَّةِ قَالَ : رَبِّ عَجَّلْ قِيَامَ السَّاعَةِ ، كَيْمَا أَرْجِعُ إِلَى أَهْلِ وَمَالِي ، [فَيُقَالُ لَهُ : أُسْكُنْ] » ÷

There will then come to him [In another narration: or there will be portrayed to him the form of] a man with a beautiful face, beautiful clothing, and a beautiful fragrance. This man will say, “Rejoice at that which will please you. [Rejoice at the pleasure of Allah and gardens in which is eternal bliss.] This is your day which you were promised.” So the person will ask the man, “[And you, may Allah give you good,] who are you? Your face is the face that brings good.” The man will reply, “I am your good deed. [For I swear by Allah, I only knew you to be quick to obey Allah, hesitant to disobey Allah, so may Allah

reward you with good.]” A door to Paradise will then be opened for him. A door to the fire will also be opened and he will be told, “This is your place if you had disobeyed Allah, but Allah has replaced it with this (Paradise).” When the person sees what is in Paradise, he will say, “My lord, speed up the last hour, so I can return to my family and wealth.” [He will be told, “Rest.”]

As for a disbeliever, the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said...

A Disbeliever at the Time of Death

« قَالَ : وَإِنَّ الْعَبْدَ الْكَافِرَ (وَفِي رَوَايَةٍ : الْفَاجِرِ) إِذَا كَانَ فِي انْقِطَاعٍ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا ، وَإِقْبَالَ مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ ، نَزَلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَلَائِكَةٌ [غِلَاطٌ شِدَادٌ] ، سُودُ الْوُجُوهِ ، مَعَهُمُ الْمُسُوحُ⁹⁶ [مِنَ النَّارِ] ، فَيَجْلِسُونَ مِنْهُ مَدَّ الْبَصَرِ ، ثُمَّ يَحِيئُ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ حَتَّى يَجْلِسَ عِنْدَ رَأْسِهِ ، فَيَقُولُ : أَيَّتَهَا النَّفْسُ الْخَبِيثَةُ أُخْرِجِي إِلَى سَخَطٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَغَضَبٍ » ÷

Indeed the disbelieving (In another narration: wicked, immoral) servant, when he reaches the departure from this life and the arrival of the hereafter, angels [harsh and severe] come down from the sky to him, their faces dark. They will have with them sackcloth [from the fire.] They will sit as far away from the deceased as the eye can see, then the Angel of Death will come and sit beside his head and say, “Oh filthy soul, come out to displeasure and anger from Allah.”

The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) continued:

« قَالَ : فَتَفَرَّقَ فِي جَسَدِهِ فَيَنْتَزِعُهَا كَمَا يَنْتَزِعُ السُّفُودُ [الْكَثِيرُ الشُّعْبُ] مِنَ الصُّوفِ الْمَبْلُولِ ، [فَتَقَطَّعُ مَعَهَا الْعُرُوقُ وَالْعَصَبُ] ، [فَيَلْعَنُهُ كُلُّ مَلَكٍ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ] ، وَكُلُّ مَلَكٍ فِي السَّمَاءِ ، وَتُعَلَّقُ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ ، لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَابٍ إِلَّا وَهَمَّ يَدْعُونَ اللَّهَ أَلَّا تَعْرِجَ رُوحَهُ

⁹⁶ The Arabic word here مُسُوحٌ (musūḥ) is the plural of مِسْحٌ (mish). It is a coarse garment of woven fabric of hairs worn over the body as a sign of asceticism or subjugation.

مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ] ، فَيَأْخُذُهَا ، فَإِذَا أَخَذَهَا ، لَمْ يَدْعُوهَا فِي يَدِهِ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ حَتَّى يَجْعَلُوهَا فِي تِلْكَ الْمُسُوحِ ، وَبَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا كَأَنَّ رِيحَ جَيْفَةٍ وُجِدَتْ عَلَى وَجْهِ الْأَرْضِ ÷

The disbeliever's soul will then scatter, dispersing throughout his body, but the Angel of Death will rip it out violently similar to how a skewer [with many forks] is yanked through wet wool [ripping with it the veins and nerves]. [Every angel between the heaven and earth and every angel in the heaven will curse the person. The gates of heaven will be closed and there will be no group of gatekeepers except that those angels will call upon Allah, asking that his soul does not ascend by way of them]. The Angel of Death will take the soul and when he has taken it, the other angels do not leave it in his hand even for the blink of an eye before they put the soul into that sackcloth. There will emit from the soul a stench more disgusting, offensive than any decaying carcass found on the surface of the earth.

