INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SÛRAT ÂT-ŢÂRIQ, 86.

This Sûra also belongs to the early Makkah period, perhaps not far removed from the last Sûra.

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 Sky  
   And the Night-Visitant (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.  

5. Now let man but think  
   From what he is created!

6. He is created from  
   A drop emitted–

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 lxvi. 2. See also last note.
7. Proceeding from between
   The backbone and the ribs: 6071

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

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

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

11. By the Firmament 6074
    Which giveth the returning rain,

12. And by the Earth
    Which opens out 6075
    (For the gushing of springs
    Or the sprouting of vegetation),

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).  

14. It is not a thing
For amusement.

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

16. And I am planning
A scheme.

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

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 benificent 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.