

Sura 52: Al-Tur (The Mountain)

In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy

Verses 1 to 49:

1. *By the mountain;*
2. *And a Book inscribed,*
3. *On fine parchment unrolled;*
4. *And the frequented House;*
5. *And the elevated ceiling;*
6. *And the swollen sea;*
7. *Most surely the torment of your Lord will come to pass;*
8. *There is none that can avert it.*
9. *On the Day when the heaven shall move from side to side,*
10. *And the mountains will move away,*
11. *Then woe that day to the deniers;*
12. *Who amuse themselves with idle talk.*
13. *That Day they will be thrust into the Fire of Hell forcefully,*
14. *(And it will be said to them), "This is the Fire which you were denying.*
15. *Is this magic, or do you not see?*
16. *Endure the heat thereof, it is the same whether you endure patiently or not; you shall be recompensed only (for) what you did."*
17. *Indeed, those who remained conscious of God will dwell in gardens and bliss,*
18. *Enjoying the (bliss) which their Lord has bestowed on them and their Lord shall deliver them from the torment of the Fire.*
19. *(And it will be said to them,) "Eat and drink in health (as a reward) for what you used to do."*
20. *They will recline (with ease) on ranged couches. And We will wed them to large-eyed beautiful ones.*
21. *And those who believe and whose offspring followed them in faith, We will unite them with their offspring. We will not deprive them any of the reward of what they have done. Each individual is responsible for his deeds.*
22. *And We will provide them with fruit and meat such as they desire.*
23. *There, they will pass, from hand to hand, a cup wherein is neither vanity nor cause of sin.*
24. *Round about them will serve, (devoted) to them, young male servants (handsome) as pearls well-guarded.*
25. *And some of them shall advance towards others questioning each other.*
26. *Saying, "When we were with our families, we were ever anxious;*
27. *But God has been gracious to us and has saved us from the torment of the intense Fire.*
28. *We used to pray to Him before. He is the Doer of Good, the Giver of Mercy.*
29. *Therefore, continue to remind, for by the Blessing of your Lord, you are neither a sorcerer, nor a madman.*
30. *Or do they say, "He is only a poet, we are waiting for a calamity to befall him."*
31. *Say (to them), "Wait, I too will wait along with you."*
32. *Do their minds command them to do this, or are they a transgressing people?*
33. *Or do they say, "He has forged it." Indeed, it is they who do not believe.*

34. *Let them then produce a statement like it, if they are truthful.*
35. *Were they created out of nothing, or were they themselves the creators?*
36. *Or did they create heavens and the earth? Indeed, they have no certitude.*
37. *Or do they have the treasures of your Lord, or are they the controllers?*
38. *Or do they have a ladder, by which they can (climb up to heaven and) listen (to its secrets)? Then let (such a) listener of theirs produce a clear proof.*
39. *Or does He have only daughters and you have sons?*
40. *Or do you ask them for a reward, so that they are overburdened with debt?*
41. *Or do they have access to the unseen? Could they write it down?*
42. *Or are they planning a conspiracy (against you)? The conspiracy will befall the disbelievers.*
43. *Or do they have a deity other than God? Exalted is God far above the things they associate with Him.*
44. *Were they to see a piece of the sky falling (on them), they would (only) say, "A heap of clouds."*
45. *So leave them alone until they encounter that Day of theirs, wherein they will be thunderstruck.*
46. *The Day when their plotting will avail them nothing and no help shall be given them.*
47. *And verily, for the wrongdoers, there is another torment besides this; but most of them do not know.*
48. *So persevere (Muhammad) waiting for your Lord's decree, for surely you are in Our sight; and celebrate the praise of your Lord when you rise,*
49. *And glorify Him during the night, and at the setting of the stars. (52: 1 – 49)*

