

Explaining Sūrah an-Naba

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E X P L A I N I N G S Ū R A H

al-Naba

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S Ū R A H A L - N A B A

Verses 1-16

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of all mercy.

1	About what are they asking one another?	﴿ عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴾
2	About the great news	﴿ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ ﴾
3	That over which they are in disagreement	﴿ الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ ﴾
4	No! They are going to know	﴿ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ﴾
5	Again, no! They are going to know	﴿ ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ﴾
6	Have we not made the earth a resting place?	﴿ أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهَادًا ﴾
7	And the mountains as stakes?	﴿ وَالْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا ﴾
8	And we created you in pairs	﴿ وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ﴾
9	And we made your sleep (a means for) rest	﴿ وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا ﴾
10	And we made the night as clothing	﴿ وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا ﴾
11	And we made the day for livelihood	﴿ وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا ﴾
12	And we constructed above you seven strong (heavens)	﴿ وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا ﴾
13	And we made (therein) a burning lamp	﴿ وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا ﴾
14	And we sent down, from the rain clouds, pouring water	﴿ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا ﴾
15	That we may bring forth thereby grain and vegetation	﴿ لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا ﴾
16	And gardens of entwined growth ¹	﴿ وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا ﴾

¹ The Quran, Sūrah an-Naba, 78:1-16.

THE EXPLANATION OF
Verses 1-16

Verse 1: ﴿عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ﴾

﴿About what are they asking one another?﴾ What are they (the disbelievers) asking each other about? Allah himself (عزَّ وجلَّ) then answers this question, saying:

Verse 2-3: ﴿عَنِ النَّبِإِ الْعَظِيمِ • الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ﴾

﴿About the great news, that over which they are in disagreement﴾ This news is everything that Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) came with of clear teachings, guidance, and especially the information he gave regarding the Last Day on which people will be resurrected, judged, and rewarded or punished.

Mankind differs regarding this news that the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) told: some people believe it and hold it to be true, others reject it and hold it to be all lies. So here, Allah is clarifying to those who reject it that they will surely soon know with certain knowledge that what they now believe to be lies is actually the truth. That will be when they see the Day of Resurrection. The day they see it unfold, those who forgot it before in this life will say, "The messengers of our lord told the truth!" About this, Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) then says:

Verse 4-5: ﴿كَأَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ • ثُمَّ كَأَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ﴾

﴿No! They are going to know. Again, no! They are going to know﴾ The second sentence is a confirmation of the first in meaning...And the knowledge that Allah

threatens them with here is the certain knowledge they will have when they see the news (the Day of Resurrection, etc.), witnessing it exactly as it was told to them.

Verse 6: ﴿ أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهَادًا ﴾

Allah (تعالی) then explains his favors and blessings he bestows on his servants so they may acknowledge them and become thankful for them, he says ﴿ **Have we not made the earth spread flat?** ﴾ Allah made the earth appear to creation as flat; it is not, for the most part, hard and rigid to where cultivation is impossible, nor is it difficult to walk upon. The ground is also not so soft and loose to where people gain no benefit from it. Instead it is flat, spread out for them for their own well-being so they may benefit from it.

Verse 7: ﴿ وَالْجِبَالِ أَوْتَادًا ﴾

﴿ **And the mountains as stakes?** ﴾ Allah (تعالی) made the mountains like stakes similar to how stakes or pegs hold a tent firmly down, fixed in its place. Allah also says in another verse of the Quran:

﴿ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا ﴾

And he placed on the earth firmly set mountains over its surface, and he blessed it.²

And about these mountain-stakes, geoscientists say that mountains have below them solid, deep-rooted, fixed roots within the earth just like a wall would be firmly-rooted into the ground. For this reason, you find that the mountains are solid and firm, not shaken by wind. And this is from the complete, perfect power of Allah and his blessings.

² The Quran, Sūrah Fuṣṣilat, 41:10.

Verse 8: ﴿ وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ﴾

﴿And we created you in pairs﴾ Meaning, he created us of different, complimentary kinds: male and female, small and big, black and red, sad and happy, and other traits in which people differ. So people are of varying kinds according to what Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ) wants and sees appropriate, and according to his wisdom. In this way too, people may consider and respect the power of Allah (تعالى) in that he is capable of making mankind, who were created from a single substance, from a single father, into so many clearly varying types.

Verse 9: ﴿ وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا ﴾

﴿And we made your sleep (a means for) rest﴾ Meaning, he made it as a means of relief from fatigue. So sleep relieves one's previous exhaustion and work. By it, people are replenished with energy for the next day. So you find someone who is worn out, exhausted; after he sleeps, he is again full of vigor and liveliness. This is a favor and blessing from Allah and a sign from him as he says:

﴿ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ مَنَامُكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَابْتِغَاؤُكُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهِ ﴾

And of his signs is your sleep by night and day and your seeking of his favors.³

Verse 10: ﴿ وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا ﴾

³ The Quran, Sūrah ar-Rūm, 30:23.

﴿**And we made the night as clothing**﴾ Allah made the night upon earth like clothing as if the earth wears the night, it being a complete covering for (a particular portion of) the earth. And a person will not know the reality of this unless he has viewed the earth from high above. We have seen that; one of the most amazing signs is that when you fly in a plane and reach a high enough altitude that the sun is not quite visible from the earth's surface but you begin to see it rise from the sky, you see that the earth below is as if it is clothed in black from the night.

