

**INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT *An-Nabaa*, 78.**

The beautiful Makkan Sūra is not quite so early as the last (S. lxxvii) nor quite so late as S. lxxvi, but nearer in time to the later.

It sets forth Allah's loving care in a fine nature-passage, and deduces from it the Promise of the Future, when Evil will be destroyed and Good will come to its own; and invites all who have the will, to seek refuge with their Lord.

*An-Nabaa, or The (Great) News.*

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

1. Concerning what  
Are they disputing?
2. Concerning the Great News,<sup>5889</sup>
3. About which they  
Cannot agree.
4. Verily, they shall soon  
(Come to) know!
5. Verily, verily they shall  
Soon (come to) know!
6. Have We not made  
The earth as a wide<sup>5890</sup>  
Expanse,

## سُورَةُ النَّبَاِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿١﴾

عَنِ النَّبَاِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢﴾

الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٣﴾

كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾

ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥﴾

أَلَمْ يَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهْدًا ﴿٦﴾

5889. *Great News*: usually understood to mean the News or Message of the Resurrection or the Hereafter, about which there are various schools of thought among the Jews and Christians and other nations. There is practically nothing about the Resurrection in the Old Testament, and the Jewish sect of Sadducees even in the time of Christ denied the Resurrection altogether. The Pagan ideas of a future life—if any—varied from place to place and from time to time. Even in the early Christian Church, as we learn from Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, there were contentions in that little community (I. Corinthians, i. 11), and some definitely denied the resurrection of the dead (*ib.*, xv. 12).

*Great News* may also be translated *Great Message* or a *Message Supreme* as I have translated at xxxviii. 67. In that case it would refer to the Qur-ān, or the Message of Revelation, or the Message of the Holy Prophet, about which there was great contention in those days. As this Message also lays great stress on the Day of Judgment and the Resurrection, the practical result by either mode of interpretation amounts to the same.

5890. See n. 2038 to xvi. 15. Cf. also xiii. 3 and xv. 19. The spacious expanse of the earth may be compared to a carpet, to which the mountains act as pegs. The Signs of Allah are thus enumerated: the great panorama of outer nature (verses 6-7); the creation of Man in pairs, with the succession of rest and work fitting in with the succession of night and day (verses 8-11); the firmaments above, with their splendid lights (verses 12-13); and the clouds and rain and abundant harvests, which knit sky and earth and man together (verses 14-16). These point to Allah, and Allah's Message points to the Future Life.

7. And the mountains as pegs?

وَالْجِبَالِ أَوْتَادًا ﴿٧﴾

8. And (have We not) created  
You in pairs,

وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ﴿٨﴾

9. And made your sleep  
For rest,

وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا ﴿٩﴾

10. And made the night  
As a covering,<sup>5891</sup>

وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا ﴿١٠﴾

11. And made the day  
As a means of subsistence?<sup>5892</sup>

وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا ﴿١١﴾

12. And (have We not)  
Built over you  
The seven firmaments,<sup>5893</sup>

وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شَدَادًا ﴿١٢﴾

13. And placed (therein)  
A blazing lamp.<sup>5894</sup>

وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا ﴿١٣﴾

14. And do We not send down  
From the clouds water  
In abundance,<sup>5895</sup>

وَأَنزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا ﴿١٤﴾

5891. The darkness of the night is as a covering. Just as a covering protects us from exposure to cold or heat, so this covering gives us spiritual respite from the buffets of the material world, and from the tiring activities of our own inner exertions. The rest in sleep (in verse 9) is supplemented by the covering of the night with which we are provided by Allah.

5892. "Subsistence" in English only partly covers the idea of *ma'ash*, which includes every kind of life activity. The Day is specially illuminated, so runs the figure of speech, in order that these life-activities of all kinds may be fully exercised.

5893. See n. 5526 to lxv. 12 and n. 2876 to xxiii. 17, also xxxvii. 6 and notes there.

5894. That is, the sun. Cf. xxv. 61; xxxiii. 46 (where it is used metaphorically for the holy Prophet); and lxxi. 16.

5895. Note how the evidences of Allah and His beneficence are set out in four groups. (1) Look to external nature on the earth around you (verses 6-7); (2) your own nature, physical, mental and spiritual (verses 8-11); (3) the starry heavens, and the glory of the sun (verses 12-13); and (4) the interdependence of earth, air, and sky in the cycle of water, clouds, rain, corn and gardens, all serving in their several ways to further the whole plan of the World as it affects us. Can you not then believe that a Creator who does this will sort out Good and Evil on an appointed Day with real justice and power?

