

Eschatology

The standard picture of Qur'ānic eschatology is in terms of the joys of the Garden and the punishments of Hell. The Qur'ān does frequently talk about these, as about reward and punishment in general, including "God's pleasure and anger"—something which we shall have to elaborate in detail. But the basic idea underlying the Qur'ān's teaching on the hereafter is that there will come a moment, "The Hour [*al-sā'a*]" when every human will be shaken into a unique and unprecedented self-awareness of his deeds: he will squarely and starkly face his own doings, not-doings, and misdoings and accept the judgment upon them as a "necessary" sequel (necessary within quotes because God's *mercy* is unlimited). That man is generally so absorbed in his immediate concerns, particularly selfish, narrow, and material concerns, that he does not heed the "ends" of life [*al-ākhirā*] and constantly violates moral law, we have had occasion to point out. We stressed in Chapter III that for the Qur'ān the goal of man-in-society is to build an ethically-based order on the earth but that cultivation of *taqwā* or a true sense of responsibility is absolutely necessary for man-as-individual if such an order is to be built. The Qur'ān repeatedly complains that man has not yet come up to this task.

Al-ākhirā, the "end," is the moment of truth: "When the great cataclysm comes, that day man will recall what he had been striving for" (79:34-35) is a typical statement of this phenomenon. It is an Hour when all veils between the mental preoccupations of man and the objective moral reality will be rent: "You were in deep heedlessness about this [Hour of self-awareness], but now We have rent your veil, so your sight today is keen!" (50:22). Every person will find there his deepest self, fully excavated from the debris of extrinsic and immediate concerns wherein the means is substituted for ends and even

pseudo-means for real means, where falsehood is not only substituted for truth but really *becomes* truth, and even more attractive and beautiful than truth. Man's conscience itself becomes so perverted that, through long habituation with particularized interests and persistent worship of false gods, the holy seems unholy, and vice versa. This is what the Qur'ān terms *ghurūr*, multi-layered self-deception. If man is to be freed from this grave-within-a-grave structure, nothing short of a cataclysm, a complete turning inside-out of the moral personality, is needed. Here are certain utterances of the Qur'ān about this event from the early Meccan years of the Revelation:

When the sun shall be darkened and the stars fall; and when mountains move, and when she-camels with mature fetuses [the most precious possessions of a Bedouin] are abandoned; and when the wild beasts are herded together; and when the seas boil; and when kindred spirits are united; and when the infant-girl buried alive [as was the practice with some pre-Islamic Arabs] shall be asked for what sin she was slain; and when the deed-sheets are unrolled [before people] and when the sky is skinned off; and when Hell is ignited and when the Garden is brought near—then every soul shall know what it had prepared [for the morrow]. (81:1-14)

This is a typical representation of the grinding pains of that hour. Although, as we shall see below, this judgment will involve communities and their prophets, the judgment itself will be primarily upon individuals. Each individual will be alone that day, without relatives, friends, clans, tribes, or nations, to support them: "We shall inherit from him [man] whatever he says and he shall come to Us alone" (19:80). Whereas a person's wealth and possessions may go to his children or other inheritors, the moral quality of his sayings and deeds is "inherited" or passed on to God and remains with Him until He produces it on the Day of Judgment before the performer himself. On that day, God shall say, "You have, indeed, come to Us [today] alone—as alone as We had created you in the first place" (6:94; cf. also 19:95). This state of not just loneliness but forlornness from all that was worldly association is depicted with hair-raising effect: "[It will be] the day when a man shall flee from his brother, his mother and father, his wife and children—for every man on that day, shall have a preoccupation that will release him from all these" (81:34-37; cf. 70:10-14, which repudiates tribal, i.e., national, ties as well).

On that day, one would wish if one could to buy release with an "earthful of gold," but such offers will be rejected (3:91; also 5:36; 10:54; 13:18; 39:47; 57:15; 70:11). As we have elaborated, the Qur'ān both rejects the idea of an intercession and allows nothing else to help a person in that state of helplessness except God's own mercy, which, the Qur'ān repeats, is absolutely unlimited. But, although the Qur'ān, particularly in the early and middle Meccan periods, persistently details the horrors of the Judgment Day for evildoers, the real punishment will undoubtedly be the irremediable pain suffered by those who have perpetrated evil in this life when they realize that there is no "going back" and that they have lost the only opportunity in the life of this world to do good. They will be the real losers (10:45; 22:11; 40:78; 7:9, 53; 8:37; 9:69, etc.): the standard Qur'ānic terms for the ultimate sequel, as we underlined in Chapter II, are not salvation and damnation so much as success (*falāh*) and loss (*khusrān*), both for this life and the hereafter.