Verse 11: ﴿وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا﴾

﴿**And we made the day for livelihood**﴾ It is a means of livelihood in that most of mankind earn a living by day, seeking sustenance according to their circumstances. And this is yet another one of the blessings of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) on his servants.

Verse 12: ﴿وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا﴾

﴿**And we constructed above you seven strong (heavens)**﴾ These are the seven heavens. Allah (تعالى) describes them as being extremely strong and well-built because they are indeed strong as Allah (تعالى) says:

﴿وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ﴾

**And the heaven we constructed with strength, and indeed we are
expanding it.⁴**

Meaning, we built it strong and well-fortified.

⁴ The Quran, Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt, 51:47.

Verse 13: ﴿ وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا ﴾

﴿And we made (therein) a burning lamp﴾ This refers to the sun, a shining lamp of extremely intense heat. ﴿burning﴾ The sun is blazing and fiery, and the heat it produces during the days of summer is extremely intense despite its great distance from the earth. What about when the sun is brought even closer to the earth? The severe heat is also from the steam and “breath” of Hell as the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

« إِذَا اشْتَدَّ الْحَرُّ فَأَبْرِدُوا بِالصَّلَاةِ ، فَإِنَّ شِدَّةَ الْحَرِّ مِنْ فَيْحِ جَهَنَّمَ »

When the heat intensifies, delay the prayer until it is cooler, for certainly the intense heat is from the exhalation of Hell.⁵

And he also (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

« إِشْتَكَّتِ النَّارُ إِلَى رَبِّهَا ، فَقَالَتْ : رَبِّي أَكَلَ بَعْضِي بَعْضًا ، فَأَذِنُ لِي أَتَنَفَّسُ . فَأَذِنَ لَهَا بِنَفْسَيْنِ : نَفْسٌ فِي الشِّتَاءِ وَنَفْسٌ فِي الصَّيْفِ . فَأَشَدُّ مَا تَجِدُونَ مِنَ الْبَرْدِ مِنْ زَمْهَرِيرِ جَهَنَّمَ ، وَأَشَدُّ مَا يَكُونُ مِنَ الْحَرِّ مِنْ فَيْحِ جَهَنَّمَ »

The fire (of Hell) complained to Allah saying, “My lord, parts of me are destroying other parts. So allow me two breaths” So Allah allowed it two breaths: one breath in the winter and another breath in the summer. So the severest cold you witness is from the bitter cold of Hell, and the severest heat is from the exhalation of Hell.⁶

⁵ This ḥadīth is in “Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī” (no. 536) and “Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim” (no. 615).

⁶ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 3620) and Muslim (617).

Despite the intense temperatures, the sun is still one of the greatest means of well-being for creation. For one, it saves people lots of money during the daytime in that the sun suffices people from having to use artificial lighting. Also, the solar energy the sun provides is another means of great benefit. Yet another benefit is that the sun helps ripen fruits, and there are many other benefits we gain from this lamp that Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ) has made for his servants.

Verse 14: ﴿ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا ﴾

After Allah mentions the ﴿burning lamp﴾ which provides heat and dryness, he then mentions something opposite, yet complimentary; he says: ﴿**And we sent down, from the rain clouds, pouring water**﴾ The rain provides moisture and coolness, and by it, the earth is made to produce (fruits, vegetation, etc.) and is brought to life once again. So when the sky's rainwater is supplemented with sunlight and heat, fruits and vegetables are ripened and grow into the most perfect forms possible.

﴿**And we sent down, from the rain clouds**﴾, The Arabic word used here الْمُعْصِرَاتِ (al-Mu'ṣirāt) literally means something that squeezes out (عَصَرَ), yet it refers to the clouds. Allah describes the clouds as squeezing as if they squeeze water out during rainfall like a wet garment may be squeezed or wringed out. The water permeates the clouds so much that it eventually falls as rain much like water is squeezed from a wet garment. ﴿**pouring water**﴾ means that it flows out immensely.

Verse 15: ﴿ لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا ﴾

﴿That we may bring forth thereby grain and vegetation﴾ With this same water that falls from the sky to the earth and by which the ground sprouts and grows, we (Allah) produce grains in all its various forms: wheat, barley, corn, etc.

Verse 16: ﴿وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا﴾

﴿And gardens of entwined growth﴾ Meaning: Gardens and orchards intertwining from the abundance of growth and beauty, and trees and bushes, with their trunks and branches winding and curving. So from this pouring water, plants and crops are cultivated like date trees, grapes, etc. regardless of whether these crops benefit directly from the falling rainwater or by utilizing the water underground, extracting it (by roots). The water in the depths of the earth is also originally from rain as Allah (تعالی) says:

﴿فَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَسْقَيْنَاكُمُوهُ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ لَهُ بِخَازِنِينَ﴾

And we have sent down water from the sky and given you drink from it.

And you are not its retainers.⁷

Rather, Allah retains the water in the earth. He also says:

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنَابِيعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ﴾

Do you not see that Allah sends down rain from the sky and makes it flow as springs in the earth?⁸

⁷ The Quran, Sūrah al-Ḥijr, 15:22.

⁸ The Quran, Sūrah az-Zumar, 39:21.

