

CHAPTER 79, AN-NAZIAT (THE EXTRACTORS)

Rating:

Description: God swears an oath and issues a stern warning. The story of Moses and Pharaoh is used as an example affirming the resurrection and afterlife. Some aspects of the Day of Resurrection are described and a question is answered.

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Introduction

Chapter 79 is titled The Extractors. It is named from the Arabic word in the first verse, naziat.

This word is most often translated as angels, particularly the angels charged with extracting the souls from the dead. The Extractors is one of the short chapters, only 46 verses, found towards the end of the Quran and was revealed in Mecca.

The Meccans of the time emphatically denied the Resurrection thus The Extractor's subject matter confirms the Day of Resurrection as strenuously as the previous chapter number 78, The Great News. The Meccans however did not deny the existence of the angels; therefore God swears by the angels that the reality of the Day of Resurrection cannot be denied.



Verses 1- 5 An Oath

An oath, by God, on those angels who tear out the souls destined for Hell. And those angels that gently remove the souls destined for Paradise. Also by those angels who glide about as if swimming and those who charge swiftly, eagerly competing with each other to carry out God's commands. And the angels that organise each matter according to God's decree.

Verses 6 – 14 A severe warning

On the Day of Resurrection there will be a loud blast of a trumpet or horn that will be followed by a second blast. The first blast from the trumpet will destroy the earth and everything on it while the second will herald humankind rising up from their graves. The

hearts of those who denied the Resurrection will tremble and pound with terror. Their eyes will be downcast.

In Mecca at the time they were asking each other, 'Will we really be returned to the earth alive even though our bones have decayed?' Mockingly they describe the Resurrection a losing return, a useless restoration. God then warns them sternly that it will be a single sound and they will find themselves alive once more all standing together upon an open plain. It is inevitable and cannot be diverted by denial, escape or mockery.

Verses 15 – 25 Moses and Pharaoh

God called out to Prophet Moses in the sacred valley known as Tuwa. Go to Pharaoh, Moses was told, for he has transgressed beyond all bounds. Ask him if he wants to repent and purify himself? Offer to guide him towards God by showing him a great miracle. Moses turned his stick into a serpent but Pharaoh denied the miracle and turned his back on the offer to be guided to faith.

Pharaoh hastily gathered his people together. He proclaimed to them that he was the most exalted Lord; he was the supreme and most high. God seized him for punishment in this life and in the Hereafter; for setting himself up as a deity, for his oppression of the people and for his denial of Moses' offer. This is a lesson and a warning for anyone who fears God and stands in awe of Him.

Verses 27 – 33 God the Creator

God asks a question to humankind. What is harder to create, you or the heavens? The universe was built high and in perfect proportion. The darkness of night spreads over the earth as if it was a canopy and in the day time the sun is brightly glowing in the sky. God created the earth with water sources, vegetation of all kinds and mountains set firmly in the ground. All these things were provided for the benefit of humankind and all living creatures.

Verses 34 – 41 A permanent abode

The great disaster will strike. The Day of Resurrection will arrive and every person will remember exactly what he or she has done. Hell will be on view for all to see. It will become the home of those who have transgressed, rebelled or preferred the life of this world. Paradise however will become the home and refuge of all those were righteous, those who restrained themselves from base desires and those who feared this momentous Day.

Verses 42 – 45 And they asked about the Hour

The disbelievers of Mecca asked Prophet Muhammad about the Hour. Although they did not believe in the Resurrection or the afterlife they asked this question over and over. When will it come they ask but Prophet Muhammad is not able to answer them. Only God knows the answer. To Him belongs the ultimate knowledge. Prophet Muhammad's message and warning will only benefit those who fear the coming of the Day.

Verse 46 A lifetime is but a moment

When the Day of Resurrection commences, humankind will feel as if they had only been in this life for the evening of a day or a part of the morning. Those who have ruined their afterlife will wonder how they could have done so in such a short time.

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