INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT Al-Mursalāt, 77.

This Sūra belongs to the early Makkan period, somewhere near to S. lxxv. (Al-Qiyāmat). The theme is somewhat similar. It denounces the horrors of the Hereafter, for those who rejected Truth. The refrain, “Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth!” which occurs ten times in its fifty verses, or, on an average, once in every five verses, indicates the leitmotif.
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. By the (Winds) Sent Forth
   One after another
   (To man's profit);

2. Which then blow violently
   In tempestuous Gusts,

3. And scatter (things)
   Far and wide;

4. Then separate them,
   One from another,

5863. This Sûra begins with an appeal to five things, as pointing to the substantive statement in verse 7, that the Day of Justice and Judgment is bound to come, and we must prepare for it. It is difficult to translate, but easy to understand, if we remember that a triple thread of allegory runs through this passage (verses 1-7). The five things or phases, which will be presently considered in detail, refer to (a) Winds in the physical world, (b) Angels in the Kingdom of Allah, and (c) Prophets in the human world, connecting it with the Kingdom of Allah.

5864. Understanding the reference to Winds, we can see that they are powerful factors in the government of the physical world. (1) They come gently as harbingers of the blessings of rain and fertility (xv. 22; xxx. 48); but (2) they can come as violent tornadoes, uprooting and destroying (li. 41-42); (3) they can scatter seeds far and wide, and (4) they can separate chaff from grain, or clear the air from epidemics; and (5) they literally carry sound, and therefore Messages. All these things point to the power and goodness of Allah, and we are asked to believe that His promise of Mercy and Justice in the Hereafter is indeed true.

Cf. this passage with li. 1-6 (Zāriyāt) with which it has many affinities.

5865. If we understand the reference to be, not to Winds, but to Angels, they are agencies in the Kingdom of Allah, which carry out similar functions, changing and revolutionising the face of the world. (1) They come softly, on beneficent errands of Mercy; (2) they are charged with the mission of punishment and destruction for sin as in the case of the two angels who came to Lût (xv. 57-66); (3) they distribute Allah's Mercies as the Winds distribute good seeds; (4) they sort out the good from the evil among men; and (5) they are the agency through which Allah's Messages and Revelations are conveyed to the Prophets (see No. 5 in the last note).
5. Then spread abroad
   A Reminder, 5866

6. Whether of Justification
   Or of Warning;-

7. Assuredly, what ye are
   Promised must come to pass.

8. Then when the stars
   Become dim; 5867

9. When the heaven
   Is cleft asunder;

10. When the mountains are
    Scattered (to the winds) as dust;

11. And when the messengers
    Are (all) appointed a time
    (To collect);— 5868

5866. If we understand the reference to Prophets or Messengers of Allah, or the
verses of Revelation which would be particularly appropriate for verses 5-6, we also get
a satisfactory solution of the Allegory. (1) The Prophets have followed one another in
a series: the verses of the Qur-an came, one after another as needed; in both cases it
was for man's spiritual profit; (2) they caused great disturbance in a spiritual decadent
world; they pulled down evil institutions root and branch, and substituted new ones; (3)
they proclaimed their truths far and wide, without fear and without favour; (4) through
them were sorted out men of Faith and rebels against Allah's Law; and (5) they gave
a Message, through which just men were justified through repentance, and evil men were
warned of their sins.

Some Commentators take one or other of these allegories, and some apply one
allegory to a few of these verses, and another to another few. In my opinion the Allegory
is wide enough to comprehend all the meanings which I have sketched. I wish a
translation could do justice to those marvellously terse sentences in the original.

5867. The lustre of the stars will become dim; in fact they will disappear: cf. lxxxi.
2, and lxxxi. 2. The heaven's canopy will be torn asunder: cf. lxxii. 1, and lxxii. 18.
The mountains will be uprooted and fly about like dust: cf. lxix. 14; lxxi. 3; etc. All
the old landmarks of the physical world as we know it will be swept away.

5868. The Resurrection will be established. In the world which will then have passed
away, inspired Prophets had been sent in succession at different times to all nations. Now
they will be gathered together in one place before the Judgment-seat to bear witness as
to the righteous or the evil ones within their respective spheres of work. Cf. xxxix. 69.
12. For what Day are these (Portents) deferred?

