

CHAPTER 77

Al-Mursalāt: Those Sent Forth

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 2 sections; 50 verses)

This chapter is, as it were, a supplement to the one that precedes it, for while it is shown therein how the righteous attain to perfection — being the acceptors of the message — here the fate of the rejectors is made clear. *Those sent forth* are the Divine messengers, the rejection of whose message brings evil consequences, and that word, occurring in the first verse, gives its name to this chapter.

The fourth year of the call is regarded as the probable date of the revelation of this chapter.

SECTION 1: Consequences of Rejection

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
the Merciful.

1 By those sent forth to spread goodness!

وَالْمُرْسَلَاتِ عُرْفًا ۝

2 Then those driving off the chaff!

فَالْعَصْفَاتِ عَصْفًا ۝

3 And those spreading (goodness), far and wide!

وَالنَّشْرَاتِ نَشْرًا ۝

4 Then those making a distinction!

فَالْفُرْقَاتِ فَرْقًا ۝

5 Then those offering the Reminder,

فَالْمُلْقِيَاتِ ذِكْرًا ۝

6 To clear or to warn! —

عَذْرًا أَوْ تَنْذِيرًا ۝

7 Surely that which you are promised will come to pass.^a

إِنَّمَا تُوعَدُونَ لَوَاقِعٌ ۝

^a As stated in 37:1a, attention is drawn in what are called oaths to certain indisputable facts, which lead to a conclusion. The conclusion here is that the opponents are doomed (v. 12). The characteristics described in the first six verses apply to prophets whose opponents were destroyed. This is made clear by the mention of the appointed

8 So when the stars are made to disappear,

فَإِذَا النُّجُومُ طُمِسَتْ ۝٨

9 And when the heaven is rent asunder,

وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ فُرِجَتْ ۝٩

10 And when the mountains are carried away as dust,^a

وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ نُسِفَتْ ۝١٠

11 And when the messengers are made to reach their appointed time,

وَإِذَا الرُّسُلُ أُقِيتَتْ ۝١١

12 To what day is the doom fixed?

لِأَيِّ يَوْمٍ أُجِّلَتْ ۝١٢

13 To the day of Decision.

لِيَوْمِ الْقَضَىٰ ۝١٣

14 And what will make thee comprehend what the day of Decision is?

وَمَا آذُرُكَ مَا يَوْمِ الْقَضَىٰ ۝١٤

15 Woe on that day to the rejectors!

وَيْلٌ لِّيَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ۝١٥

16 Did We not destroy the former generations?

أَلَمْ نُهْلِكِ الْآوَّلِينَ ۝١٦

17 Then We followed them up with later ones.

ثُمَّ نَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْآخَرِينَ ۝١٧

18 Thus do We deal with the guilty.

كَذَٰلِكَ نَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِينَ ۝١٨

19 Woe on that day to the rejectors!^a

وَيْلٌ لِّيَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ۝١٩

time of the messengers in v. 11, by which, of course, is meant the appointed time of the destruction of the enemies of Truth. They are told to consider how Truth was spread by former prophets. In the first verse they are spoken of as being sent with *'urf* or *ma'rūf*, i.e., *goodness*; in the second, as *driving off the chaff* of falsehood before them; in the third, as scattering the seed of goodness far and wide or giving life to dead earth; in the fourth, as ultimately bringing about a distinction (*farq* or *furqān*) between truth and falsehood, and they give the Reminder that one party may be cleared and the other warned. These considerations about the former prophets should lead the opponents to the certain conclusion that the same Divine law was working in the case of the Holy Prophet, and their doom was also certain.

10a. The disappearance of the stars (v. 8) was a sign for the Arabs of the befalling of a calamity (53:1a); the rending asunder of the heaven (v. 9) indicated the same, because the heaven was considered a protection. Compare 21:32: *And We have made the heaven a guarded canopy*; see 73:18a. The passing away of the mountains signified the disappearance from among them of their great men, whose protection they sought in time of distress. All these things, as the next verse shows, would be brought about when came the appointed time of the messengers, i.e., the time of the destruction of their opponents.