15. That We may produce  
Therewith grain and vegetables,
16. And gardens of luxurious growth?
17. Verily the Day  
Of Sorting Out<sup>5896</sup>  
Is a thing appointed,—
18. The Day that the Trumpet<sup>5897</sup>  
Shall be sounded, and ye  
Shall come forth in crowds;
19. And the heavens  
Shall be opened  
As if there were doors,<sup>5898</sup>
20. And the mountains  
Shall vanish, as if  
They were a mirage.
21. Truly Hell is  
As a place of ambush<sup>5899</sup>
22. For the transgressors  
A place of destination:
23. They will dwell therein  
For ages.

لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا ﴿١٥﴾

وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا ﴿١٦﴾

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا ﴿١٧﴾

يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَتَأْتُونَ أَفْوَاجًا ﴿١٨﴾

وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا ﴿١٩﴾

وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا ﴿٢٠﴾

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا ﴿٢١﴾

لِلطَّاعِينَ مَنَآبَا ﴿٢٢﴾

لِيَشِينَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا ﴿٢٣﴾

5896. Cf. xxxvii. 21, n. 4047, and xxxvi. 59, n. 4005 (end). The Day of Judgment is the Day of Sorting Out, as between Good and Evil.

5897. The angel charged with the sounding of the Trumpet is Isrâfîl. It will herald Judgment. Cf. i. 20; also xxxix. 68, and n. 4343; and lxix. 13, n. 5648.

5898. A sign that the present order of things will have ceased to exist, and a new world will have come into being. Such a figure applies to the heavens in this verse and to the earth in the next verse. The mystery of what is beyond the heavens will have vanished through the doors which will then be opened. The solid mountains, as we suppose them to be, will have vanished like an unsubstantial mirage.

5899. Hell, the embodiment of evil, is lying in wait like an ambush for every one. We should be on our guard. For the transgressors, those who have wilfully rebelled against Allah, it will be a definite destination, from which there is no return, except, it may be, after ages, i.e., unless Allah so wills: Cf. vi. 128, and n. 951.

24. Nothing cool shall they taste  
Therein, nor any drink,

لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا ﴿٢٤﴾

25. Save a boiling fluid  
And a fluid, dark, murky,  
Intensely cold,<sup>5900</sup>

إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا ﴿٢٥﴾

26. A fitting recompense  
(For them).<sup>5901</sup>

جَزَاءً وَفَاءً ﴿٢٦﴾

27. For that they used not  
To look for any account  
(For their deeds),<sup>5902</sup>

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا ﴿٢٧﴾

28. But they (impudently) treated  
Our Signs as false

وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا ﴿٢٨﴾

29. And all things have We  
Preserved on record.

وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ كِتَابًا ﴿٢٩﴾

30. "So taste ye (the fruits  
Of your deeds);  
For no increase<sup>5903</sup>  
Shall We grant you,  
Except in Chastisement.

فَذُوقُوا ظَنَنَّا أَنَّكُمْ لَا آعَادَابًا ﴿٣٠﴾

5900. Cf. x. 4, and n. 1390; also xxxviii. 57, and n. 4213.

5901. Their transgressions go on progressively as they refuse to repent and turn to Allah. The fire of misery begins to blaze forth more and more fiercely, and there is nothing to cool that blaze; their food and drink themselves are tainted with the disorder of contradictory elements,—boiling hot drink, with intensely cold, murky, and disgusting fluids. These are fitting punishments for their crimes, which are inconsistent with the pure and gentle mould in which Allah had originally cast their nature.

5902. It was not isolated acts, but a continued course of evil conduct; they repudiated the moral and spiritual responsibility for their lives; and they impudently called Truth itself by false names and disdained Allah's Signs, which were vouchsafed for their instruction. These are not mere impressions; these are hard facts "preserved on record", so that every deed can have its due weight in making up the account.

5903. Just as there is a progressive deterioration in the sinner's soul when he surrenders himself to evil, so there is a progressive increase in the Penalty which he suffers.

## SECTION 2.

31. Verily for the Righteous  
There will be  
An Achievement,<sup>5904</sup>

إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا ﴿٣١﴾

32. Gardens enclosed, and  
Grapevines;<sup>5905</sup>

حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا ﴿٣٢﴾

33. Maidens of Equal Age;<sup>5906</sup>

وَكَوَاعِبَ أَتْرَابًا ﴿٣٣﴾

34. And a Cup full  
(To the Brim).<sup>5907</sup>

وَأَسَاسٍ دِهَاقًا ﴿٣٤﴾

35. No Vanity shall they hear  
Therein, nor Untruth;<sup>5908</sup>

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا كِدًّا ﴿٣٥﴾

36. Recompense from thy Lord,  
A Gift, (amply) sufficient,<sup>5909</sup>

جَزَاءً مِنْ رَبِّكَ عَطَاءٌ حِسَابًا ﴿٣٦﴾

5904. This is true Salvation. It is not only safety and felicity, but the attainment of the final Goal, the supreme Achievement, the Fulfilment of the highest in human nature, the satisfaction of the true and pure desires of the heart,—seeing the “Face of Allah”. See n. 4733 to xliv. 57.