13. For the Day of Sorting out. \(^{5869}\)

14. And what will explain To thee what is The Day of Sorting out?

15. Ah woe, that Day, To the Rejecters of Truth!

16. Did We not destroy The men of old \(^{5870}\) (For their evil)?

17. So shall We make Later (generations) Follow them.

18. Thus do We deal With men of sin.

19. Ah woe, that Day, To the Rejecters of Truth!

20. Have We not created You from a fluid (Held) despicable? \(^{5871}\)

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5869. Cf. xxxvii. 21 and n. 4047; also xliv. 40, and n. 4718. That will be the Day of Judgment or Day of Decision. Good will then be completely separated from Evil. And the men who rejected Truth and flourished on Falsehood will find that in the world of Realities they will be absolutely nowhere. Hence the refrain of this Sūra. “Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Truth!” it sounds like a dirge on Sin.

5870. Allah’s Law is always the same. Sin or corruption prepares its own destruction. It was so with the generation of Noah. In Arab tradition it was so with the ‘Ād and the Thamūd. In our own day we see relics of prehistoric civilisations, in Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, and the Ægean: these were men of wonderful skill and resource, but they went under. If our generations, which pride themselves on their science and skill, desert Allah’s Law, they will be certain to meet the same fate.

5871. Cf. xxxii. 8, n. 3638. Man is ashamed of the process of physical creation, by which he comes into being. Yet he is arrogant in life and neglectful of the Future.
21. The which We placed
   In a place of rest,
   Firmly fixed, 5872

22. For a period (of gestation),
    Determined? 5873

23. For We do determine
    For We 5874
    Are the Best to determine (things).

24. Ah woe, that Day!
    To the Rejecters of Truth!

25. Have We not made
    The earth (as a place)
    To draw together

26. The living and the dead, 5875

27. And made therein
    Mountains standing firm, 5876

5872. See n. 2873 to xxiii. 13. The silent growth in the mother's womb, and the protection and sustenance which the growing life receives from the life of the mother, are themselves wonders of creation.

5873. The period roughly of nine months and ten days is subject to many adjustments. In fact throughout our pre-natal as well as post-natal life there are wonderful and nicely-balanced adjustments of which we are ourselves unconscious. Should we not turn in love and gratitude to Allah our Creator?

5874. Perhaps the life in the womb, in relation to the life after birth, is an allegory for our probationary life on earth in relation to the eternal Life to come. Perhaps, also, our state when we are buried in the tomb suggests an allegory to the life in the womb, in relation to the life in the Hereafter.

5875. What a wonderful parable! The earth is a place where death and life, decay and growth and decay, green grass, stubble, and fuel, corruption and purification jostle together,—one often leading to the other. The drama which we see with our own eyes in this world should enable us to appreciate the wonders in the Kingdom of Allah where the despised and rejected receive the highest honour, Lazarus rests in Abraham's bosom, and the Pharaoh is led in chains for his arrogance and his sin.

5876. See n. 2038 to xvi. 15. The solid mountains are frequently referred to: cf. xiii. 3. The parable here is that the mountains are hard, solid rock, and yet they act as sponges to collect, store up, and filter sweet and wholesome water, which on account of their altitude they are able to distribute by gravity to the lower, dry land by means of rivers —
Lofty (in stature);
And provided for you
Water sweet (and wholesome)?

28. Ah woe, that Day,
To the Rejecters of Truth!

29. (It will be said:)
"Depart ye to that
Which ye used to reject
As false!

30. "Depart ye to a Shadow (Of smoke ascending)
In three columns,

31. "(Which yields) no shade
Of coolness, and is
Of no use against
The fierce Blaze.

32. "Indeed it throws about
Sparks (huge) as Forts,

33. "As if there were
(A string of) yellow camels
(Marching swiftly)."

= or springs. Any one who has seen the parched Makkah valleys and the delicious springs in the mountains around, or the Zubaida Canal, which used to be the main source of Makkah’s water-supply, will appreciate the aptness of the metaphor, but it applies to any country, though not to so striking a degree. If the wisdom and power of Allah can do such things before your eyes, how can you reject His teaching of a still more wonderful future Life?

5877. The Sinners, instead of reposing in cool shades, will only see the blazing Fire. The only shadow they will see will be that of Smoke, ascending in three columns, right, left, and above, i.e., completely enveloping them. But it will give no comfort or coolness. On the contrary, it will contain huge sparks.