19a. Note the clear words of this and the three previous verses. The former generations were destroyed because of their wickedness and others were brought up in their place; such will always be the fate of the guilty — the day of their doom is the day of Decision. A complete manifestation of that day is, however, reserved for the Hereafter.

- 20 Did We not create you from ordinary water? ﴿٢٠﴾ أَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُمْ مِنْ مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾
- 21 Then We placed it in a secure resting-place, ﴿٢١﴾ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ فِي قَرَارٍ مَكِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾
- 22 Till an appointed term, ﴿٢٢﴾ إِلَىٰ قَدَرٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿٢٢﴾
- 23 So We determined — how well are We at determining! ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَدَرْنَا تَرَكًا فَنِعَمَ الْقَدْرِ رُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾
- 24 Woe on that day to the rejectors! ﴿٢٤﴾ وَيْلٌ لِّيَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾
- 25 Have We not made the earth draw to itself ﴿٢٥﴾ أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ كِفَاتًا ﴿٢٥﴾
- 26 The living and the dead, ﴿٢٦﴾ أَحْيَاءٍ وَ أَمْوَاتًا ﴿٢٦﴾
- 27 And made therein lofty mountains, and given you to drink of sweet water? ﴿٢٧﴾ وَ جَعَلْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ شَاهِقَاتٍ وَ أَسْقَيْنَاكُمْ مَّاءً فُرَاتًا ﴿٢٧﴾
- 28 Woe on that day to the rejectors! ﴿٢٨﴾ وَيْلٌ لِّيَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾
- 29 Walk on to that which you called a lie. ﴿٢٩﴾ اِنطِنِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَا كُنتُمْ بِهِ تُكذِّبُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾
- 30 Walk on to the shadow, having three branches, ﴿٣٠﴾ اِنطَلِقُوا إِلَىٰ ظِلٍّ ذِي ثَلَاثِ شُعَبٍ ﴿٣٠﴾
- 31 Neither cool, nor availing against the flame. ﴿٣١﴾ لَا ظِلِيلٍ وَ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ اللَّهَبِ ﴿٣١﴾
- 32 It sends up sparks like palaces, ﴿٣٢﴾ اِنَّهَا تَرْمِي بِشَرَرٍ كَالْقَصْرِ ﴿٣٢﴾
- 33 As if they were tawny camels. ﴿٣٣﴾ كَأَنَّهٗ جُمَلَتْ صَفْرًا ﴿٣٣﴾
- 34 Woe on that day to the rejectors! ﴿٣٤﴾ وَيْلٌ لِّيَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

26a. The word *kifāt* carries the significance adopted in the translation, *drawing things to itself*, referring to the law of gravitation. It further shows that all mortals, living or dead, must remain on earth, and the belief relating to the ascent of Jesus to the fourth heaven is erroneous. But *kifāt* also means *hastening on* and *being swift in running* or *plying* or *dripping* and *urging vehemently* (LL), the reference being to the motion of earth in space.

30a. According to I'Ab, the address here is to the people of the Cross (RM), the believers in Trinity, and this may be the reason for calling their punishment *dhī thalāthi shu'ab*, a shadow having three branches. The word *zill* used here means properly *shade* or *light of the sun without the rays* (LL), but the word is extensively used to carry a number of other significances, such as *covering*, *protection*, a *plentiful* or an *easy state of life* (T, LL). The three branches of it are the three characteristics thereof stated in the verses that follow; see 33a.