This is why the Qur'ān continues to exhort people "to send something for the morrow" (59:18), for whatever accrues to a person is the consequence of previous deeds; it frequently says that whenever an evil strikes someone for what his "hands have prepared for what is ahead," frustration seizes him (see for example, 2:95; 3:182; 4:92; 5:80; 8:51; 18:57; 22:10; 28:47; in connection exclusively with the hereafter: 2:95; 62:7; 78:40; 82:5). Indeed, the essence of the "hereafter" consists in the "ends" of life (*al-ākhirā*) or the long-range results of man's endeavors on earth.

"*Al-dunyā*" (the immediate objectives, the "here-and-now" of life), on the contrary, is not "this world" but the lower values, the basal pursuits which appear so immediately tempting that most men run after them most of the time, at the expense of the higher and long-range ends. In Chapter II, we quoted 13:17 to the effect that in a torrent of water rushing down the hills, a higher layer of foam is formed, but when waters pass through the plains, the thick foam disappears without a trace, while that which benefits mankind in a lasting way, i.e., the alluvial earth, stays in the ground. The show of this foam is the "*dunyā*," the lasting alluvium is the "*ākhirā*." (We also quoted there the verse that criticizes the Meccan merchants' skill at "making money" to the neglect of the higher values of life—the ends of life: "They know well the externalities of this life but are heedless of the higher ends" (30:7).

It is because of *al-ākhirā* or the end-values that the "weighing" of men's acts takes on its crucial significance. There is here, of course, sarcasm against the Meccan merchants—in the hereafter, *deeds* shall be weighed, not gold and silver and other trade commodities. Later, the Mu'tazilite theologians took this weighing of deeds too literally and developed a strict *quid pro quo* doctrine; they got themselves into the intractable difficulties connected with any theory of strict retribution. Instead of accepting God's infinite mercy as real and as seriously modifying their *quid pro quo* theory of retribution, they did grave violence to religion in trying to get around it and explain it away. There is no doubt that the Qur'ān speaks of a palpable weighing or scaling, of spreading out people's deed-sheets before them (as is apparent from the following quotations), but there is also no doubt that this is a holistic idea, not a strict *quid pro quo*. There are references galore to weighing of deeds; the following will serve as sufficient illustrations: "So for him whose scale [of good acts] shall be weighty, he shall lead a happy life; but he whose scale is light, his mother shall be the Ditch" (101:6-9). Good people will be given their deed-sheets in their right hands, while the evil will receive theirs in the left hand:

As for him who is given his book in his right hand, he shall say, Come! read my book! I knew that I was going to face my accounting. He shall be in a happy life, in an exalted Garden whose fruit-bunches are nigh [to be plucked]. [It shall be said to them:] Eat and drink to your satisfaction in consideration of what you had left in previous days. But as for him who shall be given his book in his left hand, he shall say, I wish I had not been given this book of mine and I did not know what my account was. I wish death would overtake me. My wealth has not availed me, and my authority [which I used to exercise in life] has perished. (69:19-29; see also 56:27-44; 17:71 ff.; 74:39)

The deed-records, which will speak (23:62; 45:29) and which people will not be able to deny, will be sufficient evidence for and against the doers. More: People's minds will become public so that they will not be able to hide their thoughts, even as graves will empty out their contents (100:9-10). Even one's bodily organs will speak out:

And the day when the foes of God shall be gathered towards the Fire and they shall be driven on—until when they approach it, their own ears and eyes and skins will give evidence against them of what they

knew. They shall say to their skins, Why have you testified against us? and the latter shall reply, God Who makes everything speak has also caused us to speak . . . you did not hide yourselves thinking that your ears and your eyes and your skins will not testify against you; on the contrary, you thought that God does not know much of what you do. This miscalculation of yours about your Lord has led you to perdition and you have ended up as losers. Should they resign themselves to the Fire, Fire is, indeed, their abode; but should they ask for forgiveness, they are not proper objects of forgiveness. (41:19-24)