"By the mountain; and a Book inscribed on fine parchment unrolled; and the frequented House; and the elevated ceiling; and the swollen sea; most surely the torment of your Lord will come to pass; there is none that can avert it." The Sura is characterized by its short verses. The first verse consists of one word, and then the number of words in the verses increases gradually until it reaches twelve words. In the meantime, the rhyme of the verses is kept in a consistent manner. The mountain mentioned in the first verse is most probably the mountain on which Moses (PBUH) received the Tablets from God. The Book may be a reference to the Scripture that was given to Moses (PBUH). However, there is an opinion that the Book refers to the Protected Tablet. This seems appropriate, since the following verse refers to the Holy House of God (the most frequented House). The House may also be a reference to the Ka'ba. The elevated canopy refers to the sky; this is consistent with the verse, *"And We made the sky a protected ceiling."* (21: 32) The Arabic word used to describe the sea in these verses could either mean a sea full of water (swollen sea) or it could also mean a sea on fire. God makes oaths using these signs of His creation to emphasize that His promise to punish those who denied the truth will indeed be fulfilled. No one can avert it. The next verses describe scenes from the Day of Judgment, *"On the Day when the heaven shall move from side to side; and the mountains will move away."* It is a horrendous scene: the sky will be shaking, and the mountains will be moving. Then the threat is issued to those who denied the truth, *"then woe that day to the deniers; who amuse themselves with idle talk. That Day they will be thrust into the Fire of Hell forcefully."* This description applies to all those who rejected the truth based on conjectures. They had no rational arguments. All their arguments were based on idle talk.

The Quran provides a consistent and logical explanation for the existence of humankind and the creation of the universe. Rejecting the truth on the basis of irrational conjectures is useless. Islam

provides a plan for the intellectual growth of people. It also raises their awareness of the universe around them. It provides logical answers to the questions that dwell in the minds of many people: *“from where did I come? Why did I come? And where am I going?”* The answers to these questions outline the Islamic understanding of the purpose of the creation. Humankind is not alone in this universe and there are millions of God’s creatures that inhabit the same universe which humankind inhabits. The life of a Muslim is a very busy life because he has a major purpose behind his existence and every minute of his time should be spent in fulfilling this purpose.

On the Day of Judgment, those who denied the truth will be forced into Hell fire. They will then be told that this is the Hell fire that they denied before. They will be ridiculed, *“(and it will be said to them), ‘This is the Fire which you were denying. Is this magic, or do you not see?’”* Then, the verdict will be delivered, *“Endure the heat thereof, it is the same whether you endure patiently or not; you shall be recompensed only (for) what you did.”*

The second image is an image which reflects comfort and happiness, *“Indeed, those who remained conscious of God will dwell in gardens and bliss; enjoying the (bliss) which their Lord has bestowed on them and their Lord shall deliver them from the torment of the Fire.”* Being saved from the torment of Hell Fire is in itself a great achievement; but those who accepted the truth and remained conscious of their Lord will be given more. It will be said to them, *“Eat and drink in health (as a reward) for what you used to do.”* They will be reclining comfortably on couches, and they will be paired, with beautiful mates, *“They will recline (with ease) on ranged couches. And We will wed them to large-eyed beautiful ones.”* In addition, their righteous offspring will join them, *“And those who believe and whose offspring followed them in faith, We will unite them with their offspring. We will not deprive them any of the reward of what they have done. Each individual is responsible for his deeds.”* The verses continue to describe the bliss that they will enjoy, *“And We will provide them with fruit and meat such as they desire. There, they will pass, from hand to hand, a cup wherein is neither vanity nor cause of sin. Round about them will serve, (devoted) to them, young male servants (handsome) as pearls well-guarded.”*

They will talk to each other, *“And some of them shall advance towards others questioning each other. Saying, ‘When we were with our families, we were ever anxious; But God has been gracious to us and has saved us from the torment of the intense Fire. We used to pray to Him before. He is the Doer of Good, the Giver of Mercy.’”* This is the secret of this bliss; they were cautious and avoided committing sins. They were not deluded by the transient security that they felt living among their families. They were always concerned about the Day of Reckoning. That is why they prayed God to save them from the torment of Hell fire; and by His Grace He accepted their prayer.

The Quran then addressed the Messenger (PBUH), *“Therefore, continue to remind, for by the Blessing of your Lord, you are neither a sorcerer, nor a madman.”* The Messenger (PBUH) was commanded to continue to remind the idolaters even though they were insolent to him, sometimes calling him a sorcerer and sometimes calling him a madman. But God comforted His Messenger (PBUH) by bestowing on him His grace. Some of the idolaters claimed that he was a poet, *“Or do they say, ‘He is only a poet, we are waiting for a calamity to befall him.’”* The Quran responded to them saying, *“Say (to them), ‘Wait, I too will wait along with you.’”* The verse told them to wait; very soon they will see the consequences of their insolence.