33a. They reject the Truth and seek comfort and ease in material benefits. They are given a shade, but it does not serve the purpose of shade. It is devoid of the coolness of

- 35 This is the day on which they speak not, هَذَا يَوْمٌ لَا يَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾
- 36 Nor are they allowed to offer excuses. وَلَا يُؤْذَنُ لَهُمْ فَيَعْتَذِرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾
- 37 Woe on that day to the rejectors! وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾
- 38 This is the day of Decision; We have gathered you and those of yore.^a هَذَا يَوْمُ الْقَضَاءِ جَمَعْنَاكُمْ وَالْأُولَئِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾
- 39 So if you have a plan, plan against me (now).^a فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ كَيْدٌ فَكِيدُوا ﴿٣٩﴾
- 40 Woe on that day to the rejectors! وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

SECTION 2: Consequences of Rejection

- 41 Surely the dutiful are amid shades and fountains, إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي ظِلِّ وَعَيْنٍ ﴿٤١﴾
- 42 And fruits such as they desire. وَفَوَاحِشَ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾
- 43 Eat and drink pleasantly for what you did. كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾
- 44 Thus do We reward the doers of good. إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾
- 45 Woe on that day to the rejectors! وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾
- 46 Eat and enjoy yourselves for a little; surely you are guilty. كُلُوا وَتَمَتَّعُوا قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ مُّجْرِمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾
- 47 Woe on that day to the rejectors! وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾
- 48 And when it is said to them, Bow down, they bow not down. وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ ارْكَعُوا لَا يَرْكَعُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

shade — they cannot find solace in it. Nor does it avail them against *flames*, which stand here for the distresses of life. More than this, what they mistook for ease and plenty is itself a source of distress. Sparks arise therefrom, not the tiny sparks of an ordinary fire but sparks big as palaces. In fact, the very palaces which they make for their comfort turn into sparks, which set fire to all around them. Perhaps there is a deeper reference here to the modern implements of destruction on account of their magnitude and extensive destructive effect. These sparks are further compared to *tawny camels*, which is true not only as regards their colour but also because of the succession with which these big sparks follow one another, like camels walking one after another in a line.

38a. This gathering together will take place in the Resurrection, but the opponents of Truth, earlier as well as later, are gathered together in punishment in this life, too.

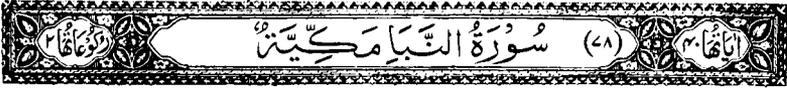
39a. The opponents are even so early challenged to execute their plans against the Holy Prophet.

49 Woe on that day to the rejectors!

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

50 In what narration after it, will they believe?

فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾



Part 30

CHAPTER 78

Al-Naba': The Announcement

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 2 sections; 40 verses)

This chapter is entitled *al-Naba'*, or the Message of Importance, and the important message which it gives to humanity is that God will give life to a dead earth through the Prophet. The day of Decision is again spoken of here to show that Truth will ultimately triumph and opposition to it will meet with its doom. Its revelation belongs to the early Makkan period.

SECTION 1: The Day of Decision

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
the Merciful.

1 Of what do they ask one another?

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿١﴾

2 Of the tremendous announcement^a

عَنِ النَّبِإِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢﴾

3 About which they differ.

الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٣﴾

4 Nay, they will soon know;

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾

5 Nay, again, they will soon know.

ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥﴾

2a. *Naba'* means an announcement of great utility leading to knowledge (R), or a piece of information, news, tidings (LL). The original words are *naba'* 'azim, meaning a tremendous or very great announcement, which also occur in 38:67. Some commentators take it to signify the Holy Qur'an, others the prophethood of Muhammad and still others the day of Resurrection. In fact, all three are included. The Qur'an was revealed as the greatest of the Divine messages hitherto given to humanity, because it was a message for the whole of humanity, compared with the smaller messages to this or that nation. It was, moreover, the most complete message. It gave the great news that the whole of humanity, not this or that nation, would receive life through it. They differed about it not only in the sense that they rejected it, but also because they put in different suggestions, some saying that the Prophet was a madman, others that he was a dreamer, others still that he was a poet or a fabricator, and so on.

