

PSYCHOMYSTICAL INFERENCE: THE NAFS AND THE QUR'AN

Just as nations and corporations and communities try to develop themselves, so do individual human beings. The results and tactics of this effort are obvious in a physical world like that of athletics, where world-records are broken after great effort by generations of athletes. But when one looks for tactics of development in the psychological world, the evidence is of a different nature. It can be found, however, in the books that document various accounts of how a carpenter or a shepherd becomes a prophet. Or how a criminal reforms. These accounts document a growth in human perception and behavior and motivation, and they exist in most cultures and back into ancient history.

Human efforts to develop in this way are sometimes written down, thus producing the Qur'an and the Bible and a host of other profound documents. This literature is said to have embedded within it a number of meanings, and these levels of meanings are perhaps one reason that the literature survives for centuries and becomes a kind of map for human beings to follow.

We later arrivals who are curious about conscious human evolution study these documents from at least two points of view. The first involves reading the text and accepting its directives literally, dogmatically, concretely. That orientation gives rise to interpretations like this: "There is a literal heaven which is located up there and looks like this and you gain entry to it in that fashion."

The second viewpoint involves reading the text and assigning allegorical impressions to the material. Here the text is seen as symbolic, and thus subject to another type of interpretation, in this case a psychological one. This type of decoding might give rise to this interpretation about heaven: "Heaven is the name of a state that a human can enter: it is a state that is psychological, occurs here on earth, has these characteristics, and can be sought in this fashion," etc.

Scholars and theologians debate the validity of using the allegorical method. But it is important to observe what it can yield in the Qur'an, for instance, in an attempt to make the document accessible to these times, this place, these people, this text, and this interpreter. The idea of such effort is to honor and re-honor and re-honor a text, despite the inevitable changes over centuries that make its language or premises seem profoundly unavailable. Support for the method is even found in the Qur'an itself.

Verse seven of the Third Surah (chapter) of the ,  
Al Imran (Oh Thou Human Being), comments that the Qur'an

"contains messages that are clear in and by themselves (ayat muhkamat) as well as others that are allegorical (mutashabihat)".<sup>1</sup>

Considering elements of the Qur'an allegorically, Ja'far al-Sadiq (d.765) proposed that there were multiple interpretations of the Qur'an corresponding to the different levels of the listeners. Thus the Qur'an lines (27:34) "When kings enter a city, they destroy it," were rendered 'when mystical gnosis enters the hearts of the believers, their desires and longings cease altogether, so that no place remains in their hearts for anything except God.'<sup>2</sup> Sadiq was a devoutly religious Muslim and a Sufi, this latter being an esoteric sect typically found sheltered in the traditions of Islam. He must have been akin to Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, and Jewish adherents that look for the 'inner' or 'hidden' meaning in their traditions, in order to better discern what is being said and how that applies to their world in the present. The terms gnostic and mystic are good contemporary words that describe this effort. Gnostics seek out the inner nature of traditions. Mystics seek out the human manifestations of the transcendent, the Divine. Both arrive at transpersonal ideas that are consistent across times & cultures - perennial wisdom<sup>3</sup>.

It was a Sufi of later times, Abu-Hamid Mohammed El-Ghazali (d. 1111) who formally reconciled the Qur'an with psychomystical traditions which propose that theological material has an inner content.<sup>4</sup> During his times orthodox Islam was opposed to Sufism, which seemed to be ignoring the Qur'anic Law and substituting personal experience of what the religion actually meant - a heretical idea. Ghazali employed the Sufic conception that all religious and psychological activity is essentially of the same nature, that both have an outward and an inward significance, and that both work consistently within their own dimensions. He demonstrated that what might be meant by the term "God" was something which could only be appreciated by inner means, not accessible through the framework of any formal religion.

The question for anyone following El-Ghazali's example then becomes 'what are these inner means?' It is proposed here that such means are accessible when portions of the Qur'an are read as allegory.

As a literary device, the allegorical message involves a representation which both parallels and illustrates a deeper sense of some particular material. Thus the story of the search for the actual Holy Grail, read in this fashion, illustrates an inner spiritual search.<sup>5</sup> Allegorical meanings of a text can yield impressions and directives that are linked to previous information in the student's mind. This bridges the gap between previously realized ideas and states and those yet unrealized. This is the embodiment of the

injunction to speak to the student in a language that they can understand. This kind of activity brings an ancient text alive in contemporary students' actual daily worlds.

