

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT *Al-Zilzāl* or *Al-Zalzalah* 99

This Sūra is close in date to the last: it is generally referred to the early Madinah period, though it may possibly be of the late Makkan period.

It refers to the tremendous convulsion and uprooting which will take place when the present order of the world is dissolved and the new world of Justice and Truth takes its place. The sign used is that of an earthquake which will shake our present material and phenomenal world to its very foundations. The words in which the earthquake is described are remarkable for both power and graphic aptness. With that shaking all hidden secrets will be brought to light.

Al-Zilzāl, or The Convulsion.

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.*

1. When the Earth is
Shaken to her (utmost)
convulsion,⁶²³⁵
2. And the Earth throws up
Her burdens (from within),⁶²³⁶
3. And man cries (distressed);
'What is the matter with her?'-⁶²³⁷
4. On that Day will she
Declare her tidings:
5. For that thy Lord will
Have given her inspiration.⁶²³⁸

سُورَةُ الزَّلْزَلَةِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا ﴿١﴾

وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا ﴿٢﴾

وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا لَهَا ﴿٣﴾

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُخَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا ﴿٤﴾

بِأَن رَّبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا ﴿٥﴾

6235. To the ordinary human observer a violent earthquake is a terrifying phenomenon, in its suddenness, in its origin, and in its power to destroy and uproot the strongest buildings and to bring up strange materials from the bowels of the earth. The Overwhelming Event (S. lxxxviii.) which ushers in the Judgment will be a bigger and more far-reaching convulsion than any earthquakes that we know. And yet the incidents of earthquakes may give us some idea of that supreme world-shaking Event.

6236. An earthquake, if accompanied by a volcanic eruption, throws up enormous boulders and lava from beneath the crust of the earth. They are thrown up as if they were a burden to the Earth personified. They may be all kinds of minerals, or treasures buried for secrecy. So in the great and final Convulsion, the dead who had been buried and forgotten will rise; and will be brought to the light of day, and justice will be done in the full glare of absolute Truth.

6237. The puzzled agony suffered by the victims of violent earthquakes is as nothing compared to the experience of the new and wonderful world which will then open out of the gaze of man.

6238. The present order may be personified as the earth. It will pass away, but the Deeds done therein, even the most secret, will be brought to the full light of day. And this will be because Allah will give the Command, the inspiration or Word, by which alone all events do proceed. The "inspiration" is the Command or direction conveyed by instruction breathed into the Earth personified: she is directed to tell the whole story of what she knows. Cf. xvi. 68, n. 2097.

6. On that Day will men
Proceed in groups sorted out,⁶²³⁹
To be shown the Deeds
That they (had done).

7. Then shall anyone who
Has done an atom's weight⁶²⁴⁰
Of good, see it!

8. And anyone who
Has done an atom's weight
Of evil, shall see it.

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْأَانًا
لِّيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٦﴾

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ﴿٧﴾

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ﴿٨﴾

6239. In this world good and evil are mixed together. But then they will be sorted out, and each grade of good and evil will be sorted out. So they will proceed in companies to receive judgment. And they will be shown the exact import of everything that they had thought, said, or done, in this life of probation, however they may have concealed or misinterpreted it in this life. Everything will be considered in taking the account, and the account will convince the persons concerned themselves.

6240. *Zarrât*: the weight of an atom, the smallest living weight an ordinary man can think of. Figuratively the subtlest form of good and evil will then be brought to account, and it will be done openly and convincingly: he "shall see it".