- 6 Have We not made the earth an
expanse
- 7 And the mountains as pegs?^a
- 8 And We have created you in pairs,
- 9 And made your sleep for rest,
- 10 And made the night a covering,
- 11 And made the day for seeking
livelihood.
- 12 And We have made above you
seven strong (bodies),
- 13 And made a shining lamp,^a
- 14 And We send down from the
clouds water pouring forth in abun-
dance,
- 15 That We may bring forth there-
by grain and herbs,
- 16 And luxuriant gardens.
- 17 Surely the day of Decision is
appointed^a —
- 18 The day when the trumpet is
blown, so you come forth in hosts,
- 19 And the heaven is opened so it
becomes as doors,
- 20 And the mountains are moved
off, so they remain a semblance.^a

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهْدًا ۝

وَالْجِبَالِ أَوْتَادًا ۝

وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ۝

وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا ۝

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا ۝

وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا ۝

وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شَدِيدًا ۝

وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا ۝

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً نَّجَّاجًا ۝

لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا ۝

وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا ۝

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفُصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا ۝

يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَمَأْتُونَ أَفْوَاجًا ۝

وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا ۝

وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا ۝

7a. The earth is called *mihād* or a *place made even for walking upon* (R). The words here are similar to what is said in 2:22, where the earth is spoken of as being made a *firāsh*, i.e., an *expanse* or *resting-place*. The mountains are likened to pegs on the surface of the earth.

13a. *The seven strong bodies* of the previous verse are apparently the seven major planets of the solar system, the words *above you* clearly showing that the earth itself belongs to the same class, and the sun, the centre of the solar system, is spoken of in the words a *shining lamp*.

17a. That there is a day of Decision in this life, too, which is synonymous with the ultimate triumph of Truth and the doom of opposition to its spread is amply clear from all these early chapters.

20a. The description contained in vv. 18–20 is a prophetic description applying to the final triumph of Truth. People will come forth in hosts, *afwāj-an*, to accept the Truth; see ch. 110 — *when the help of Allāh and victory comes and thou seest people entering the religion of Allāh in hosts, afwāj-an*; the heaven is opened and the dead earth

- 21 Surely hell lies in wait, إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا ﴿٢١﴾
 22 A resort for the inordinate, لِلظَّالِمِينَ مَأْبَأًا ﴿٢٢﴾
 23 Living therein for long years.^a لِيُثْبِتِينَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا ﴿٢٣﴾
 24 They taste not therein coolness
 nor drink, لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا ﴿٢٤﴾
 25 But boiling and intensely cold
 water, إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا ﴿٢٥﴾
 26 Requital corresponding.^a جَزَاءٌ وَفَاءًا ﴿٢٦﴾
 27 Surely they feared not the reck-
 oning, إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا ﴿٢٧﴾
 28 And rejected Our messages, giv-
 ing the lie (thereto). وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا ﴿٢٨﴾
 29 And We have recorded every-
 thing in a book, وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ كِتَابًا ﴿٢٩﴾
 30 So taste, for We shall add to you
 naught but chastisement.^a فَذُوقُوا فَلَئِنْ تَزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا عَذَابًا ﴿٣٠﴾

SECTION 2: The Day of Decision

- 31 Surely for those who keep their
 duty is achievement,^a إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا ﴿٣١﴾
 32 Gardens and vineyards, حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا ﴿٣٢﴾

receives life, v. 19; the mountains — the great opposing forces — melt away, and all that remains of opposition is a mere semblance.

23a. *Ḥuqub*, of which *aḥqāb* is a plural, denotes *eighty years*, or *seventy years*, or *a year or years*, or *a long time* (see LL, which quotes various authorities for each of these meanings). Whatever significance may be adopted, the use of the word leaves no doubt that the punishment of hell is not eternal. The use of a word which signifies a limited period in the case of the punishment of hell, while such words are never used regarding the bliss of heavenly life, is a clear indication that the latter will never come to an end, while the former shall; see 11:107a.