If one's active daily world involves curiosity about methods of human development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, one is drawn to commentary in Sufi materials about "the nafs", meaning (among other things) personality, self- , or levels of personality development<sup>6</sup>. One wonders just what these elements of personality are, how to identify and work with them, and what the fruits of that endeavor might be.

The Surah (chapter) #36, Ya Sin (Oh Thou Human Being),<sup>7</sup> said to be the heart of the Qur'an, yields some distinct directives about the nafs when seen through the allegorical lens of contemporary transpersonal psychology, a field of Western science that links Eastern and Western studies of the transformation and development of the human being. This type of psychology is concerned with the empirical study of human consciousness, with psychological and behavioral conditioning, with personality, and with the tendency of humans to 'identify' with internal and external phenomena and thus constrict their possible development.<sup>8</sup>

Transpersonal psychology studies experiences of higher human functioning, transcendent values and states, and how ordinary humans can develop extra-ordinary, perceptions, efforts, and achievements. It postulates the existence of a human essence or higher Self, the seat of the very best of all known (and little known) human qualities, and the human link with the Divine.

Applying this contemporary field of psychology to the Qur'an yields some surprising and illuminating clues about 'what we are doing here and how we can consciously develop ourselves'.

Taken literally, Ya Sin has two sections: a description of the nature of a human being, and the story of how the people of a village behaved when the Divine word arrived through messengers.

The description of a human being cites various attributes: 'you are message bearers, pursuing a straight way, who need to warn the unaware that they are shackled and enshrouded'. Then the story of the messengers unfolds: two, then three apostles arrive in a village. They tell the inhabitants to "beware" of that which lies within and without them, and that this action would take them to paradise. They are enjoined to "not worship Satan."

But the villagers resist the warnings, and horrific consequences come to them because of their incapacity to hear the word of God. The English language translation of Ya Sin

here employed is cited in full at the end of this article. The language employed there emanates from the time when it was authored, is moralistic and threatening and harsh, much in the style of Biblical translations.

If the text of Ya Sin is instead taken as allegory and the viewing perspective is shifted from the literal to the transpersonal, the Surah embodies a very different kind of language which may be closer to what contemporary Westerners can understand. Perhaps it is even closer to what the original authors intended.

The chart following considers a few of the literal statements of the Qur'anic text and compares them to a transpersonally-inspired description of what cognitive, behavioral, and emotional efforts are actually being suggested.

Line	Ya Sin Text	Transpersonal Suggestions
(3)	(oh humans) verily, thou art indeed one of God's message-bearers	truly you have within you the message of Divinity, a higher Self internally that is linked to the Transcendent
(4)	pursuing a straight way	you can pursue the practice of intentional awareness of your self and your world, mindfulness practice
(5)	by [virtue of] what is being bestowed from on high by the Almighty...	mindfulness comes to you by Grace, and by your remembering and practicing, by Grace, to become aware at this moment of what is inside and what is outside
(6)	so that thou mayest warn people... who had not been warned and who therefore are unaware	so that your mindfulness informs you, alerts-warns you to this and that; one who is not mindful is unaware
(8)	...around their necks We have put shackles... and We have set a barrier before them and... behind them, and We have enshrouded them in veils so that they cannot see	you humans are conditioned, ensnackled by (and identified with) your individual personalities (nafs), your repetitive forms of thinking, feeling and behaving that bind you and blind you from being directly aware of yourself

- and your world
- (11) thou canst warn only him who is willing to take the reminder to heart
- you can warn (make aware, conscious) only if you are willing to become aware of, be witness to, your own blindness, deafness and conditioning; this increase in consciousness will move you toward more intentional actions, thoughts, decisions
- (12) We shall indeed bring the dead back to life
- the dead are the unaware; to begin to practice awareness by Grace is to come back to life
- (13) And set forth unto them a parable - [the story of how] the people of a township [behaved] when [Our] message-bearers came unto them
- this is what happens inside you when your personality ("the people") encounters information from the Transcendent manifested through your higher self or essence
- (14) We sent unto them two [apostles], and they gave the lie to both; and so We strengthened [the two] with a third
- the message bearers of Divinity are three: the human body, the human mind, and the human spirit (consciousness)
- (15) [the others] (the villagers) answered: "You are nothing but mortal men like ourselves... you do nothing but lie!"
- the ordinary human ego and personality ("the others, the villagers") challenge, reject the message of the Divine within, messages that are being generated in the body and mind, and are available by cultivating mindfulness
- (45) And when they are
- humans are told to become