Allah's messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) continued:

« فَيَصْعَدُونَ بِهَا ، فَلَا يَمُرُّونَ بِهَا عَلَى مَلَأٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ إِلَّا قَالُوا : مَا هَذَا الرُّوحُ الْحَيْثُ؟ فَيَقُولُونَ : فَلَانُ ابْنُ فَلَانٍ ؤ بِأَقْبَحِ أَسْمَائِهِ الَّتِي كَانَ يُسَمِّي بِهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا ، حَتَّى يَنْتَهِيَ بِهِ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا فَيَسْتَفْتَحُ لَهُ ، فَلَا يُفْتَحُ لَهُ ، ثُمَّ قَرَأَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : ﴿ لَا تُفْتَحُ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى يَلْبِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ ﴾ ۞ فَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ : اُكْتُبُوا كِتَابَهُ فِي سَجِينٍ ، فِي الْأَرْضِ السُّفْلَى ، [ثُمَّ يَقُلُ : أَعِيدُوا عَبْدِي إِلَيَّ الْأَرْضِ فَإِنِّي وَعَدْتُهُمْ أَنِّي مِنْهَا خَلَقْتُهُمْ ، وَفِيهَا أُعِيدُهُمْ ، وَمِنْهَا أُخْرِجُهُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى] ،

⁹⁷ Meaning: the eye of a needle. A camel is a known animal, but it is referred to as جَمَل (jamal) in Arabic when it has reached nine years of age. The verse is in Sūrah al-A'rāf, 7:40.

فَتُطْرَحُ رُوحُهُ [مِنَ السَّمَاءِ] طَرْحًا [حَتَّى تَقَعَ فِي جَسَدِهِ] ثُمَّ قَرَأَ : ﴿وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتَخْطَفُهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوِي بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ﴾ □□ فَتَعَادُ رُوحُهُ فِي جَسَدِهِ ، [قَالَ : فَإِنَّهُ لَيَسْمَعُ خَفَقَ نِعَالِ أَصْحَابِهِ إِذَا وَلَّوْا عَنْهُ] «

The angels will ascend with the soul and will pass no group of angels except that they will ask, “What is this filthy soul?” The angels carrying the soul will answer, “He is So-and-So, the son of So-and-So,” calling him the worst names he used to be called in life. The angels will continue rising with the soul until they come to the end of the sky of this world. They will seek permission for the next heaven to open for him (the soul) but he will be refused entry. Allah’s messenger then recited: **﴿The gates of heaven will not be opened for them, nor will they enter Paradise until a camel enters into the eye of a needle.﴾**⁹⁹ Then Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) will say, “Write his book (of deeds) in Sijjīn, in the lowest earth.” [It will then be said, “Return my servant to the earth, for surely I promised them that from it I created them, to it I will return them, and from it I will bring them out once again.”] His soul will then be thrown [from the heaven] with a single toss [and fall into his body]. The prophet then recited: **﴿And whoever associates with Allah partners in worship, it is as he had fallen from the sky and was snatched by the birds or the wind carried him down to some remote place.﴾**¹¹ And so his soul will be returned to his body. He will then be able to hear the footsteps of his companions’ shoes as they turn and walk away from him.]

He (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) continues:

⁹⁸ The Quran, Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22:31

⁹⁹ The Quran, Sūrah al-Ā'rāf, 7:40.

« وَيَأْتِيهِ مَلَكَانِ [شَدِيدَا الْإِنْتِهَارِ ، فَيَنْتَهَرَانِهِ ، وَ] يُجْلِسَانِهِ ، فَيَقُولَانِ لَهُ : مَنْ رَبُّكَ؟ [فَيَقُولُ : هَاهُ هَاهُ] لاَ أَدْرِي ، فَيَقُولَانِ لَهُ : مَا دِينُكَ؟ فَيَقُولُ : هَاهُ هَاهُ لاَ أَدْرِي] ، فَيَقُولَانِ : فَمَا تَقُولُ فِي هَذَا الرَّجُلِ الَّذِي بُعِثَ فِيكُمْ؟ فَلاَ يَهْتَدِي لِاسْمِهِ ، فَيَقَالُ : مُحَمَّدًا! فَيَقُولُ : هَاهُ هَاهُ لاَ أَدْرِي [سَمِعْتُ النَّاسَ يَقُولُونَ ذَلِكَ! قَالَ : فَيَقَالُ : لاَ دَرَيْتَ] ، [وَلَا تَلَوْتَ] ، فَيُنَادِي مُنَادٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ أَنْ : كَذَبَ ، فَأَفْرَشُوا لَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ ، وَافْتَحُوا لَهُ بَابًا إِلَى النَّارِ ، فَيَأْتِيهِ مِنْ حَرِّهَا وَسَمُومِهَا ، وَيُضَيِّقُ عَلَيْهِ قَبْرَهُ حَتَّى تَخْتَلِفَ فِيهِ أَضْلَاعُهُ »

There will come to him two angels [harsh in reprimanding who will chastise him and] make him sit up. They both ask him, “Who is your lord?” [The person will reply, “Huh, huh, I don’t know.”] The angels further ask him, “What is your religion?” and he will again answer, “Huh, huh, I don’t know.”] The angels will then ask him, “Then what do you say about this man that was sent to you?” He will not be guided to remember his name. It will be said, “Muhammad!” Then the person will say, “Huh, huh, I don’t know.” [“I did hear the people saying that!”] He will then be told, “You did not know] [and you did not read.”] A caller will then call out from the heaven, saying, “He lied. So give him furnishing from the fire (of Hell) and open a door for him to the fire.” Its heat and scorching wind will then come to him, and his grave will close in on him, tightening around him until his ribs are pressed together.

