

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT *At-Tāriq*, 86.

This Sūra also belongs to the early Makkan period, perhaps not far removed from the last Sūra.

Its subject-matter is the protection afforded to every soul. The physical nature of man may be insignificant, but the soul given to him by Allah must win a glorious Future in the end.

At-Tāriq, or The Night-Visitant.

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

1. By the Sky⁶⁰⁶⁷
And the Night-Visitant⁶⁰⁶⁸
(Therein);
2. And what will explain to thee
What the Night-Visitant is?—
3. (It is) the Star
Of piercing brightness;—
4. There is no soul but has
A protector over it.⁶⁰⁶⁹
5. Now let man but think
From what he is created!
6. He is created from
A drop emitted⁶⁰⁷⁰

سورة الطارق

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ ١

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ ٢

النَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ ٣

إِنْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ لَمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ ٤

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ ٥

خُلِقَ مِنْ سَائٍ دَافِقٍ ٦

6067. The appeal here is to single Sign, viz.: the Sky with its Night. Visitant; and the substantive proposition is in verse 4: "There is no soul but has a protector over it". In the last Sura we considered the persecution of Allah's votaries, and how Allah protects them. Here the same theme is presented in another aspect. In the darkest sky shines out most brilliantly the light of the most brilliant star. So in the night of spiritual darkness—whether through ignorance or distress—shines the glorious star of Allah's revelation. By the same token the man of Faith and Truth has nothing to fear. Allah will protect His own.

6068. This is explained in verse 3 below. The "Star of piercing brightness" is understood by some to be the Morning Star, by others to be the planet Saturn, by others again to be Sirius, or the Pleiads or shooting stars. I think it is best to take the "Star" in the collective or generic sense, for stars shine on every night in the year, and their piercing brightness is most noticeable on the darkest night.

6069. If man has a true spiritual understanding, he has nothing to be afraid of. He is protected by Allah in many ways that he does not even know. He may be an insignificant creature as a mere animal, but his soul raises him to a dignity above other creation. And all sorts of divine forces guard and protect him.

6070. See n. 5832. to lxxvi. 2. See also last note.

7. Proceeding from between
The backbone and the ribs:⁶⁰⁷¹

يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ ﴿٧﴾

8. Surely (Allah) is able
To bring him back
(To life)!⁶⁰⁷²

إِنَّهُ عَلَى رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ ﴿٨﴾

9. The Day that
(All) things secret
Will be tested,

يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ ﴿٩﴾

10. (Man) will have
No power,
And no helper.⁶⁰⁷³

فَأَلَّهُ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَلَا نَاصِرٍ ﴿١٠﴾

11. By the Firmament⁶⁰⁷⁴
Which giveth the returning rain,

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْارْجِ ﴿١١﴾

12. And by the Earth⁶⁰⁷⁵
Which opens out
(For the gushing of springs
Or the sprouting of vegetation),-

وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّلَٰجِ ﴿١٢﴾

6071. A man's seed is the quintessence of his body. It proceeds from his loins, i.e., from his back between the hip-bones and his ribs. His back-bone is the source and symbol of his strength and personality. In the spinal cord and in the brain is the directive energy of the central nervous system, and this directs all action, organic and psychic. The spinal cord is continuous with the Medulla Oblongata in the brain.

6072. The Creator who can mingle the forces of psychic and physical muscular action in the creation of man, as explained in the last note, can surely give a new life after physical death here, and restore man's personality in the new world that will open out in the Hereafter.

6073. In that new world, all our actions, motives, thoughts, and imaginings of this life, however secret, will be brought into the open, and tested by the standards of absolute Truth, and not by false standards of custom, prejudice, or partiality. In that severe test, any adventitious advantages of this life will have no strength or force whatever, and cannot help in any way.

6074. The Firmament above is always the same, and yet it performs its diurnal round, smoothly and punctually. So does Allah's Revelation show forth the Truth, which like a circle is ever true to its centre,—which is ever the same, though it revolves through the changing circumstances of our present life.

6075. The earth seems hard, but springs can gush forth and vegetables sprout through it and make it green and soft. So is Truth: hard perhaps to mortals, but through the fertilising agency of Revelation, it allows our inner personality to sprout and blossom forth.

13. Behold this is the Word
That distinguishes (Good
From Evil):⁶⁰⁷⁶

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ فَصْلٍ ﴿١٣﴾

14. It is not a thing
For amusement.

وَمَا هُوَ بِالْهَزْلِ ﴿١٤﴾

15. As for them,⁶⁰⁷⁷ they
Are but plotting a scheme,

إِنَّهُمْ يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا ﴿١٥﴾

16. And I am planning
A scheme.⁶⁰⁷⁸

وَأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا ﴿١٦﴾

17. Therefore grant a delay
To the unbelievers:
Give respite to them
Gently (for awhile).⁶⁰⁷⁹

فَهَلْ أَكْتَفِرِينَ أَتْمَلَهُمْ رُؤُوفًا ﴿١٧﴾

6076. See the last two notes. Revelation—Allah's Truth—can pierce through the hardest crusts, and ever lead us back to the centre and goal of our life: for it separates Good from Evil definitely. It is not mere play or amusement, any more than the Sky or the Earth is. It helps us in the highest issues of our life.

6077. Though Allah in His Mercy has provided a piercing light to penetrate our spiritual darkness, and made our beings responsive to the growth of spiritual understanding, just as the hard earth is responsive to the sprouting of a seed or the gushing of a stream, yet there are evil, unregenerate men who plot and scheme against the beneficent purpose of Allah. But their plots will be of no avail, and Allah's Purpose will prevail. It happened so with the Quraish who wanted to thwart the growth of Islam. It will be so in all ages.

6078. Cf. iii. 54.

6079. Gentle forbearance with Evil shows our trust in Allah and Allah's Plan: for it can never be frustrated. This does not mean that we should assist or compromise with evil, or fail to put it down where we have the power. It means patience and humility where we have no visible power to prevent Evil.