There is, indeed, no refuge from a situation where one's mind becomes transparently public and where one's own physical organs begin to bear witness against one! But, then, this is exactly the state of mind which the Qur'ān wants men to achieve amidst the conduct of *this life*. This is what *taqwā* is, a coalescence of the public and the private life. And this is what the Prophet showed by his own example—while he lived his life in Madina, the closest possible community life, among his companions—and yet he had nothing whatever to hide from others. It is such transparency of the heart that the Qur'ān wants man to achieve, if he is to achieve success and is not to burn in Hell.

Further: There will be a great deal more questioning and answering on that day. The guards of the Fire shall ask its prospective inmates why they were there and whether Messengers had not come to them to warn them against the impending doom:

And those who disbelieve shall be driven in troops to Hell. When they arrive there and its gates are opened, its guards will say to them: Did no Messengers from among yourselves ever come to you reciting to you the verses of your Lord and warning you of this day of yours? They shall reply, Of course, but the judgment of punishment was already ripe upon the disbelievers. It shall be said [to them:] Enter the gates of Hell abiding therein—what an evil abode for the wilful [and the haughty]. Those who had developed *taqwā* towards their Lord shall be carried forward to the Garden in troops. When they arrive there and its gates are opened, its guards shall say, Peace upon you, be you happy, enter it abiding therein. They shall reply, All praise to God Who has kept His promise with us and has given us the earth as inheritance; we will make our abode in its Garden wherever we will—what an excellent reward for those who do good! (39:71-74)

The latter part of this passage is remarkable, i.e., "God . . . has given us the earth as inheritance; we will make our abode in its Garden wherever we will." Although usually Qur'ānic descriptions of

the Last Day speak of a general and complete upset of the present cosmos, a dislocation of the earth and the heavens, a complete shaking of the earth—indeed, of "the earth being in His hand-grip on the Day of Resurrection and the heavens being wrapped up in His right hand" (39:67) and "mankind being like scattered locusts and mountains like carded wool"—all these descriptions really intend to portray the absolute power of God. Those who think that the earth and the heavens—the cosmos—is a self-created, unauthored, and ultimate being must understand that it is the all-powerful, mighty, and absolute God Who has brought forth the cosmos out of His sheer mercy; nothing can therefore get outside His control and governance. The Qur'ān talks not of the *destruction* of the universe but of its transformation and rearrangement with a view to creating new forms of life and new levels of being. When it says, "Everything is destructible except His person" (28:88) or "Whosoever is on the earth shall perish and His person alone—the majestic and the noble—shall remain forever" (55:26-27), this, first, speaks not of the universe as a whole but of its contents and, secondly, depicts the absolute and eternal majesty of God.

Certainly, from the verses we are commenting upon, it is quite clear that *this earth* will be transformed into a Garden which will be enjoyed by its "inheritors." That the Qur'ān is speaking not of total destruction of the earth but of its transformation (except insofar as every re-creation or transformation requires a certain destruction), is also clear from such verses as: "The day when the earth shall be transmuted into something else and the heavens as well [i.e., their nature will become different from what it is now]." (14:48) The Qur'ān also repeatedly speaks of a new form or level of creation: "We have appointed for you the death and none may excel Us in that We shall transmute [*nubaddilu*] your models [*amthālakum*] and re-create you in [forms] you do not know. You already know the present [form of] your creation, so why do you not take a lesson [from this]?" (56:60-62); "God will then create the next creation" (29:20; cf. 53:47); "Strange indeed is their statement, Shall we be in a new creation after having turned to dust?" (13:5; 32:10; 34:7); "If He wills, He can destroy you [all] and bring out a new creation" (14:19; 35:16); "Have We become fatigued by the first creation that they are in doubt about a new creation?" (50:15, and all those verses that speak about the first creation and re-creation, *nabda' al-khalqa thumma nu'iduhū*).