told, "Beware of all that lies open before you and all that is hidden from you so that you might be graced with His mercy..." [most men choose to remain deaf] no message of their Sustainer ever reaches them without their turning away from it

aware of what is inside them and of what is outside them, their conscious doings and their unconscious motives, that they might be graced with mercy, that is, might dis-identify<sup>9</sup> from conditioned thoughts, emotions, and actions; humans are told all this but they ignore the suggestion to practice this, they remain deaf, unaware

(55-56) those who are destined for Paradise shall today have joy in whatever they do - in happiness will they and their spouses on couches recline

those who learn to practice mindfulness and the reconciliation of opposites ('their spouses') will dis-identify from their conditioning will be at peace in the present moment -- their internal opposites will relax (Jesus: "When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside... then will you enter [the Kingdom]"<sup>10</sup>)

(60) did I not enjoin on you.. that you should not worship Satan - since verily, he is your open foe?

(Satan, shaytan is derived from the verb shatana, signifying "he was remote [from the truth]"... thus impulses that offend against truth, reason, and the good are "satanic")<sup>11</sup>; the implication here is that the practice of mindfulness creates in a human the capacity to become aware of impulses, thinking, behavior as they arise... and that the dis-identification (i.e. non-worship) from impulses and thoughts and emotions makes it possible to allow them to pass without acting on them (without worshipping them); one learns to struggle or dance with one's impulses rather than flee them, repress them, or follow them blindly

(61) you should worship Me

your efforts should be

- alone... this would  
have been a straight  
way
- (66) Now had it been Our  
will [that men should  
not be able to  
discern between right  
and wrong], We could  
surely have deprived  
them of their sight,  
so that they would  
stray forever from  
the [right] way
- (67) And had it been Our  
will [that they  
should not be free to  
choose between right  
and wrong], We could  
surely have given  
them a different  
nature...
- (74) but (you) take to  
worshipping deities  
other than God,  
hoping to be succored  
by them
- toward developing  
consciousness, toward the  
Cosmic Consciousness; this  
effort keeps you on the path
- sight is what is to be  
developed, to cultivate  
discernment; sight means  
awareness, consciousness,  
attention, mindfulness,  
insight, so that one can  
note one is off course and  
can redirect oneself
- the capacity to choose is  
what is to be developed, to  
select this from that, to  
attend to one thing and not  
another
- instead of cultivating  
conscious awareness and your  
link to the Divine, you  
worship wealth, security,  
youth, re-election,  
vengeance, fashion, piety,  
fame, enlightenment, status,  
jihad, power, rebirth

In this way the Surah from the Qu'ran is seen to have a number of psychomystical references to actual activities that a person can do right now, right in this present moment.

It begins with an injunction to remember God, Allah ("that which is worshiped"), the Divine. It notes the principle of immanency, the Divine within, and the possibility of being in contact with that Source through a particular kind of practice, the training of attentional stability employed in a sacred context.

It describes the resistance that manifests in the ordinary human mind-body toward doing that practice and making that kind of contact, and how that mindbody worships all manner of material things rather than the Oneness. It offers a contemporary and plausible meaning of the term 'Satan,' with implications that attachment to the world blinds a worshipper from being near to the truth (and the Truth). It is a directive to practice mindfulness and to reconcile opposites in oneself, and to know from Where this profound capacity arises. And it is a request to thus

diminish one's own self-defeating habits and make room for a higher form of perception and responsiveness that arises from within.

A similar reading of the Qur'an chapter #56 Al-Qaqi'ah (That Which Must Come to Pass) yields another important clue in the contemporary map.