The chiefs of Quraish claimed to be wise people. The Quran addressed them sarcastically, *“Do their minds command them to do this, or are they a transgressing people?”* Is this the way wise people behave? Or is it their transgression that makes them behave foolishly?

They went far in their insolence claiming that the Messenger (PBUH) fabricated the Quran. If this was true, why could they not fabricate one like it? *“Or do they say, ‘He has forged it.’ Indeed, it is they who do not believe. Let them then produce a statement like it, if they are truthful.”*

The Quran then questions them about how they were created, *“Were they created out of nothing, or were they themselves the creators?”* It is against logic that they were created from nothing; let alone claiming that they are the creators. The truth is that they and everyone else were created by God. Then the verses turn to the creation of the heavens and earth. Who created them? *“Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Indeed, they have no certitude.”* They used to say that God created everything; yet this saying never translated into a firm belief in their hearts. Who owns the treasures of heaven and earth? Do they own them themselves? Or do they have any control over them? *“Or do they have the treasures of your Lord, or are they the controllers?”* The Quran says that God is the owner of the treasures of the heavens and earth and He is the sole controller of everything. Can they prove otherwise?

“Or do they have a ladder, by which they can (climb up to heaven and) listen (to its secrets)? Then let (such a) listener of theirs produce a clear proof.” Muhammad (PBUH) told them that he was receiving revelations from God. Do they have the means to reach the heavens to ascertain that Muhammad (PBUH) was not receiving a revelation from God? The verses turn around to mock a statement that they used to make, *“Or does He have only daughters and you have sons?”*

The Messenger (PBUH) never asked them for a reward for the guidance that he offered them; yet they did not want to receive such guidance, *“Or do you ask them for a reward, so that they are overburdened with debt?”* The Quran confronted them with a question whose answer they should know, *“Or do they have access to the unseen? Could they write it down?”* They knew very well that they had no access to the unseen. They were only trying to conspire against the Messenger (PBUH); they were told that their conspiracy will turn back against them, *“Or are they planning a conspiracy (against you)? The conspiracy will befall the disbelievers.”* Then another challenge was posed, *“Or do they have a deity other than God? Exalted is God far above the things they associate with Him.”* Could their deity protect them against the wrath of God?

In their delusions, they misinterpreted the wrath of God, *“Were they to see a piece of the sky falling (on them), they would (only) say, ‘A heap of clouds.’”*

The Sura is concluded by an address to the Messenger of God, *“So leave them alone until they encounter that Day of theirs, wherein they will be thunderstruck.”* The Messenger (PBUH) was told not to worry about them; they will see their doom on the Day of Judgment. On that Day, they will have no support or help to save them, *“The Day when their plotting will avail them nothing and no help shall be given them. And verily, for the wrongdoers, there is another torment besides this; but most of them do not know.”*

The Quran then addressed the Messenger (PBUH) in a very special way. First, he was asked to persevere; then he was given a great honor: the honor of being in the sight of God, *“So persevere (Muhammad) waiting for your Lord's decree, for surely you are in Our sight;”* This is a high rank that was not given to any human. Moses (PBUH) was told, *“I have chosen you so listen to what is being revealed,”* (20: 13), *“And I bestowed upon you love from Me,”* (20: 39) *“I*

produced you for Myself.” (20: 41) All these indicate the high rank that was bestowed on Moses (PBUH), but Muhammad (PBUH) was given the highest honor of all; God told him, “you are in Our sight.” The Prophet (PBUH) was then told of the way to keep this precious link with God, “celebrate the praise of your Lord when you rise, and glorify Him during the night, and at the setting of the stars.”

Hawwa commented that the Sura cites two of the attributes of those who are God-conscious: fear of God’s punishment and recitation of supplication. The Sura also includes a command to the Messenger of God (PBUH) to persevere and glorify God. The Messenger of God (PBUH) was the role model for those who are calling people to Islam. Thus, a person who undertakes the duty of calling to Islam must persevere and seek God’s help through celebrating the praise of God and glorifying Him often.