Similarly, the females (the houris!) and the males of the next world

will be created anew (56:35). Further, about Hell it is said, "It is God's Fire that is blazing and that lights upon the hearts [of men] in lofty columns" (104:6-9). In a passage that speaks of successive peoples and communities entering Hell (the later ones having been misled by the evil legacies of the earlier ones and thus encumbered by them), the Qur'ān makes it clear that the effect of punishment in Hell depends upon the sensitivity of the guilty and hence involves a conscience. The punishment is thus basically moral or spiritual:

God shall say [to the polytheists:] Enter among the communities that had preceded you, of jinn and humans and into Hell. Every time a new community will thus enter, it shall curse its [preceding] sister, until when all are down in the depths [of Fire], the later ones shall say about the earlier ones, O God! It is these that led us astray, so give them double punishment. Whereupon God will reply, All [of you] are getting double [punishment], but you do not realize it" (7:38).

But the happiness and the torture of the hereafter is certainly not just spiritual. The Qur'ān, unlike Muslim philosophers, does not recognize a hereafter that will be peopled by disembodied souls—in fact, it does not recognize the dualism of the soul and the body and man, for it is a unitary, living, and fully functioning organism. The term *nafs*, which later in Islamic philosophy and Sufism came to mean soul as a *substance* separate from the body, in the Qur'ān means mostly "himself" or "herself" and, in the plural, "themselves"; while in some contexts it means the "person" or the "inner person," i.e., the living reality of man—but not separate from or exclusive of the body. In fact, it is body with a certain life-and-intelligence center that constitutes the inner identity or personality of man.

The Qur'ān, therefore, does not affirm any purely "spiritual" heaven or hell, and the subject of happiness and torture is, therefore, man as a person. When the Qur'ān speaks—so repeatedly, so richly, and so vividly—of physical happiness and physical hell, it is not speaking in pure metaphor, as Muslim philosophers and other allegorists would have it, although, of course, the Qur'ān is trying to describe the happiness and punishments as effects, i.e., in terms of the *feeling* of physical and spiritual pleasure and pain. The vivid portrayals of a blazing hell and a garden are meant to convey these effects as real spiritual-physical feelings, apart from the present psychological effects of these descriptions. There are thus literal

psycho-physical effects of the Fire, without there being a literal fire.

While physical punishment and happiness are literal, not metaphorical, however, the Qur'ān makes it clear that it is their spiritual aspect that is supreme. Thus, we are told, "God has promised believing men and women Gardens, underneath which rivers flow, wherein they shall abide, and pleasant abodes in the Gardens of Eden—but the pleasure of God with them is greater and that is the great success" (9:72). While believers and the virtuous have their greatest reward in the pleasure (*ridwān*) of God, unbelievers and evil persons will earn His displeasure and alienation (*sakht*) as their greatest punishment: "Is the one who goes after the pleasure of God like the one who earns His displeasure and whose abode is Hell?" (3:162; cf. 5:80; 47:28; also see verses under *ghadab*, "anger of God," and further verses under *ridwān*, though these do not refer entirely to the hereafter but also to this world). On the Day of Judgment, "God will not so much as talk to or even look at" those who sell God's covenant and their solemn oaths (certain Jews are meant here) for a paltry sum of money (3:77). The faces of the believers on that day will be "fresh with joy and will be looking at their lord" (75:22, a verse from which arose the notorious and foolish controversy in medieval Islam (it lasted for a millenium) as to whether or not God will be literally physically visible to believers in the hereafter; also 76:11; 80:39; 83:24; 10:26), while the faces of disbelievers "will be covered in dust, subdued in darkness" (80:40-41; 10:27; 68:43; 70:44).

To return to the questioning and answering of that day, the people of the Garden, those of the Fire, and those dwelling in "the Ramparts" who are neither in Hell nor yet in the Gardens shall all exchange views and review their past performance:

The people of the Garden shall call unto the people of the Fire: We have found what our Lord had promised us to be true; have you found what your Lord had promised you to be true? They will reply, Yes. Then a crier shall cry between them that God's curse be upon the unjust ones who block the cause of God and would have it crooked and deny the Last Day. [Then] a curtain shall fall between the two.

And upon the Rampart [between the two] will be men who will recognize everyone by facial expression [i.e., whether they are people of the Garden or the Fire]; they shall call unto the people of the Garden, Peace unto you—They would [also] like to enter it [the Garden], but will not be able to. But when their eyes turn towards the people of the Fire, they shall say: O our Lord! Do not put us with the

unjust ones. And the people of the rampart shall call unto some men whom they shall recognize by their facial expression saying, "The wealth collected by you and your pride has been of no avail to you. Are these [people now in the Garden but who had been poor] the ones about whom you used to swear that God will not bestow [His] mercy upon them [but to whom it has now been said]: Enter the Garden, you have nothing to fear, nor shall you come to grief?"

