

القَارِعَة Al-Qariah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name from its first word *al-qariah*. This is not only a name but also the title of its subject matter, for the Surah is devoted to Resurrection.

Period of Revelation

There is no dispute about its being a Makki Surah. Its contents show that this is one of the earlier Surahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is Resurrection and the Hereafter. At the outset, the people have been aroused and alarmed, saying: The Great Disaster! What is the Great Disaster? And what do you know what the Great Disaster is? Thus, after preparing the listeners for the news of the dreadful calamity, Resurrection has been depicted before them in two sentences, saying that on that Day people will be running about in confusion and bewilderment just like so many scattered moths around a light, and the mountains uprooted, will lose their cohesion and will fly about like carded wool. Then, it has been said that when Allah's court

is established in the Hereafter and the people are called upon to account for their deeds, the basis of judgment will be the weight of good deeds. The people whose good deeds are found to be heavier than their evil deeds, will be blessed with bliss and happiness, and the people whose good deeds are found to be lighter than their evil deeds, will be cast into the deep pit full of burning fire.

1. The striking calamity.*¹

الْقَارِعَةُ

*1 *Qariah* literally means the striking one. *Qar* is to strike one thing upon another so severely as to produce a noise. In view of this literal meaning, the word *qariah* is used for a dreadful disaster and a great calamity. At another place in the Quran this word has been used for a great affliction befalling a nation. In Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 31, it has been said: As for the disbelievers, because of their misdeeds, one affliction or the other does not cease to visit them every now and then. But, here the word *al-Qariah* has been for the Resurrection and in Surah Al-Haaqqah too the Resurrection has been described by this very epithet (verse 4). One should remember that here the whole Hereafter, from the first stage of Resurrection to the last stage of judgment and meting out of rewards and punishments is being depicted together.

2. What is the striking calamity.

مَا الْقَارِعَةُ

3. And what do you know what is the striking calamity.

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ

4. The Day when people shall be like scattered moths.

يَوْمَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ
الْمَبْثُوثِ ﴿٤﴾

5. And the mountains shall be like carded wool.*²

وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ
الْمَنْفُوشِ ﴿٥﴾

*² This will be the first stage of Resurrection, when in consequence of the great disaster the whole of the present order of the world will be overthrown; the people will then be running about in confusion and bewilderment like so many scattered moths around a light; and the mountains will be flying about like carded wool of different colors. The mountains have been compared to wool of different colors because of the existence of a variety of colors in them

6. Then,*³ he whose scales are heavy.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ ﴿٦﴾

*³ From here begins description of the second stage of Resurrection when after having been resurrected men will appear in the court of God.

7. Shall be in a state of bliss.

فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ ﴿٧﴾

8. And, he whose scales are light.*⁴

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ ﴿٨﴾

*⁴ The word *mawazin* in the original can be plural of *mauzun* as well as, of *mizan*. In the first case, *mawazin* would imply the deeds which might have some weight in the

sight of Allah and be, thus, worthy of appreciation. In the second case, *mawazin* would imply scales of a balance. In the first case, the meaning of the *mawazin's* being heavier or lighter is that the good deeds will be heavy or light as against the evil deeds, for in the sight of Allah only good deeds have any weight and worth. In the second case. the meaning of the *mawazin's* being heavy is that the scale of the good deeds will be heavier than the scale of evil deeds, in Allah Almighty's Balance of Justice, and their being light means that the scale of good deeds will be lighter than the scale of evil deeds. Besides, in Arabic idiom the word *mizan* is also used for weight (*wazan*); accordingly, the weight's being heavy or light implies the good deeds being heavy or light. In any case, whether *mawazin* is taken in the meaning of *mauzun* or of *mizan*, or of *wazan*, the intention remains the same, which is that the basis of judgment in the divine court will be whether the provision of the deeds that a man has brought is weighty or weightless, or whether his good deeds are heavier than his evil deeds or lighter. This theme has occurred at several places in the Quran which explains the full meaning. In Surah Al-Aaraf it has been said: On that Day the weight will be identical with the truth: accordingly, those whose scales, will be heavy will alone come out successful; and those whose scales are light will be the ones who will have incurred loss upon themselves. (verses 8-9). In Surah Al-Kahf, it was said: O Prophet, say to them: Should we tell you who are the most un-successful people and miserable failures in regard to their deeds? They are those whose all endeavors in the worldly life had

gone astray from the right way, but they were under the delusion that everything they were doing, was rightly directed. These are the people who rejected the revelations of their Lord and did not believe that they would ever go before Him. Therefore, all their deeds were lost, for We will assign no weight to them on the Day of Resurrection. (verses 103-105). In Surah Al-Anbiya: On the Day of Resurrection, We will set up just and accurate balances so that no one will be wronged in the least in any way; even if it be an act equal in weight to a grain of mustard seed, We will bring it forth (to be weighed) and We suffice for reckoning. (verse 47). These verses show that kufr and denial of the truth is in itself such a stupendous evil that it will certainly lower the scale of evils, and there will be no good act of the disbelievers, which may have any weight in the scale of good deeds so that its scale of goodness may become heavy. However, in the scales of the believer there will be the weight of faith as well as the weight of the good deeds which he performed in the world. On the other hand, every evil done by him will be placed in the scale of evil deeds and then it will be seen whether his scale of the good deeds is heavier or his scale of the evil deeds.

9. So his refuge shall be the deep pit (of Hell).^{*5}

فَأُمُّهُ هَاوِيَةٌ

*5 The words in the original are: *ummu hu hawiyah*: his mother will be *hawiyah*. *Hawiyah* is from *hawa*, which means to fall from a height to a depth, and *hawiyah* is the deep pit into which something falls. Hell has been called *Hawiyah* because it will be very deep and the culprits will

be thrown into it from the height. As for the words, his mother will be *Hawiyah*, they mean: Just as the mother's lap is the child's abode, so Hell will be the culprits' only abode in the Hereafter.

10. And what do you know what it is.

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا هِيَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. A raging Fire!^{*6}

نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ ﴿١١﴾

*6 That is, it will not merely be a deep pit but will also be full of raging fire.