This is the story of Judgment Day. The essence of the translated text is this: 'When that which must come to pass [at last] comes to pass... when the earth is shaken with a shaking [severe], then you shall be divided into three kinds: those that have attained to what is right, those that have lost themselves to evil, and those (the foremost) whose faith and good works draw them close to God.' It goes on, promising rewards (fruit-laden trees and waters gushing) to the righteous, and punishments (scorching winds and burning despair) to the lost. It is completed in a series of exhortations by God who is saying, essentially: 'Have you ever really considered the miraculous nature of this place? Have you realized Who creates seeds, and death, and your coming into being in the first place, and water and fire? How can you ignore the profound beauty of all this complexity, placed here to remind you of that Creator? And how can you ignore the consequences of your life?'

Taking the chapter again a psychological allegory produces another map regarding human development: There are times in a person's life ("Judgment Day") when they suddenly see what they've been up to, their motives and the true consequences of their actions. It can shake a man or woman to their depths, and present a stunning view of one's real life efforts. This isn't some cataclysmic end-of-the-world future event: it occurs in our present lives to us in a divorce, a defeat, a humiliation, a confrontation, a grand success, an accurate summing up of impressions by someone who know us well. When that happens, individuals who have been practicing mindfulness, increasing awareness, choosing in the direction of the Absolute, persevering and taking right action, will be much gratified. They'll have evidence that their efforts are promoting their own development but more importantly, the development of the planet and of the beings of Being that come and go here. On the other hand, people who have been narcissistic, have chosen selfishly in their blindness and have harmed others will suffer. It will be painful for them to see what they've done and what they are doing.'

This story might describe such an event. A dervish commits to visit his Sheik, and travels long and hard to make the journey. He arrives exhausted late at night, and realizes that he has not accomplished his daily practices. Despite his condition he sets about to do the meditations, and is awake the rest of the night. Upon his meeting with the Sheik early the next morning he's barely able to sit

upright, listen, or speak! "What's happened to you?" inquires the Sheik, who then hears the story of the travels and the late-night extended effort. "Oh!" the Sheik responds, "you've been being righteous!!!"

This is Judgment Day. A trait that has been inhibiting the dervish's progress has been illuminated.

Another way to think of this Judgment Day Chapter is that it is an obtuse reminder and motivator towards human self-development. In this way it can be reminiscent of the seven stages of psycho-spiritual development on the Sufi path<sup>12</sup>. The stages represent a progression in the transformation of a human from primitive to integrated in nature, and are all implied in the Chapter.

#### Stage 1: Repentance (Tauba)

"(4) When the earth is shaken with a shaking [severe]," begins the chapter, "(5) and the mountains are shattered into [countless] shards... then, shall you be [divided into] three kinds." And now paraphrasing those kinds: those that have attained to what is right... those that have lost themselves in evil... and the foremost: those who were always drawn [in faith and good works] close to God.

Suddenly, one sees what one has been and is up to. It's an awakening. One feels guilty, remorseful, fearful about one's state. It's the beginning of Judgment Day: 'oh! THIS is what I've been doing!!! And THAT is the impact!!!' While the literal story forecasts the threat of a single profound world-wide event, where 'those of olden times and those of later times will be gathered together' and see us for what we really are, by analogy it can refer to an event in one's actual daily life. There is a moment of self-seeing, or self-realization, and it is burning, and provocative. It promotes an extended form of turning back towards oneself as the primary cause of one's suffering, a style of introspection that is rare for many people, especially those convinced that they are merely the innocent victims of larger hostile forces.

While commonly associated with returning and not forgetting one's sins, repentance is more effective as a 'turning back' of one's attention towards one's self. In this way one begins to practice mindfulness, self-reflective awareness, 'to attain to what is right', and is usually in fact stunned at the massive amount of habit and prejudice and conditioning that one sees in one's self.

#### Stage 2: Abstinence (Wara)

This is a stage of being timid, cautious, temperate. After the initial shock of Judgment Day, one is more aware of their thoughts and actions, and this often creates inner turmoil regarding ethical or psychological or religious values. One is encouraged to struggle to disrupt, abstain

from pain-creating activities. There is fear about the consequences of continuing to operate heedlessly, impulsively. This is the action-plan associated with 'drawing closer to the Truth,' of tying one's camel to a post, of getting a handle on parts of one's life that have been formerly ignored, denied.