And the people of the Fire shall say to the people of the Garden, Pour some water upon us or something of what God has provided you with, and they shall reply, God has prohibited these things to disbelievers. (7:44-50)

Every community shall be judged by the standards set for them by their prophet and in accordance with the teachings of their respective Revelations—although according to the Qur'ān while they are essentially identical since their source is identical, yet, a community from the ancient past cannot be judged by the standards set for new communities: "How about when We bring out a witness from every community and We call you [O Muhammad!] to give witness upon these people?" (4:41); "We shall pull out a witness from every community and We shall say, Bring your proof [i.e., for your misdeeds, particularly for polytheism which you practiced]" (28:75). The prophets themselves will also be questioned as to whether they gave the Message truly to their people and particularly whether what the latter believed and practiced after these prophets were gone was in accordance with their proclaimed Messages: "We shall surely ask the people to whom missions [of the prophets] were sent and We shall equally surely ask the prophets themselves. And then We shall certainly relate to them [their deeds] on the basis of knowledge [so ascertained, i.e., for the sake of those upon whom judgment is to be passed]" (7:6-7). Jesus will be asked on the Day of Judgment whether he had taught Trinitarianism to his followers, and he shall reply, "Glory be to You! I could not say something that was not for me to say. If I did say it You know it already" (5:116); generally, about all prophets: "The day when God shall gather all the prophets and say, How were you responded to?, they shall reply, We have no knowledge [of this], You are the One who knows the unseen things" (5:109). The last two verses both belong to the last phase of the Prophet's life—as does sura 5 generally—and, therefore, must be considered as a warning not only to Christians and other communities but equally, though somewhat indirectly, to the Muslim community itself. Already

in Mecca, the Qur'ān had declared, "And the Messenger [Muhammad] shall say, O my Lord! my very people abandoned this Qur'ān" (25:30).

Finally, the Qur'ān speaks persistently about a bitter questioning and answering between the socially weak and the rich; the weaker shall accuse the rich and influential of their society of having led them astray by undue influence and threats: those condemned in the Fire shall say to their comrades when a new group of the condemned enter:

This is a horde pressing upon you; be they unwelcome! [but] they are going to burn in the Fire.' [The new entrants] will reply saying, No! Let *you* be unwelcome, it is you who have prepared this [punishment] for us [due to your evil influence]—how evil an abode it is! And they shall add, O our Lord! give these a double punishment in the Fire who have prepared this for us. And they shall [also] say, How is it that we do not see here those whom we used to count as mischiefmakers [the believers, who are, of course, in the Garden]. Did we take them [mistakenly] as a laughingstock or have our eyes missed them [now]? It is, indeed, true—the people of Fire *shall* accuse each other. (38:59-64)

The weak ones will say to those who were big, But for you, we would have been believers. The big ones will reply to the weak ones, Did *we* prevent you from the guidance after it had come to you or were you yourselves guilty? The weak ones shall then say to the big ones, Of course, it was your scheming of day and night, when you pressured us that we disbelieve in God and that we acknowledge other peers unto Him. And they shall [all] be inwardly filled with, but shall try to hide, their remorse when they behold the punishment. (34:32-34; see also 14:21; 40:47; 50:23 ff., where God will say to these disputants, Do not dispute before Me, for I had already sent you the Warning. My words cannot change and I am no tyrant over my servants. 50:28-29).

Resurrection or the final accounting was an idea which the secular Meccan pagans found very hard to accept. In fact, besides the doctrines of monotheism (and the consequent removal of their gods) and of Revelation itself (for they persistently called the Qur'ān a *sihr*, a piece of sorcery, or the result of the Prophet's mental disturbance, etc.), this doctrine was the most difficult for them to accept. It is quite likely that the "changes" they demanded from the Prophet in the Qur'ān included, besides recognition in the new system of their "gods" as intermediaries between man and God, elimination of the Last Day, and particularly of physical resurrection. They said they and

their fathers had heard of resurrection before (no doubt, from Jews and Christians) but that this idea was no more than "a fiction of the earlier communities" (23:82; 27:67-68). Still less, of course, would the idea of "moral responsibility" and abstract "ends" of life be comprehensible to them—any more than they tell now upon secular societies of our own day.

