

CHAPTER 79, VERSES 34 – 41: THE INEVITABILITY OF THE HEREAFTER

Rating: 4.1

Description: A group of verses from Chapter 79 of the Quran that concisely describe the consequences of giving oneself up to one's desires and contrasts it to the consequences of leading a God conscious life.

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"But when there comes the greatest Overwhelming Calamity – the Day when man will remember that for which he strove, and Hellfire will be exposed for [all] those who see – so as for he who transgressed and preferred the life of the world, then indeed, Hellfire will be [his] refuge. But as for he who feared the position of his Lord and prevented the soul from [unlawful] inclination, then indeed, Paradise will be [his] refuge." (Quran 79:34-41)

These essential and crucial verses from the Quran come from  Chapter 79, An-Naziat or translated into English as The Angels who Extract the Souls. The chapter was revealed in Mecca and its theme is the inevitability of the Day of Judgement. The eight verses (34 – 41) that we will discuss refer particularly to that event. This is an emotional chapter that up until this point has evoked fear and apprehensive expectation.

The first verse in this set of verses starts out with a statement of authority. It states, when this great event comes or when the overwhelming calamity arrives. Fact; it will arrive. The knowledge of when that time will be rests only with God, and Prophet Muhammad has warned the disbelievers repeatedly that the timing is not known but the fact that it will arrive is indisputable. The earth will come to its extinction event, and the fleeting comfort of this life will be extinguished.

On that Day all human beings will remember what they spent their time in this world seeking. They will remember that for which they strove. Each person may have been distracted by the comforts of life or by the events in their lives, but when the calamity strikes they will remember both their good and their evil. They will remember the warnings that came to them and many will begin counting their misdeeds.

This feeling sometimes overcomes people in this life, particularly when they have escaped from a serious accident or recovered from a severe illness. They think about

death and their own immortality and all of a sudden they remember those sins they now wish they had never committed. At this momentous occasion (Day of Judgment) not only will they remember, but Hell will be shown to them.

Hell will be exposed for all to see. Everyone will see it with their own eyes, there is no more imagining, it is a reality that will be visually confronting. Those who stated that they would not believe until they could see it with their own eyes now both see and believe. It becomes clear that people have different destinies. God now addresses the person who transgressed, the one who committed sin and did not repent, the one who preferred the distractions of the worldly life over matters of the religion.

Those who rebelled against the instructions of God will not only see Hell - they will enter it. The rebellion is not necessarily a rejection of the afterlife; it is a preference for matters of the world to the Hereafter.

God calls Hell a refuge. This is a form of sarcasm. It refers back to verse 12 of this chapter where the disbelievers call the resurrection a return filled with loss, "**That then would be a losing return.**" (Quran 19:12) When the disbelievers were told that they would be resurrected after death, they began mocking it, saying to one another, "Well, if we really are restored then we would certainly be doomed."

On the other hand, those who feared their Lord and controlled their worldly desires would have Paradise as their refuge. The one who fears to stand in front of God does not knowingly or willingly commit sin. If he or she does slip in a moment of human weakness he repents and prays for forgiveness. Fear of God and control of desire are mentioned together in the same verse. A person can use the fear of God to fight against evil desires. Because God understands human weaknesses He does not ask humankind to suppress evil inclinations; He simply asks us to control ourselves. Thus the reward for self-control is Paradise.

The verses end with a declaration that those who prefer to focus on the Hereafter and control their evil desires will find eternal refuge in Paradise. God knows the hardships involved in this struggle and has designated a fitting reward.

In these few words, eight small verses from the Quran, God clearly articulates what the criterion of the final judgment will be. It will be how a person conducted his or her worldly life. If the conduct involved knowingly, and without repentance, disobeying God, the abode will be Hell, and if a person feared God and struggled with unlawful inclinations, his abode would be Paradise.

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