

Sura 86: Al-Tariq (The Night Comer)

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

Verses 1 to 17:

1. *By the heaven and the night comer;*
2. *And what will explain to you what the night comer is?*
3. *The piercing star.*
4. *No human soul but has a guardian over it.*
5. *So let humankind consider from what he is created.*
6. *He is created from a gushing fluid.*
7. *That is issued from between the loins and the ribs.*
8. *Certainly God is able to bring him back.*
9. *On the day when hidden thoughts shall be made manifest,*
10. *Then he will not have might or a helper.*
11. *By the sky which returns,*
12. *And the earth which splits open.*
13. *Most surely it is a decisive word,*
14. *And it is no joke.*
15. *They plot and scheme.*
16. *And I plot and scheme.*
17. *So give a respite to the disbelievers, a brief respite.*

We mentioned in the beginning of this part that its suras hammer the psyche of the person with severe and strong blows. They try to awaken people who are deep asleep. These blows send one message, “*Wake up, look, think, and reflect. There is only one God. He controls everything. There will be a test, there will be accountability, and there will be either a severe punishment or a tremendous bliss.*” This Sura exemplifies these characteristics. It displays scenes of the piercing star, the gushing fluid, the sky that returns and the earth that splits open. There are a number of lessons that one gleans from this Sura. They are: each soul is under close observation, humankind will have no might nor helpers on the Day of Judgment, and the Qur’an is a decisive word not a joke.

“*By the heaven and the night comer; and what will explain to you what the night comer is? The piercing star. No human soul but has a guardian over it.*” These verses include a cosmic scene and a principle of faith. It starts with an oath by the sky and the morning star, then it poses a rhetorical question. This a familiar feature of the Qur’anic style. The night comer is a piercing star. It pierces the darkness by its light. The verse does not specify a particular star. This ambiguity is a way of generalization; as if it says, “*By the sky and all its piercing stars.*” Every soul is being closely observed.

The Divine project is then referred to by the request to reflect on how people were created, “*So let humankind consider from what he is created. He is created from a gushing fluid. That is issued from between the loins and the ribs.*” This process was not known to people until the mid eighteen hundreds. It is a huge leap between the beginning and the end, between the gushing fluid that comes out between the loins and the ribs and the mature human being with his highly complex physical, psychological and mental systems. This process shows that there is a major power which causes this transformation from the simple fluid to the complex human.

“Certainly God is able to bring him back. On the day when hidden thoughts shall be made manifest, then he will not have might or a helper.” God created him and took care of him; God is able to bring him back to life after death. This will happen on the Day when all what is hidden will be uncovered. On that Day, humankind will have no power nor will he have a helper.

“By the sky which returns, and the earth which splits open. Most surely it is a decisive word, and it is no joke.” This is another oath to ascertain that the Qur’an is a decisive word. The sky keeps returning the rain water, and the earth splits open so that the plants can come out. These are images of life. The water comes down from the sky and the plant pierces the ground to grow.

The verses then turn to address the Prophet (PBUH) and the few believers who were with him at that time, *“They plot and scheme. And I plot and scheme. So give a respite to the disbelievers, a brief respite.”* The verse reassures the Prophet (PBUH) and the few who believed with him. The disbelievers’ plots are in vain. God has control over every thing.