For the Qur'an, the Last Judgment was crucial for multiple, fundamental reasons. First, moral and just as the constitution of reality is for the Qur'an, the quality of men's performance must be judged, else fairness cannot be ensured merely on the basis of what transpires in this life. Secondly, and this we have underlined in the early part of this chapter, the "ends" of life must be clarified beyond doubt, so that men may see what they have been striving for and what the true purposes of life are. This point is absolutely crucial in the entire doctrine of resurrection in the Qur'an, since the "weighing of deeds" presupposes and depends upon it. Thirdly, and connected closely with the second point, is the idea that disputes, dissensions, and conflicts of human orientations must be finally resolved. There is little doubt for the Qur'an that whereas there is such a thing as an *honest* difference of opinion, there is nevertheless very little of it; for the most part, human differences are plagued with extrinsic motivations of selfishness, of group or national interest, of congealed inherited traditions and myriad other forms of fanaticism. And the worst human moral plague is that one often does even good things through wrong and extrinsic motivations. The resolution of these differences of "belief," therefore, will be practically identical with the manifestation of the motivations of these beliefs. Since on that day all the interior of man will become transparent, these motivations will too. But apart from this, truth will show through in that Hour of Truth, and to this the Qur'an makes frequent reference:

Say [to the Meccans]: You are not going to be asked about the crimes we are committing, nor shall we be asked about what you do. Say: Our Lord *will* bring us together and then He will decide between us in truth—He is the Decider, the Knower. (34:25-26)

Those who believe [Muslims], and the Jews and the Sabeans and the Christians and the Magicians and the polytheists—God shall decide among them on the Day of Resurrection [as to who was right], for God is witness over everything. (22:17)

It is notable that the Qur'an often calls that day "The Day of De-

cision" (i.e., between right and wrong, not only deeds, but beliefs, life-orientations, etc. [37:21; 44:40; 77:13; 14:78, 17]. Directly relevant to this point are also the frequent verses that generally speak about the "settling of all matters that were under dispute" (3:55; 2:113; 5:48; 6:164; 16:39; 92:24; 22:69; 10:93; 32:25; etc.) It is said, to Muhammad, "You will die and they [your opponents] will, too; you will then dispute before your Lord on the Day of Resurrection" (39:30-31).

To overcome these objections of the Meccans and the difficulties they felt in accepting the idea of Resurrection and the Day of Accounting, the Qur'an also brings arguments from God's power in general. The God who created the heavens and the earth and who has created man and innumerable forms of life in this universe is capable of creating man anew, and other hitherto unknown forms of life:

Did man not see that We have created him from a clot of blood, but lo! he is a manifest disputant. He coins similitudes for Us but has forgotten his own creation: he says, Who will revive the bones when they have decayed? Say: He will re-create them who has created them in the first place and He knows all [forms of] creation—He Who brings out for you fire out of a green tree whence you are enabled to light [your fires]. Is He Who has created the heavens and the earth not able to create their [humans'] likeness?—surely, because He is the Creator Who knows [all manner of creation]. Whenever He wills to create something He simply says, Be! and there is it! Glory be to Him, then, in Whose power is the mastery of everything and to Whom you shall be returned. (36:77-83)

That God can make death and life succeed each other, just as He can bring out sparks of fire from green wood, is also evidenced by the fact that He causes light and darkness, day and night, to follow each other, as indeed He does the rise and fall of nations; and just as these latter two phenomena are "natural" so that we ask no questions about them, so must the phenomenon of resurrection and creation of new modes of life be regarded as a natural fact, given the moral constitution of the universe:

Say, O my God, the Ruler of the Kingdom! You give rule to whomsoever You will and deprive of rule whomsoever You will, and You bestow power and honor upon whomsoever You will and You debase whomsoever you will [this does not mean, of course, that there are no natural causes for these phenomena]; in Your hands is the Good and You are powerful over everything. You make the night penetrate into the day and You make the day pass into the night and You bring out

the living from the dead and the dead from the living and You bestow sustenance upon whomsoever You will without stint. (3:27; see also 22:61; 31: 29; 35:13; 57:6)