S Ū R A H A L - N A B A

Verses 17-30

17	Indeed, the Day of Judgment is an appointed time	﴿ إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا ﴾
18	The day the horn is blown and you will come forth in multitudes	﴿ يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَتَأْتُونَ أَفْوَاجًا ﴾
19	And the heaven is opened and will become as gateways	﴿ وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا ﴾
20	And the mountains are removed and will become as a mirage	﴿ وَسَيَّرَتِ الْجِبَالَ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا ﴾
21	Indeed, Hell has been lying in wait	﴿ إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا ﴾
22	For the transgressors, a place of return	﴿ لِلطَّاغِينَ مَابًا ﴾
23	In which they will remain for ages (unending).	﴿ لَا يَبِثْنَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا ﴾
24	They will not taste therein (any) coolness or drink	﴿ لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا ﴾
25	Except scalding water and intensely cold fluid (or foul pus)	﴿ إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا ﴾
26	An appropriate recompense	﴿ جَزَاءٍ وَفَاقًا ﴾
27	Indeed, they were not expecting an account	﴿ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا ﴾
28	And they denied our verses with (insistent) denial	﴿ وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا ﴾
29	But all things we have enumerated in writing	﴿ وَكُلِّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ كِتَابًا ﴾
30	So taste (the punishment), and never will we increase you except in torment	﴿ فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا عَذَابًا ﴾

THE EXPLANATION OF
Verses 17-30

After Allah (تعالی) reminds of his favors and blessings given to all of his servants, he then mentions the conditions of the Last Day and that it is certainly a fixed time at which Allah will gather all people, the first and last of them. He says:

Verse 17: ﴿ إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا ﴾

﴿Indeed, the Day of Judgment is an appointed time﴾ This is the Day of Resurrection. It is referred to in Arabic as the day of فَصْل (faṣl) meaning decision, judgment, or separation because Allah will judge on that day between his servants in matters of dispute between themselves and in matters in which they differed. So he will distinguish and separate between the people of truth and those of falsehood, the people of disbelief and those who believed, the people of injustice and aggression and those of justice and moderation. And he will separate the people of Paradise from the people of the fire – a group will be in Paradise and a group in flames.

﴿an appointed time﴾ It is a fixed appointment as Allah (تعالی) says in another verse:

﴿ وَمَا نُؤَخِّرُهُ إِلَّا لِأَجَلٍ مُّعَدُّودٍ ﴾

And we do not delay it except for a limited, appointed term.⁹

So what do you think about something that has a limited term and a fixed appointment? And with that, you see this term as if time is moving quickly, day after day, until mankind

⁹ The Quran, Sūrah Hūd, 11:104

finally comes to the end of this term. Just like that, this life is moving quickly, day after day, until it will soon reach the end of its term. For, this, Allah says: ﴿**And we do not delay it except for a limited, appointed term.**﴾ Everything with a limited term will certainly end.

Verse 18: ﴿يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَتَأْتُونَ أَفْوَاجًا﴾

﴿**The day the horn is blown and you will come forth in multitudes**﴾ As for the one who will blow, the one responsible for this horn, he is the angel Isrāfīl. He will blow in the horn twice: the first time, all people alive at that time will be terrified, so shocked that they will all fall down dead; the second time, all people will be resurrected from their graves and their souls will be returned to their bodies. For this, Allah says: ﴿**The day the horn is blown and you will come forth in multitudes**﴾

Mankind will be given life again and will come forth from their graves all in one group or one group after another. And these groups – and Allah knows best – are the religious nations, each nation will be called to their book or their reckoning and will be brought to account. They will come in groups, arriving at a single, overwhelming, place. Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) will make the earth at that point flat and level having no curvature or unevenness. Allah then says about that day:

Verse 19: ﴿وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا﴾

﴿**And the heaven is opened and will become as gateways**﴾ The skies will literally be opened, split apart and become gateways. People will watch this on that day, witnessing the heavens, once a well-preserved ceiling, become opened gateways. This is proof of the perfect and complete power of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) in that he will make these

same **﴿seven strong (heavens)﴾**¹⁰ on the Day of Resurrection as if they never existed; they will now be gates.

﴿يَوْمَ تَكُونُ السَّمَاءُ كَالْمُهْلِ • وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ • وَلَا يَسْأَلُ حَمِيمٌ حَمِيمًا •
يُبْصِرُونَهُمْ﴾

The day the sky will become like molten copper. And the mountains like flakes of wool. And no friend will ask anything about (another) friend, though they will clearly see each other.¹¹

Verse 20: ﴿وَسَيَّرَ الْجِبَالَ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا﴾

﴿And the mountains are removed and will become as a mirage﴾ These tremendous, solid mountains will be destroyed, flattened into sand and then become as a fading mirage: ﴿And the mountains are removed and will become as a mirage﴾

Verses 21, 22, and 23:

﴿إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا • لِلطَّاغِينَ مَابًا • لَا يَثْبُتُ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا﴾

﴿Indeed, Hell has been lying in wait. For the transgressors, (it is) a place of return. In which they will remain for ages (unending).﴾ Transgression, as it is used here, means to go beyond the permissible bounds of something. And the bounds set for mankind are mentioned in this verse:

﴿وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ﴾

And I did not create the Jinn and mankind except to worship me.¹²

¹⁰ The “seven strong (heavens)” are mentioned in verse 12: “And we constructed above you seven strong (heavens).” See p. 6 of this article for the explanation of this verse.

¹¹ The Quran, Sūrah al-Ma’ārij, 70:8-11.