5878. Qasr: Fort, big building, palace. An alternative reading is Qasar, plural of Qasarat (-un), meaning bundles of wood used for fuel: Ibn ‘Abbás apud Bukhārī. I almost prefer this latter reading.

5879. The yellow sparks flying swiftly one after another suggest a string of camels marching swiftly, such as the Arabs of Nejd and central Arabia are so proud of. There is a double allegory. It refers not only to the colour and the rapid succession of sparks, =
34. Ah woe, that Day,  
To the Rejecters of Truth!

35. That will be a Day  
When they shall not  
Be able to speak. 5880

36. Nor will it be  
Open to them  
To put forth pleas.

37. Ah woe, that Day,  
To the Rejecters of Truth!

38. That will be a Day  
Of Sorting out! We shall  
Gather you together  
And those before (you)! 5881

39. Now, if ye have  
A trick (or plot),  
Use it against Me! 5882

40. Ah woe, that Day,  
To the Rejecters of Truth!

= but to the vanity of worldly pride, as much as to say: “your fine yellow camels in which you took such pride in the world are but sparks that fly away and even sting you in the Hereafter!” Smoke with sparks may also assume fantastic shapes like long-necked camels.

5880. They will be dumbfounded; i.e., (when read with the next verse), they will not be in a position to put forward any valid defence or plea. Facts will speak too plainly against them. They might perversely try to deny false worship: vi. 23: but their own tongues and limbs will bear witness against them: xxiv. 24. Nor does the fighting out or settling of doctrinal disputes in the Hereafter (xxxix. 31) amount to putting forward pleas in defence.

5881. We may suppose this as spoken primarily to the Quraish who were plotting against the Prophet. You may use all your wisdom and that of your ancestors, but you will not be able to defeat Allah or His Plan. See next verse.

5882. The plots against the holy Prophet were plots against Allah’s Truth, and therefore against Allah. Can any one hope to profit by such plots? Can any one defeat Allah’s Plan and Purpose? Let them try. They will only ruin themselves, as the Pagan leaders did. There can only be pity for such men. What will be their state in the Hereafter? “Ah woe, that Day, to the Rejecters of Allah’s Truth!”
41. As to the Righteous,
They shall be amidst
(Cool) shades and springs
(Of water).\textsuperscript{5883}

42. And (they shall have)
Fruits, all they desire.\textsuperscript{5884}

43. “Eat ye and drink ye
To your heart’s content:
For that ye worked
(Righteousness).\textsuperscript{5885}

44. Thus do We certainly
Reward the Doers of Good.

45. Ah woe, that Day,
To the Rejecters of Truth!

46. (O ye Unjust!)
Eat ye and enjoy yourselves
(But) a little while,\textsuperscript{5886}
For that ye are Sinners.

47. Ah woe, that Day,
To the Rejecters of Truth!

\textsuperscript{5883} This is in contrast to the triple shade of smoke and sin for the sinners, which
neither gives them coolness nor protects them from the Blazing Fire. The Shade, \textit{i.e.}
Covering, of Allah’s Good Pleasure, will be the greatest Boon of all, and the Spring of
Allah’s Love will be inexhaustible.

\textsuperscript{5884} Fruits: see n. 4671 to xliii. 73.

\textsuperscript{5885} The fruits of righteousness are contentment in this life and the supreme Bliss
in the next.

\textsuperscript{5886} “Eat” is symbolical of having the good things of life in this world. It may be
that they are only given for a trial. Because their minds and wishes run to wrong things,
the opportunities for wrong are multiplied, as the impetus for good or for evil increases
progressively. They are asked to believe and repent. But if they do not, they are to be
pitied, even for the good things of this life, for they will come to an evil End in the
Hereafter.
48. And when it is said
   To them, “Prostrate yourselves!”
   They do not so. 5887

49. Ah woe, that Day,
   To the Rejecters of Truth!

50. Then what Message,
   After that, 5888
   Will they believe in?

5887. Prostration is a symbol of humility and a desire to get nearer to Allah by Prayer and a good life. Those who refuse to adopt this Path are to be pitied: how will they fare at Judgment?

5888. “That” may refer to verse 48: they were given plain and clear Guidance, and they refused to accept it: after that what kind of Message will they accept? The Guidance referred to is obviously that of Islam or the Qur-an.