A specific example of reviving the dead given by the Qur'an is the quickening of the earth in spring after its "death" during the winter: "He quickens the earth after its death" (30:19, 24, 50; 57:17). Here is a translation of sura 50, the theme of which is the resurrection of man and which represents the lengthiest single treatment of the subject in the Qur'an:

By the glorious Qur'an! They are rather surprised that a warner from among themselves has come to them, and the disbelievers say, This is a strange thing! When we are dead and turned to dust [shall we be resurrected?—this is a far-fetched return! We know what the earth takes away of them, and with Us is a Recording Book. Nay! they have disbelieved in the Truth when it came to them and they are, therefore, in a troubled situation.

Have they not observed the heaven above them: How We have built it and beautified it and how there are no rifts therein. And the earth that We have spread out and We have cast firm mountains therein and We have caused all lovely pairs [of male and female—cf. 51:47-49] to grow thereon—as a lesson and reminder to every servant [of Ours] who is sincere of heart. And We send down from the sky blessed water wherewith We cause gardens and crop-grains to grow, and lofty date-palms with ranged clusters—as sustenance for Our servants—and We quicken thereby dead land. Even so shall be the Resurrection [of the dead].

The people of Noah denied [Our Messages] before them, as did the dwellers of Al-Rass, the tribe of Thamūd, the tribe of ^cAd, the Pharaoh and the brethren of Lot, as well as the people of the Thicket [Madyanites], the folk of Tubba—all gave the lie to the Messengers. Hence My threat came into operation.

Have We been fatigued by the first creation, that they are in doubt about a new one? Indeed, We have created man and We know what his inner mind whispers to him—We are, indeed, nearer to him than his jugular vein! When the two Receivers encounter him, seated on his right and left, he utters no word, but there is with him a ready observer.

The agony of death shall come in truth [and it will be said to him], Is this what you were trying to avoid? And the Trumpet shall be blown—that will be the threatened day. And every person shall come forth along with a driver and a witness. [It shall be said to the evil ones.] You were [sunk] in heedlessness of this, but We have removed from you your veil, so your sight today is keen? And his companion [angel] shall say, Here is what I have ready [by way of testimony]. [It shall be

said.] Throw you two [the driver and the witness] into Hell every ungrateful rebel, who withheld wealth [from the needy], a transgressor and a doubter [of the Revelation]; he who assumed another god besides God. Cast him into an intense punishment. His companion will say, O our Lord! I did not beguile him but he [himself] was far afield in error. God will say, Dispute not before Me, I had already sent to you the warning. My words cannot be changed and I am no tyrant over My servants.

The day when We shall say to the Hell, Are you satiated? and it will answer, Is there any more? And the Garden shall be brought near to those who had the fear of responsibility and will not be very distant [from them]. [And it will be said to them,] This is what you had been promised—it is for every penitent who was heedful—he who was humble before the Merciful in the Unseen and came with a sincere heart. Enter the Garden in peace, this is the day of eternity. They shall have therein whatever they wish, and We have much more.

We have destroyed before them many a people who were much greater in their might than them [the Meccans], who overran lands. [But] was there any escape for them [when Our judgment came]? Therein, indeed, is an admonition for one who possesses a heart or attentively gives his ear, fully witnessing. We, indeed, created the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them in six days but were not touched by fatigue. So hear what they [your opponents, O Muhammad!] say with patience and sing the praises of your Lord before sunrise and before sunset, and also sing His praises into night and after prostrations as well. And listen on the day when the Crier shall cry from a near place [i.e., it will penetrate the ears and the mind effectively—contrasted with 41:44: Those who do not believe, there is a deafness in their ears and they are blind to it (the Revelation)—these ones are being called as though from a *far distant place*]. The day when they shall hear the Cry in truth—that will be the Day of Resurrection. It is We who give life and death, and to Us is the return. The day when the earth shall split away from them suddenly—that is a gathering easy for Us [to undertake]. We know best what they say, but you [O Muhammad!] are no compeller over them, but warn through the Qur'an him who fears My threat.