So whoever goes beyond the limits and does not worship Allah alone, then such a person is a transgressor. And Hell is a resort for the transgressors, the place to which they are returning and in which they will remain forever.

Verse 24: ﴿ لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا ﴾

﴿They will not taste therein (any) coolness or drink﴾ Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) refuses them any coolness with which they may cool themselves outwardly, and he refuses them any cool drink by which they may cool themselves inwardly.

Verse 25: ﴿ إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا ﴾

﴿Except scalding water and intensely cold fluid (or foul pus)﴾ This is the exception. They will have nothing except boiling water of the highest extreme temperature as in another verse:

﴿ وَإِنْ يَسْتَعِثُّوا يُغَاثُوا بِمَاءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوهَ ﴾

And if they cry for water, they will be given water like molten brass that will scald their faces.¹³

And Allah also says:

﴿ وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيمًا فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَاءَهُمْ ﴾

And they are given to drink boiling water so that it tears their intestines.¹⁴

¹² The Quran, Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt, 51:57.

¹³ The Quran, Sūrah al-Kahf, 18:29.

¹⁴ The Quran, Sūrah Muḥammad, 47:15.

As for the Arabic word, غَسَّاقًا (ghassāqan) ﴿intensely cold fluid (or foul pus)﴾ the scholars of Quran interpretation say that this is an intensely cold drink having a putrid smell. So they will combine – and refuge is with Allah – between intensely hot water and intensely cold water so that they feel the punishment from two different perspectives: hot and cold. Other scholars say that غَسَّاقًا (ghassāqan) refers instead to the pus which comes out of the people of the fire and whatever else is secreted from them of filth, sweat, etc. Either way, the verses indicate that they will taste nothing but a drink that will cut up their intestines from intense heat and will tear their insides from intense cold, we ask Allah for protection from this. When different types of punishment are combined in this way, the punishment is even further increased for the people of Hell.

Verse 26: ﴿جَزَاءً وَفَاقًا﴾

﴿An appropriate recompense﴾ They are only punished in accordance with their deeds, and Allah is in no way oppressing them. Allah (تبارك وتعالى) says:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ﴾

And surely Allah does not do any injustice to people, but people are unjust to themselves.¹⁵

So this punishment is appropriate and befits their deeds. Allah then explains why this punishment is appropriate to their deeds, he says:

Verse 27-28: ﴿إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا • وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا﴾

¹⁵ The Quran, Sūrah Yūnus, 10:44.

﴿Indeed, they were not expecting an account. And they denied our verses with (insistent) denial﴾ Here, Allah explains their deviation in belief and in statement.

﴿Indeed, they were not expecting an account﴾ They did not anticipate that they would ever be taken to account. Rather they denied the judgment all together as well as the resurrection, saying:

﴿ مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ ﴾

“There is nothing but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time.”¹⁶

So they never expected to be called to account for what they did during their lives because they used to completely deny that it would ever happen; this is the deviation of belief in their hearts. As for the deviation in their statements, they belied this (the Day of Judgment, Allah’s verses, etc.), saying that it is all lies, “This is magic,” and “This is crazy,” and other such statements. In the same way, the disbelievers used to belie Allah’s messenger as Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ) describes them in his book:

﴿ كَذَلِكَ مَا أَتَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا قَالُوا سَاحِرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ ﴾

Similarly, no messenger came to those before them, but they said (of him),
“A sorcerer, or madman.”¹⁷

Allah also says about those who accused Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) of being a liar:

¹⁶ The Quran, Sūrah al-Jāthiyah, 45:24.

¹⁷ The Quran, Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt, 51:52.

﴿ وَقَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴾

And the disbelievers said, “This is a sorcerer, a liar.”¹⁸

Other times, they would say that the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is nothing but a poet:

﴿ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ نَّتَرَبَّصُ بِهِ رَيْبَ الْمُنُونِ ﴾

Or do they say: “A poet, we wait for him the evil accidents of time.”¹⁹

And:

﴿ وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِي نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ إِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُونٌ • لَوْ مَا تَأْتِينَا بِالْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴾

And they say, “Oh you upon whom the message is revealed, you are certainly insane! Why don’t you bring the angels to us if you are truthful?”²⁰

If Allah had not supported the messengers and made them patient with their own people, they would not have been able to withstand it.

In addition to this, those who accused the messengers of being liars, they did not stop there. Rather, they used to even physically harm the prophets as they did with the messenger Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) in some of the harshest ways. They went so far as to take up arms against the messenger, waging war against them. So whoever

¹⁸ The Quran, Sūrah Ṣād, 38:4.

¹⁹ The Quran, Sūrah at-Ṭūr, 52:30.

²⁰ The Quran, Sūrah al-Ḥijr, 15:6-7.

does this, his recompense is Hell, and appropriate recompense consistent with his own actions as in these noble verses (26-28): ﴿An appropriate recompense. Indeed, they were not expecting an account. And they denied our verses with (insistent) denial﴾

Verse 29: ﴿وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ كِتَابًا﴾

﴿But all things we have enumerated in writing﴾ Here, ﴿all things﴾ includes what Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) himself does of creating and planning in the universe. It also includes whatever his servants do of actions and statements, whether small or big. ﴿we have enumerated﴾ Meaning: We have precisely counted everything, accurately with no error at all. ﴿in writing﴾ Everything is written down. It has also been confirmed in an authentic ḥadīth that Allah wrote down and preordained everything that is to occur until the last hour comes.²¹ Among those things are the actions of the children of Adam (all of mankind). All of their actions are written down and each and every statement a person makes is written down as Allah (تعالى) says:

²¹ The ḥadīth is in “Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim” (no. 2653) and the text is:

« كَتَبَ اللَّهُ مَقَادِيرَ الْخَلَائِقِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِخَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ »

Allah wrote down and preordained all creations fifty thousand years before he even created the heavens and earth.