5905. The supreme Achievement, or the Fulfilment of the Heart's Desires, spoken of in the last verse, is now described in three illustrations (verses 32-34), as further explained by two negatives (verse 35). The first is the enclosed Fruit-Garden, represented by the Grape. The Garden in its many aspects is the most frequent expression adopted for Bliss. The most carefully-tended Garden is a Fruit-Garden, with walls all round to protect it, and the most characteristic fruit mentioned here is the luscious Grape.

5906. The second is maidens of Equal Age.

5907. The third, the Cup, takes us partly to the Grapes mentioned in verse 32 and partly to the Springs or Rivers mentioned with the Garden in so many places.

5908. The explanation of the three illustrations is made further clear by the two negatives. (1) There will be no talk of vanities, such as are usually associated on this earth with pleasant Gardens, Companions of equal age, or generous Cups flowing in Assemblies. (2) There will be no Untruth or Falsehood. Insincerity or Hollowness there. Everything will be on a plane of absolute Truth and Reality.

5909. The Recompense is not exactly a Reward in proportion to merit, but is rather a Gift or a Bounty from the Merciful,—a Gift most amply sufficient to satisfy all desire on that plane of purity. “A Gift (amply) sufficient” might almost be translated: a liberal and bountiful gift. Cf. the phrase, A ‘tā fa ahsaba=he gave generously, or bountifully.

37. (From) the Lord  
Of the heavens  
And the earth,  
And all between,—  
The Most Gracious:  
None shall have power  
To argue with Him.<sup>5910</sup>

رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمَنُ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ  
مِنَهُ خِطَابًا ﴿٣٧﴾

38. The Day that  
The Spirit<sup>5911</sup> and the angels  
Will stand forth in ranks,  
None shall speak  
Except any who is  
Permitted by The Most Gracious,  
And he will say  
What is right.<sup>5912</sup>

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ  
إِلَّا مَن أِذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا ﴿٣٨﴾

39. That is the True Day:<sup>5913</sup>  
Therefore, whoso will, let him  
Take a (straight) Return  
To his Lord!

ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَن شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَعَابًا ﴿٣٩﴾

5910. No one has the right or the power to argue with Allah about the Gifts which He may bestow on His devotees beyond their deserts, (verse 36 above) or about the Penalty which His justice may inflict for sin or wrong-doing. He is high above all Creation. But He is also Most Gracious. Therefore He may permit special Dignitaries, of honour in His eyes, to plead for sinners, but they will only plead in truth and righteousness: see verse 38 below.

5911. *The Spirit*: see n. 5677 to lxx. 4. Some Commentators understand by "the Spirit" the angel Gabriel as he is charged specially with bringing Messages to human prophets: see xxi. 193, n. 3224.

5912. See n. 5910 above. No one has the right to speak before the Judgment-Seat; but certain great Dignitaries may be given permission to plead for mercy for sinners, and they will only so plead if the mercy is not negatory of Allah's universal justice.

5913. Cf. lxx. 1 and n. 5635. Judgment is sure to come, and Truth will then be free from all veils. Why should not man, therefore, now in this life of probation, turn back to Allah, and understand and do His Will?

40. Verily, We have warned you  
Of a Chastisement near,—<sup>5914</sup>  
The Day when man will  
See (the Deeds) which  
His hands have sent forth,  
And the Unbeliever will say,  
“Woe unto me! Would that  
I were (mere) dust!”<sup>5915</sup>

إِنَّا أَنْذَرْنَكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ  
مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَلَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا ﴿٤٠﴾

5914. Is Judgment very near? Yes. There are three stages of Judgment. (1) Many of our sins and wrong-doings find their penalty in this very life. It may not be an open or striking event, but it corrodes the soul and conscience all the time. Let us therefore turn back to Allah in repentance and ask for forgiveness. (2) Where the Penalty is not actually perceived or is not visible in this life, Death is considered the Lesser Judgment for each individual soul: see n. 5822 to lxxv. 22. Death may come to anyone at any time, and we must all be ready for it. (3) Then there is the final Judgment, when the whole of the present order passes away, and there is a New World. Time as we know it will not exist. Fifty thousand years as we reckon now will be but as a Day: lxx. 4. According to those standards even this Final Judgment is quite near, and we must prepare for it. For it will be too late then for repentance.

5915. The Unbeliever, the Rejecter of Allah, will then find himself in a world of absolute Reality, in which there will be no place for him. He will neither live nor die: xx. 74. He will wish that he could be reduced to nothingness, but even that would not be possible.