Since God is present everywhere and at all times, there is obviously nothing hidden from Him. Man thinks he can hide his thoughts, motivations, etc., from other men and, indeed, he often tries to hide things from himself, does not wish to face the truth of his own situation starkly; but his inner being will become public, for nobody in that Hour will be able to "reserve" anything mentally. All Qur'anic statements about evidence on that day and about the transparency of one's hidden being lead to the one point that one must bear responsibility for one's deeds, thoughts, and intentions. But that day will be the day of judgment; one will have no opportunity to change anything, to offer a

new performance, or to redeem one's failings, for the only opportunity for that is here, now, in this life, which is given only once (for the Qur'ān does not believe in the *karma* or cycles of rebirths and deaths). This *one* life, then, is the only life where man can work and earn or sow those seeds that will bear fruit "in the end."

This is why it is imperative, according to the Qur'ān, to take this life seriously and to recognize fully that no matter how much one may hide one's negative intentions and one's failings, God "is well aware of them," as the Qur'ān often puts it. Hence one must develop that inner torch which can enable one to distinguish between right and wrong, between justice and injustice, which the Qur'ān calls *taqwā*—a crucial term, indeed one of the three or four most crucial terms. Although the final judgment upon man's conduct does lie outside him, as does the final criterion by which he is to be judged—and recognition of this fact is an essential part of the meaning of *taqwā*—such recognition already implies a certain development of the conscience of man to a point where this inner torch is lit. Like torchlight, *taqwā* is undoubtedly capable of gradations, from a zero-point of naïve self-righteousness to a high point where one can almost completely X-ray one's state of mind and conscience.

The kind of being "made public" of the inner self so poignantly portrayed as occurring on the Day of Judgment is what the Qur'ān really desires to take place here in this life; for a man who can X-ray himself effectively and hence diagnose his inner state has nothing to be afraid of if his inner being goes public. It is only those who hide their inner being here—largely unsuccessfully, of course, for they really succeed not so much in hiding themselves from others as from themselves—who have every reason to fear the Day of Accounting. This is why the Qur'ān says in sura 50, "You were sunk in heedlessness of this [accounting, X-raying], but now that We lifted the veil from you, your sight today is keen!" The central endeavor of the Qur'ān is for man to develop this "keen sight" here and now, when there is opportunity for action and progress, for at the Hour of Judgment it will be too late to remedy the state of affairs; there one will be reaping, not sowing or nurturing. Hence one can speak there only of eternal success or failure, of everlasting Fire or Garden—that is to say, for the fate of the individual. As Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī puts it:

If you wish to witness Resurrection, become it!
For this is the condition for witnessing anything!

Satan and Evil

Evil (*sharr*), as the opposite of good (*khair*) and as perpetrated by man, has been dealt with where we discussed individual and collective human conduct. Here we shall discuss the *principle* of evil, which the Qur'ān often personifies as Iblīs or Satan, although the latter personification is much weaker than the former: the Qur'ān, particularly in the Meccan suras, speaks frequently in the plural of "satans"—which sometimes also refer, probably metaphorically, to humans as well: "But when they [the hypocrites] are alone with their own satans" (2:14); "And even so have We appointed for every Messenger enemies, satans from among humans and the jinn" (6:112).

But if the term "satans" is regarded as metaphorical with respect to humans, is it so also with regard to the jinn? In his useful but as yet unpublished study, *The Pneumatology of the Qur'ān* (which discusses angels, Satan, and jinn), Dr. Alford Welch reaches the conclusion in Chapter V that what the Qur'ān calls the "hordes of Iblīs [the Devil]" in 26:95 are the jinn, who say "We touched the heavens and found it full of intensive watch and of shooting-stars. We used to take up secret positions in order to listen [to what transpired in heaven] but anyone who would try to listen now, will encounter a shooting-star guardman" (72:8-9). This is so in view of the repeated statements of the Qur'ān that satans (in the plural) attempt stealthily to snatch news from heaven but are driven away (15:17; 67:5; 72:8-9; etc.).

That the jinn is a creation more or less parallel to humankind except that the former are made of fire whereas the latter are made of "baked clay" is affirmed by the Qur'ān (7:12; 55:14-15). The Qur'ān also states (18:50) that the Devil (Iblīs) was "of the jinn and he disobeyed the command of his Lord." Dr. Welch's view, therefore, does have some plausibility, provided it is made applicable only to some jinn, since the

MAJOR THEMES OF THE
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