And in another ḥadīth, the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

« إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْقَلَمَ ، فَقَالَ لَهُ : اكْتُبْ ، قَالَ : رَبِّ وَمَاذَا أَكْتُبُ ؟ قَالَ : اكْتُبْ مَقَادِيرَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى تَقُومَ السَّاعَةُ »

The first thing Allah created was the pen. He said to it, “Write.” The pen asked, “Oh lord, and what should I write?” Allah replied, “Write the pre-decree of everything that is to occur until the last hour.”

This ḥadīth is recorded by Abū Dāwūd and at-Tirmidhī, and al-Albānī says it is authentic in “Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abī Dāwūd” (no. 3933) and “Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan at-Tirmidhī” (no. 2645).

﴿ مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ ﴾

He (man) does not utter any word except that with him is an observer prepared (to record it).²²

Someone (from the angels) is watching each person and present with him at all times.

It has been reported that while Imam Ahmad was sick and groaning from his ailment, someone came upon him and said, “Oh Abu Abdullah, Ṭāwūs²³ says that even the moans of a sick person are written down.” So Imam Ahmad ceased moaning out of fear that it will be recorded.

So what about endless speech, words flowing nonstop day and night that the speakers of which are not even concerned with? Everything, even intentions, is written down either for you or against you. Whoever intends to do a bad deed but for some reason is unable to do it, it is still written against him. And whoever intends to do something bad but refrains from doing it just for Allah (while still fully capable of doing it), it will then be written in his favor.²⁴ So, do not waste any moment or statement when **﴿all things we have enumerated in writing.﴾**

²² The Quran, Sūrah Qāf, 50:18.

²³ Ṭāwūs was one of the well-known successors to the companions of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

²⁴ The ḥadīth supporting this is in “Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī” (no. 6491) and “Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim” (no. 128, 203) and the full text is:

« إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَتَبَ الْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ ثُمَّ بَيَّنَ ذَلِكَ ؛ فَمَنْ هَمَّ بِحَسَنَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً ، وَإِنْ هَمَّ بِهَا فَعَمِلَهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ عَشْرَ حَسَنَاتٍ إِلَى سَبْعِمِائَةٍ ضِعْفٍ إِلَى أَضْعَافٍ كَثِيرَةٍ . وَإِنْ هَمَّ بِسَيِّئَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً ، وَإِنْ هَمَّ بِهَا فَعَمِلَهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ سَيِّئَةً وَاحِدَةً »

Allah recorded the good deeds and bad deeds and he then explained them. So whoever intends to do a good deed but is unable to do it, Allah records it with himself as a complete good deed. And if he intends to do it and actually does the good deed, Allah records it with himself as ten times the reward up to seven hundred times or even more reward. And whoever intends to do a bad deed but does not do it, Allah records it with himself as a complete good deed. And if he intends to do it and actually does do the bad deed, Allah records it as only one bad deed.

Verse 30: ﴿ فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَّزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا عَذَابًا ﴾

﴿ **So taste (the punishment), and never will we increase you except in torment** ﴾

This is a form of further insult and rebuke. In other words, it is said to the people of the fire “Taste the punishment as a form of indignity and reprimand, for we will not give you anything except an increase in punishment. We will not lighten it upon you, and we will not leave you in that state. Instead, we will give you an increase in punishment; it will become stronger against you, you will stay in it longer, and will experience more types of punishment.” In another verse in the Quran, the people in the fire will ask the keepers (angels) of Hell:

﴿ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ ﴾

And those in the fire will say to the keepers of Hell, “Call upon your lord that he may lighten the punishment upon us for a single day.”²⁵

There are some very important points to consider about these words the people of the fire will say.

1. These people will not ask Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) directly. Instead they will request the keepers of Hell to call upon Allah for them. This is because Allah says to them:

﴿ اخْسَؤُوا فِيهَا وَلَا تُكَلِّمُونِ ﴾

“Remain despised therein and do not speak to me.”²⁶

²⁵ The Quran, Sūrah Ghāfir, 40:49.

²⁶ The Quran, Sūrah al-Mu’minūn, 23:108.

So they will see themselves as not even deserving of asking Allah directly and calling upon him without some sort of mediator.

2. They will say: ﴿**Call upon your lord**﴾ and not, “Call upon *our* lord.” This is because neither their faces nor their hearts will be able to even speak or think by associating the lordship of Allah with themselves by saying, “our lord.” They will see themselves as so shameful, disgraced, and humiliated that they will not deserve to associate themselves with Allah’s lordship, so they instead say: ﴿**your lord**﴾.
3. The people of the fire also will not say, “...that he may relieve us from the punishment.” Instead, they say: ﴿**that he may lighten the punishment upon us**﴾ because they will have completely despaired, lost all hope of ever getting completely out of the punishment, so they ask only for it to be lightened, and we seek Allah’s protection.
4. They will also not say, “lighten the punishment upon us forever.” Instead, they will say: ﴿**for a single day**﴾ – just for one day. With this, it becomes clear the anguish and misery they will be in of punishment, disgrace, and shame.