#### Stage 3: Renunciation (Zuhd)

The word Zuhd refers to renouncing and indifference. In the context of Judgment Day, it alludes to an activity designed to attain to what is right: dis-identification, the method of loosening one's attachment to various thoughts, feelings, behaviors, attitudes that have been observed in the above two stages to be self-defeating. One is no longer ignoring the consequences of one's life: one is aware now more frequently, is with effort repeatedly observing one's self and one's environment simultaneously, disidentifying from that which has been familiar but problematic. It is the opposite of those who "... (45) abandon themselves wholly to the pursuit of pleasures," who exclude moral considerations. For them, 'scorching winds and burning despair' are forecast.

#### Stage 4: Poverty (Faqr)

This is a reference to the more of the fruits of the effort of renunciation, i.e. detachment. It refers to the freedom from wants and desires, the peace of mind that comes from being less-attached to worldly things. As the conditioned self is disrupted, space arises in place of matter, generosity arises in place of greed. There is a contentment, a quietness, that arises at this stage. There is devotion to the task at hand without grasping for a result from the effort.

Ironically, the traditional text speaks not of poverty but of literal plenty: "fruit-laden trees, waters gushing, gold-encrusted thrones of happiness'. It is conceivable that the text is speaking in a language that the contemporary readers could understand. To speak of psychological attainments (as I am) would have been absurd.

#### Stage 5: Patience (Sabr)

After accomplishing much work in the previous stages, the seeker can now see evidence of patience, endurance, tolerance - and a sense of fulfillment. This kind of patience is a further polishing of one's mind and body and behavior: it involves the practice of being the same whether suffering or being free from suffering. Patience is the essence of faith, and faith, in this way of thinking, means 'to learn to think in a new way'. It brings a sense of certitude which is unmistakable, not zealous, quiet.

#### Stage 6: Trust in God (Tawakkul)

In the context of Judgment Day, God's Will separates out those that have drawn closer or attained to God from those that have missed the mark too many times. From this point of

view, one now has real trust in God: one's sincerity, one's strong faith and hope, one's communion with the Divine is active. One shares one's good fortune with others because one has a sense of connectedness with the Source, with Reality, which axiomatically nurtures that which is part of It. If one is certain that La Ilaha Ill-al-Allah (there is no God but God), that nothing exists in the universe but God, then dualistic notions involving insufficiency are dissipated. If God cleaves reality into that which is close and that which is far away from Him, then to be close is to be connected and safe, complete. This is the doorway to the seventh stage of development, known in the Judgment Day chapter as Paradise.

Stage 7: contentment (Rida)

The word means satisfaction, contentment. At this stage, the troubling personality and conditioning has been melted by the efforts cited above. Here that is no further loss to suffer, no sense of duality with the world. One has freed oneself from complaints about the world. One experiences contentment with whatever life brings. One is in Paradise. One is Paradise!

When interpreted in a way that is consistent with transpersonal psychology and traditional Sufi doctrine, these Surahs become a twenty-first century map regarding one's own personality, the practice of mindfulness, the use of dis-identification as a method, and the act of remembering the Divine.

The consequences for not doing that are just consequences, that's all, like closing one's eyes while walking in the woods. If your eyes aren't open, you'll get hurt, and you'll hurt what's around you too. If your eyes are open, and you are in contact with yourself and the world, you'll see that there are evolutionary moves to make, people who have made them before you, and that there is much to do, and to love!

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YA SIN (O THOU HUMAN BEING)<sup>13</sup>  
IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE DISPENSER OF GRACE  
(1) O thou human being! (2) Consider this full of wisdom: (3) verily, thou art indeed one of God's message-bearers, (4) pursuing a straight way (5) by [virtue of] what is being bestowed from on high by the Almighty, the Dispenser of Grace, (6) [bestowed upon thee] so that thou mayest warn people whose forefathers had not been warned, and who therefore are unaware [of the meaning of right and wrong].  
(7) Indeed, the word [of God's condemnation] is bound to come true against most of them: for they will not believe.  
(8) Behold, around their necks We have put shackles, reaching up to their chins, so that their heads are forced up; (9) and We have set a barrier before them and a barrier

behind them, and We have enshrouded them in veils so that they cannot see: (10) thus, it is all one to them whether thou warnest them or dost not warn them: they will not believe.

(11) Thou canst [truly] warn only him who is willing to take the reminder to heart, and who stands in awe of the Most Gracious although He is beyond the reach of human perception: unto such, then, give the glad tiding of [God's] forgiveness and of a most excellent reward!