26a. The punishment of hell is described here as a *requital corresponding to the sin*. It may have been noted that various names are given to hell itself, and various sorts of punishment are spoken of. Thus every sinner has his own hell, corresponding to his sin.

30a. As they in their inordinacy added evil to evil, they shall have correspondingly punishment added to punishment. The addition in punishment lasts only until the evil is requited. See also 11:107a where it is shown that hell is not eternal.

31a. Note that the reward of good is *achievement* — achievement of the object of this life as also of the great goal of the next life. It is this *achievement* which becomes a Garden.

33 And youthful (companions),
equals in age,^a

وَكَاِئِبٍ اَنْرَابًا ۝

34 And a pure cup.

وَكَاِسًا دِهَانًا ۝

35 They hear not therein vain
words, nor lying —

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا كِذَابًا ۝

36 A reward from thy Lord, a gift
sufficient;

جَزَاءٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءٌ حِسَابًا ۝

37 The Lord of the heavens and the
earth and what is between them, the
Beneficent, they are not able to
address Him.

رَبِّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا

الرَّحِيْمِ لَا يَسْتَلِئُوْنَ مِنْهُ خُطَابًا ۝

38 The day when the Spirit and the
angels stand in ranks;^a none shall
speak except he whom the Beneficent
permits and he speaks aright.

يَوْمَ يَقُوْمُ الرُّوْحُ وَالْمَلٰئِكَةُ صَفًّا ۝

لَا يَتَكَلَّمُوْنَ اِلَّا مَن اٰذِنَ لَهُ

الرَّحِيْمِ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا ۝

39 That is the True Day, so whoever
desires may take refuge with his Lord.

ذٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَن شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ

اِلَىٰ رَّبِّهِ مٰاٰبًا ۝

40 Truly We warn you of a chas-
tisement near at hand^a — the day
when man will see what his hands
have sent before, and the disbeliever
will say: O would that I were dust!

اِنَّا اَنْذَرْنٰكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيْبًا ۝

يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ وَيَقُوْلُ

الْكٰفِرُ يٰلَيْتَنِيْ كُنْتُ تُرَابًا ۝

33a. *Kawā'ib* is the plural of *Kā'ib* which, when applied to a girl, means *youthful* or *one nearing maturity* (LL). But it should be noted that neither the word *kawā'ib* nor *atrāb* (“equals in age”) is preceded or followed by any qualifying words, and hence *kawā'ib* only means *showing freshness of youth*; see further 52:20a.

38a. The Spirit (*al-Rūḥ*) and the angels are spoken of together on three occasions in the Holy Qu'rān; in 70:4, as ascending to God, for which see 70:4a; in 97:4, as descending on earth in *lailat al-Qadr*, for which see 97:4a; and here as standing in ranks on the Day of Judgment. In 16:2, the angels are spoken of as descending with *al-rūḥ*, which is evidently Divine revelation. *Al-rūḥ* means *Gabriel*, or a *higher class of angels above the ordinary angels*, or *the spirit of man when it leaves the earthly body* (RM). In the last-mentioned case the word *al-rūḥ* can be applied only to the faithful, people in whom the Divine Spirit finds an awakening. As shown in 4:171b and 40:15a, the word *al-rūḥ* really signifies *Divine inspiration* or *Divine revelation*, and Gabriel is called *al-Rūḥ* because he brings the Divine revelation to the Prophet. The human spirit can, in fact, be called *al-rūḥ* only when it receives light through Divine inspiration. The meaning would thus be that on the day of Judgment the faithful and the angels stand in ranks in the presence of God.

40a. The punishment of which the disbelievers are warned throughout the chapter is a *punishment near at hand*, which term, like the *nearer punishment* of 32:21, indicates the punishment of this life.