﴿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.²⁷

May Allah protect us from such punishment.

²⁷ The Quran, Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42:45.

S Ū R A H A L - N A B A

Verses 31-36

31	Indeed, for the ^{وَالْمُتَّقِينَ} (muttaqūn) is success (Paradise)	﴿ إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا ﴾
32	Gardens and grapevines	﴿ حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا ﴾
33	And full-breasted (companions) of equal age	﴿ وَكَوَاعِبَ أَتْرَابًا ﴾
34	And a full cup	﴿ وَكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا ﴾
35	Neither vain speech will they hear therein nor any lying	﴿ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا كِذِّبًا ﴾
36	A reward from your lord, a sufficient gift	﴿ جَزَاءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءٌ حِسَابًا ﴾

THE EXPLANATION OF
Verses 31 - 36

After his statement in the previous verse: ﴿**So taste (the punishment), and never will we increase you except in torment**﴾, Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) then mentions something of what is prepared for the righteous people. This is because the Quran is balanced: whenever punishment is mentioned, reward is often mentioned next and vice versa. Similarly, when the people of good deeds are mentioned, the people of evil deeds are mentioned, and when truth is mentioned, falsehood is also mentioned. It is balanced like this so that a person worships his lord balanced between fear (of Allah's anger) and hope (for Allah's mercy). If a person has much more hope than fear, he may begin to feel safe and secure from Allah. And if he has too much fear, he may begin to despair of Allah's mercy. Both situations are major sins and both are wrong. Imam Ahmad said, "A person must be, with regards to his worship of his lord, between fear and hope; if either one becomes too much, it will destroy the person."

For this, you find that the Quran often speaks of one thing and then something which compliments and is comparative to it. This is so that the souls may not lean too much to one side, focusing solely on one condition without thinking of what corresponds to it. In such a way, when people read the Quran, they may be hopeful yet fearful, and this is part of the eloquence of the Quran.

Verse 31: ﴿إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا﴾

«Indeed, for the **مُتَّقِينَ (muttaqīn)** is success (Paradise)» The **مُتَّقِينَ (muttaqīn)** are the people with **تَقْوَى (taqwá)**, or a constant consciousness (of Allah).²⁸ They are those who are constantly conscious of Allah’s punishment and they remain in this state by fulfilling his commands and staying away from what he prohibits. In the Quran, sometimes Allah commands people to have this taqwá of him, sometimes to have taqwá of the Day of Reckoning, and sometimes to have taqwá of the fire. Allah (تعالی) says:

﴿ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ • وَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ ﴾

And have taqwá of Allah so that you may be successful. And have taqwá of the fire.²⁹

So here, he combines between the command to have taqwá of himself and the fire. Allah (تعالی) also says:

﴿ وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ﴾

And have taqwá of a day on which you will be returned to Allah.³⁰

And here, he commands people to have taqwá of the Day of Reckoning. And each of these different uses includes one general meaning: that people must be conscious of the bounds set by Allah by obeying him and abstaining from sins. So the muttaqīn are those who fulfill what Allah has commanded and stay away from what he has forbidden.

²⁸ A famous successor to the companions, Ṭalq Ibn Ḥabīb, was asked the meaning of taqwá to which he replied, “Taqwá is that you act in obedience to Allah, hoping for his mercy, upon a light from Allah; and taqwá is that you leave acts of disobedience to Allah out of fear of him, upon a light from Allah.” This narration was reported by Ibn Abī Shaybah in “Kitāb al-Īmān” (no. 99) and al-Albānī declared it to be authentic.

²⁹ The Quran, Sūrah Āli-‘Imrān, 3:130-131.

³⁰ The Quran, Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:281.

For those people, there is ﴿**success (Paradise)**﴾. The Arabic word used here, مَفَازًا (mafāzan), means a place of success and a time of success. So they are successful in their places and during their days.

Verse 32: ﴿حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا﴾

﴿**Gardens and grapevines**﴾ This is part of the success and attainment they will have.

﴿**Gardens**﴾ Meaning: gardens and orchards containing an abundance of magnificent trees and bushes of varying kinds. ﴿**and grapevines**﴾ Grapevines are a type of orchard but Allah chose to specifically mention them here.

Verse 33: ﴿وَكَوَاعِبَ أُنثَرَابًا﴾

﴿**And full-breasted (companions) of equal age**﴾ The Arabic word used here is كَوَاعِبَ (kawā'ib), the plural of كَاعِبَ (kā'ib), which means a woman whose breasts are apparent and do not droop or sag. Rather, they are raised and protruding similar, in the Arabic language, to the word for ankle, كَعَبَ (ka'b), which also protrudes. And this is the most beautiful state of one's chest. ﴿**of equal age**﴾ means that the women in Paradise will all be of one age; they will not differ in age like women in this life. If some were older or younger than others, perhaps the balanced harmony between them would be affected, or perhaps some may feel unhappy that they are not of the same standard as others. So they are of equal age.