(12) Verily, We shall indeed bring the dead back to life; and We shall record whatever [deeds] they have sent ahead, and the traces [of good and evil] which they have left behind: for of all things do We take account in a record clear.

(13) And set forth unto them a parable - [the story of how] the people of a township [behaved] when [Our] message-bearers came unto them.

(14) Lo! We sent unto them two [apostles], and they gave the lie to both; and so We strengthened [the two] with a third; and thereupon they said: "Behold, we have been sent unto you [by God]!"

(15) [The others] answered: "You are nothing but mortal men like ourselves; moreover, the Most Gracious has never bestowed aught [of revelation] from on high. You do nothing but lie!"

(16) Said [the apostles]: "Our Sustainer knows that we have indeed been sent unto you; (17) but we are not bound to do more than clearly deliver the message [entrusted to us]."

(18) Said [the others]: "Truly, we augur evil from you! Indeed, if you desist not, we will surely stone you, and grievous suffering is bound to befall you at our hands!"

(19) [The apostles] replied: "Your destiny, good or evil, is [bound up] with yourselves! [Does it seem evil to you] if you are told to take [the truth] to heart? Nay, but you are people who have wasted their own selves!"

(20) At that, a man came running from the farthest end of the city, [and] exclaimed: "O my people! Follow these message-bearers! (21) Follow those who ask no reward of you, and themselves are rightly guided!"

(22) "[As for me,] why should I not worship Him who has brought me into being, and to whom you all will be brought back? (23) Should I take to worshipping [other deities beside Him? [But then,] if the Most Gracious should will that harm befall me, their intercession could not in the least avail me, nor could they save me: (24) and so, behold, I would have indeed, most obviously, lost myself in error!"

(25) "Verily, [O my people,] in the Sustainer of you all have I come to believe; listen, then to me!"

(26) [And] he was told, "[Thou shalt] enter paradise!" - [whereupon] he exclaimed: "Would that my

people knew (27) how my Sustainer has forgiven me [the sins of my past], and has placed me among the honoured ones!"

(28) And after that, no host out of heaven did We send down against his people, nor did We need to send down any; (29) nothing was [needed] but one single blast [of Our punishment] - and lo! They became as still and silent as ashes.

(30) OH, THE REGRETS that [most] human beings will have to bear! Never has an apostle come to them without their deriding him!

(31) Are they not aware of how many a generation We have destroyed before their time, [and] that those [that have perished] will never return to them, (32) and [that] all of them, all together, will [in the end] before Us be arraigned?

(33) And [yet,] they have a sign [of Our power to create and to resurrect] in the lifeless earth which We make alive, and out of which We bring forth grain, whereof they may eat; (34) and [how] We make gardens of date-palms and vines [grow] thereon, and cause springs to gush [forth] within it, (35) so that they may eat of the fruit thereof, though it was not their hands that made it.

Will they not, then, be grateful?

(36) Limitless in His glory is He who has created opposites in whatever the earth produces, and in men's own selves, and in that of which [as yet] they have no knowledge.

(37) And [of Our sway over all that exists] they have a sign in the night: We withdraw from it the [light of] day - and lo! They are in darkness.

(38) And [they have a sign in] the sun; it runs in an orbit of its own - [and] that is laid down by the will of the Almighty, the All-Knowing; (39) and [in] the moon, for which We have determined phases [which it must traverse] till it becomes like an old date-stalk, dried-up and curved: (40) [and] neither may the sun overtake the moon, nor can the night usurp the time of day, since all of them float through space [in accordance with Our laws].

(41) And [it ought to be] a sign for them that We bear their offspring [over the seas] in laden ships, (42) and [that] We create for them things of a similar kind, on which they may embark [in their travels]; (43) and [that,] if such be Our will, We may cause them to drown, with none to respond to their cry for help; and [then] they cannot be saved, (44) unless it be by an act of mercy from Us and a grant of life for a [further span of] time.

(45) And [yet,] when they are told, "Beware of [God's insight into] all that lies open before you and all that is hidden from you, so that you might be graced with His mercy," [most men choose to remain deaf;] (46) and no message of their Sustainer's messages ever reaches them without their turning away from it.