Allah’s messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) continued:

¹⁰⁰ This (هَاهُ hāh) is a word said out of laughter or when threatened. It could also be said out of pain, and this would be more appropriate considering the meaning of the ḥadīth, and Allah knows best.

وَيَأْتِيهِ (وَفِي رَوَايَةٍ : وَيُمَثِّلُ لَهُ) رَجُلٌ قَبِيحُ الْوَجْهِ ، قَبِيحُ الثِّيَابِ ، مُنْتِنُ الرِّيحِ ، يَقُولُ :
 أَبْشِرْ بِالَّذِي يَسُوؤُكَ ، هَذَا يَوْمُكَ الَّذِي كُنْتَ تُوعَدُ ، يَقُولُ [وَأَنْتَ فَبَشِّرْكَ اللَّهُ بِالشَّرِّ] مَنْ
 أَنْتَ؟ فَوَجْهَكَ الْوَجْهُ يَجِيئُ بِالشَّرِّ! يَقُولُ : أَنَا عَمَلُكَ الْخَبِيثُ ، [فَوَ اللَّهُ مَا عَلِمْتُ إِلَّا كُنْتُ
 بَاطِلًا عَنِ طَاعَةِ اللَّهِ ، سَرِيعًا إِلَى مَعْصِيَةِ اللَّهِ] ، [فَجَزَاكَ اللَّهُ شَرًّا ، ثُمَّ يَقِيضُ لَهُ أَعْمَى أَصْمٌ
 أَبْكَمٌ فِي يَدَيْهِ مِرْزَبَةٌ! لَوْ ضَرَبَ بِهَا جَبَلٌ كَانَ تُرَابًا ، فَيَضْرِبُهُ ضَرْبَةً حَتَّى يَصِيرَ بِهَا تُرَابًا ، ثُمَّ
 يُعِيدُهُ اللَّهُ كَمَا كَانَ ، فَيَضْرِبُهُ ضَرْبَةً أُخْرَى ، فَيَصِيحُ صِيحَةً يَسْمَعُهُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا الثَّقَلَيْنِ ،
 ثُمَّ يَفْتَحُ لَهُ بَابٌ مِنَ النَّارِ ، وَيَمَهِّدُ مِنْ فُرْشِ النَّارِ] ، يَقُولُ : رَبُّ لَا تُقِمِ السَّاعَةَ ۝

There will come to him (In another narration: there will be portrayed to him the form of) a man with a hideous face, ugly clothing, and a horrible stench. This man will say to the person, “Rejoice at that which will sadden you; this is your day which you were promised.” So the person will say to this man, “[And you, may Allah give you evil.] Who are you? Your face is the face that brings evil!” The man will reply, “I am your filthy deed. [For I swear by Allah, I only knew you to be hesitant to obey Allah, quick to disobey Allah.] So may Allah reward you with evil.” A blind, deaf, mute man will then be sent to him carrying a huge hammer in his hand; if a mountain were hit with it, it would become dust. The man will then hit the disbeliever once and the person will turn to dust. Allah will then return him to his former state, and the man will hit him again. The person will scream so loud that everything will hear it except the humans and Jinn. A door will then be opened for him to the fire and he will be furnished with furnishings of the fire.] He will then say, “My Lord, do not establish the last hour.”

This ḥadīth is recorded by Abū Dāwūd (2/281), al-Ḥākim (1/37-40), aṭ-Ṭiyālīsī (no. 753), and Aḥmad (4/287, 288, 295, and 296). The wording above is Aḥmad's narration and that of al-Ājurrī in "ash-Sharī'ah" (367-380).

The ḥadīth is also recorded by an-Nasāī (1/282) and Ibn Mājah (1/469-470) – the first part of it up until the statement, "as if birds were sitting undisturbed on our heads." The same chain of narration is also from Abū Dāwūd (2/70) and Aḥmad (4/297) in a shorter form.

al-Ḥākim said about this ḥadīth, "It is authentic according to the conditions of al-Bukhārī and Muslim," and adh-Dhahabī agreed. And I (al-Albānī) say it is exactly as they both say. Ibn al-Qayyim also says it is authentic in "I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn" (1/214) and in "Tahdhīb as-Sunan" (4/337), and he reported that Abū Nu'aym and others also said it is authentic.