Verse 34: ﴿وَكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا﴾

﴿**And a full cup**﴾ The intended meaning here is a full cup or glass of wine. Although, maybe it is wine or some other drink because in Paradise there are:

﴿ أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ مَاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ خَمْرٍ لَذَّةٍ
لِلشَّارِبِينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ عَسَلٍ مُصَفًّى ﴾

...rivers of water unaltered (in taste or smell), rivers of milk the taste of which never changes, rivers of wine delicious to those who drink, and rivers of purified honey.³¹

Verse 35: ﴿ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا كِدًّا بَابًا ﴾

﴿Neither vain speech will they hear therein nor any lying﴾ The people in Paradise will hear no ill speech, which is any vain talk containing no real benefit. ﴿nor any lying﴾ The people of Paradise will neither lie nor accuse one another of lying. That is because they will be upon thrones facing one another, and Allah will remove from their hearts any form of resentment and make them all as brothers.³²

Verse 36: ﴿ جَزَاءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءٌ حِسَابًا ﴾

﴿A reward from your lord, a sufficient gift﴾ They are being rewarded with this reward from Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) because of the righteous deeds they performed in this life and because they had taqwá of what Allah had prohibited. ﴿sufficient﴾ Sufficient and suitable. The Arabic word used, حِسَابًا (ḥisāban), originates from حَسَبَ (ḥasb) which means sufficiency. For example, the glass (of wine mentioned previously) will suffice the people of Paradise completely; they will need nothing else with it due to the perfect taste and wholesome benefit it provides them.

³¹ The Quran, Sūrah Muḥammad, 47: 51.

³² This is indicated in the verse in Sūrah al-Hijr, 15:47:

﴿ وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غَلٍّ إِخْوَانًا عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مُّتَقَابِلِينَ ﴾

And we will remove whatever is in their breasts of resentment, (so they will be as) brothers, on thrones facing each other.

S Ū R A H A L - N A B A

Verses 37-40

37	(From) the lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them, the Most Merciful. They do not possess (any authority) from him to speak	﴿ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمَنِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا ﴾
38	The day the spirit and the angels will stand in rows, they will not speak except for one whom the Most Merciful allows, and he will say what is correct	﴿ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا ﴾
39	That is the true day; so whoever wills may take a (way of) return to his lord	﴿ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَى رَبِّهِ مَآبًا ﴾
40	Indeed, we have warned you of a near punishment, the day when a person will observe what his hands have put forth and the disbeliever will say, "Oh, I wish I were dirt!"	﴿ إِنَّا أَنْذَرْنَاكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَالَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا ﴾

THE EXPLANATION OF
Verses 37-40

Verse 37: ﴿ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمَنُ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا ﴾

﴿(From) the lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them, the Most Merciful. They do not possess (any authority) from him to speak﴾ As for: ﴿the lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them﴾, Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) is the lord of everything, he says:

﴿ إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ رَبَّ هَذِهِ الْبَلَدَةِ الَّذِي حَرَّمَهَا وَلَهُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ ﴾

“I have only been commanded to worship the lord of this city who made it sacred and to whom belongs all things.”³³

So Allah is the lord of the seven heavens and lord of the earth, and they are also seven in number as that has been confirmed in the Sunnah from Allah’s messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ)³⁴.

﴿and whatever is between them﴾ Meaning: Whatever huge and magnificent creations that exist between the heavens and earth like clouds, planets, and other things we may know about. It also includes those creations that no one but Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) may

³³ The Quran, Sūrah an-Naml, 27:91.

³⁴ A particular ḥadīth indicating this can be found in “Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī” (no. 3195, 3196) and “Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim” (no. 1610, 1611, 1612). In one such ḥadīth, the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

« مَنْ أَخَذَ شَيْئًا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ حَقِّهِ خَسَفَ بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَى سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ »

Whoever takes something from the earth without right, on the Day of Resurrection, he will sink down with it into the seven earths.

know of. ﴿They do not possess (any authority) from him to speak﴾ People will have no right to address Allah nor will anyone speak at all except with the permission of Allah.

Verse 38:

﴿يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا﴾

﴿The day the spirit and the angels will stand in rows, they will not speak except for one whom the Most Merciful allows, and he will say what is correct﴾ As for:

﴿The day that the spirit﴾ the spirit here refers to the angel Jibrīl. ﴿and the angels will stand in rows﴾ The angels will stand row after row like what has come in the ḥadīth:

« تَنْزِلُ مَلَائِكَةُ السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا فَتُحِيطُ بِالْخَلْقِ ، ثُمَّ مَلَائِكَةُ السَّمَاءِ الثَّانِيَةِ مِنْ وِرَاءَهُمْ ، ثُمَّ الثَّلَاثَةُ وَالرَّابِعَةُ وَالْخَامِسَةُ »

The angels of the (lowest) heaven of this world will descend and surround the creations. Then the angels of the second heaven will follow them, then (those angels of) the third (heaven), then the fourth, then the fifth.³⁵

So the angels will come in rows and no one knows how numerous they are except the one who created them (سبحانه وتعالى).

﴿they will not speak except for one whom the Most Merciful allows, and he will say what is correct﴾ None of the angels or anyone else will speak as Allah (تعالى) says in another verse:

³⁵ This ḥadīth is recorded in “al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah” (19/473) of Ibn Kathīr and by al-Ḥākim (614/4), and adh-Dhahabī said its chain of narrators is strong.

﴿ وَخَشَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا ﴾

**And all voices will be stilled before the Most Merciful, so you will not hear
except a whisper.**³⁶

﴿**except for one whom the Most Merciful allows**﴾ No one will speak unless given permission by Allah and he will then only speak with what Allah allows him to say. ﴿**and he will say what is correct**﴾ He will say only what is correct and what pleases Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) and that refers to the intercession. If Allah allows someone to intercede for another, he will intercede in the manner and to the extent that Allah allows.