(47) Thus, when they are told, "Spend on others out of what God has provided for you as sustenance," those who

are bent on denying the truth say unto those who believe, "Shall we feed anyone whom, if [your] God had so willed, He could have fed [Himself]? Clearly, you are but lost in error!" (48) And they add, "When is this promise [of resurrection] to be fulfilled? [Answer this] if you are men of truth!"

(49) [And they are unaware that] nothing awaits them beyond a single blast [of God's punishment], which will overtake them while they are still arguing [against resurrection]: (50) and so [sudden will be their end that] no testament will they be able to make, nor to their own people will they return!

(51) And [then] the trumpet [of resurrection] will be blown - and lo! Out of their graves towards their Sustainer will they all rush forth!

(52) They will say: "Oh, woe unto us! Who has roused us from our sleep [of death]?"

[Whereupon they will be told:] "This is what the Most Gracious has promised! And His message-bearers spoke the truth!"

(53) Nothing will there have been but one single blast - and lo! Before Us will all of them be arraigned [and be told]: (54) "Today, then, no human being shall be wronged in the least, nor shall you be requited for aught but what you were doing [on earth].

(55) Behold, those who are destined for paradise shall today have joy in whatever they do: (56) in happiness will they and their spouses on couches recline; (57) [only] delight will there be for them, and theirs shall be all that they could ask for: (58) peace and fulfillment through the word of a Sustainer who dispenses all grace.

(59) "But stand aside today, O you who were lost in sin! (60) did I not enjoin on you, O you children of Adam, that you should not worship Satan - since verily, he is your open foe - (61) and that you should worship Me [alone]? This would have been a straight way! (62) And [as for Satan-] he had already led astray a great many of you: could you not, then, use your reason?

(63) "This, then, is the hell of which you were warned again and again: (64) endure it today as an outcome of your persistent denial of the truth!"

(65) On that Day We shall set a seal on their mouths - but their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will bear witness to whatever they have earned [in life].

(66) Now had it been Our will [that men should not be able to discern between right and wrong], We could surely have deprived them of their sight, so that they would stray forever from the [right]way: for how could they have had insight [into what is true]?

(67) And had it been Our will [that they should not be free to choose between right and wrong], We could surely have given them a different nature [and created them as beings rooted] in their places, so that they would not be able to move forward, and could not turn back.

(68) But [let them always remember that] if We lengthen a human being's days, We also cause him to decline in his powers [when he grows old]: will they not, then, use their reason?

(69) And [thus it is:] We have not imparted to this [Prophet the gift of] poetry, nor would [poetry] have suited this [message]: it is but a reminder and a [divine] discourse, clear in itself and clearly showing the truth, (70) to the end that it may warn everyone who is alive [of heart], and that they word [of God] may bear witness against all who deny the truth.

(71) Are they, then, not aware that it is for them that We have created, among all the things which Our hands have wrought, the domestic animals of which they are [now] masters? - (72) and that We have subjected them to men's will, so that some of them they may use for riding and some they may eat, (73) and may have [yet another] benefits from them, and [milk] to drink?

Will they not, then, be grateful?

(74) But [nay,] they take to worshipping deities other than God, [hoping] to be succored [by them, and not knowing that] (75) they are unable to succor their devotees, even though to them they may [appear to] be hosts drawn up [for succor].

(76) However, be not grieved by the sayings of those [who deny the truth]: verily, We know all that they keep secret as well as all that they bring into the open.

(77) Is man, then, not aware that it is We who create him out of a [mere] drop of sperm - whereupon, lo! He shows himself endowed with the power to think and to argue?

(78) And [now he [argues about Us, and] thinks of Us in terms of comparison, and is oblivious of how he himself was created! [And so] he says, "who could give life to bones that have crumbled to dust?"

(79) Say: "He who brought them into being in the first instance will give them life [once again], seeing that He has full knowledge of every act of creation: (80) he who produces for you fire out of the green tree, so that, lo! You kindle [your fires] therewith."

(81) Is, then, He who has created the heavens and the earth not able to create [anew] the like of those [who have died]?

Yea, indeed - for he alone is the all-knowing Creator: (82) His Being alone is such that when He wills a thing to be, He but says unto it, "Be" - and it is.

(83) Limitless, then, in His glory is He in whose hand rests the mighty dominion over all things; and unto Him you all will be brought back!

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