Verse 39:

﴿ ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَآبًا ﴾

﴿**That is the true day; so whoever wills may take a (way of) return to his lord**﴾ As for: ﴿**That is the true day**﴾, that which we have informed you of is the true day. And truth is the opposite of falsehood. So the meaning is that this day is certain to occur and on it, truth will be established. And justice will be established on that day when no wealth or children will be of any benefit except for one who comes to Allah with a good heart. ﴿**so whoever wills may take a (way of) return to his lord**﴾ Meaning: Whoever wishes to do the deeds by which he may turn in repentance to Allah and thereby return to Allah, and they are the righteous deeds that Allah (تعالى) is pleased with. And Allah's statement, ﴿**so whoever wills may take a (way of) return to his lord**﴾ must be understood in connection with another verse which is the statement of Allah (تعالى):

﴿ لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَسْتَقِيمَ • وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾

³⁶ The Quran, Sūrah ṬāHā, 20:108.

For whoever wills among you to take a right course. And you do not will (anything) unless Allah wills, the lord of the worlds.³⁷

These verses together mean that we as people do have freewill in that we may do as we please; no one forces us to do anything. However, despite that, our freewill, our choices, and our wills all depend on Allah: **﴿And you do not will (anything) unless Allah wills﴾** And Allah only clarifies this in his book so that people do not rely solely upon themselves and their own wills. Rather, they know that their choices and freewill are connected to the will and decisions of Allah so that they resort to Allah, asking him for guidance in doing what he loves and is pleased with. So a person should not unconditionally say, “I am free, I can choose what I want and do what I want.” We say that yes, the issue is like that but you are still connected to the will and decision of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ).

Verse 40:

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

﴿Indeed, we have warned you of a near punishment, the day when a man will observe what his hands have put forth and the disbeliever will say, “Oh, I wish I were dirt!”﴾ As for: **﴿Indeed, we have warned you of a near punishment﴾**, it means: We have frightened you of a near punishment which is the Day of Resurrection. And the Day of Resurrection is certainly close. Even if there remained a million years of this life, it is still close:

﴿كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَهَا لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحَاهَا﴾

³⁷ The Quran, Sūrah at-Takwīr, 81:28-29.

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.³⁸

So this chastisement that Allah warns us of is definitely close; there is nothing between a person and it except death. And no one knows when he will die. He may make it to the morning but not the evening, or maybe to the evening but not the next morning. For this, we must become determined in our deeds and take advantage of the chance before it is too late.

﴿the day when a person will observe what his hands have put forth﴾ Here “person” means that every single person will see what his (or her) hands have set forth (his deeds) set right before him. And he will be given his book (of deeds) and will be told:

﴿اقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا﴾

“Read your record. Sufficient is yourself against you this day as an accountant.”³⁹

And the disbeliever, from the severity of what they witness of horrors and punishment, will say: ﴿“Oh, I wish I were dirt!”﴾ Meaning: “Oh, I wish I were never created,” or “I wish I were never resurrected.” Or, when the disbeliever sees the animals that Allah judges between and then says to them, “Be dust,” and they become dust (or dirt)⁴⁰ – the

³⁸ The Quran, Sūrah an-Nāzi‘āt, 79:46.

³⁹ The Quran, Sūrah al-Isrā, 17:14.

⁴⁰ One particular ḥadīth that indicates this is considered authentic by al-Albānī in “al-Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah” (no. 1966) and in it, the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) says:

disbelievers will wish they were dirt like the animals. So his statement: ﴿“I wish I were dirt!”﴾ carries three possible meanings:

The First Meaning: The disbeliever means, “Oh, I wish I were dirt so that I was never created,” because mankind was created from dirt.

The Second Meaning: “Oh, I wish I were dirt so that I was never resurrected,” meaning that he remained dirt in the depths of his grave.

The Third Meaning: When the disbeliever sees the animals after Allah judges between them and he says to them, “Become dust,” he means, “Oh I wish I were dust like these animals.” And Allah knows best.

With that, the explanation of Sūrah al-Naba is complete. Within this Sūrah, there are reminders worthy of reflection, points of wisdom, and signs of Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ) by which people may increase and strengthen themselves in certain knowledge and faith.

We ask Allah that he causes us and you all to benefit from his book, and that he makes it a reminder to our hearts and a cure for that which is in our breasts, for he is bountiful and generous.

« يَقْضِي اللَّهُ بَيْنَ خَلْقِهِ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ وَالْبَهَائِمِ وَإِنَّهُ لَيَقِيدُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْجَمَاءِ مِنَ الْقُرْنَاءِ حَتَّى إِذَا لَمْ يَبْقَ تَبَعَةٌ عِنْدَ وَاحِدَةٍ
لِأُخْرَى قَالَ اللَّهُ: كُونُوا تُرَابًا، فَعِنْدَ ذَلِكَ يَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ: ﴿ يَا لَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا ﴾ »

Allah will judge between his creation – Jinn, people and animals. On that day, Allah will let the hornless animal settle its score with the horned animal until, when there is nothing left to be settled, Allah will say to them, “Be dust.” At that point the disbeliever will say: ﴿“I wish I were dust!”﴾.