

Background and Meaning

Al-Tariq calls the human being to reflect on creation, resurrection and the seriousness of revelation. Ibn Kathir explains the opening night visitor as the bright star, then follows the surah's movement from the human being's dependent beginning to the exposure of secrets on the Day of Resurrection. The final ayat affirm the Qur'an as a decisive word and address the plotting of those who oppose it. The parent should connect the signs of Allah's power with the responsibility to respond to His message.

Tafsir of the Surah

Ayat 1–4: The night visitor and the guardian. Ibn Kathir explains al-tariq as the star seen at night and identifies al-thaqib through its brightness. The question in the opening is answered by the following ayah. He then explains that every soul has a guardian appointed by Allah, referring to al-Ra'd 13:11. The passage directs attention from the signs above people to the care and authority under which their own lives exist.

Ayat 5–8: The first creation and the return. Ibn Kathir explains the call to examine one's origin as a reminder of human weakness and an argument for resurrection. He records early explanations of al-sulb and al-tara'ib, including the backbone and the upper chest or region of a necklace. The central argument is that the One who brought the human being into existence is able to restore him. Ibn Kathir favours understanding the promised return here as resurrection.

Ayat 9–10: Secrets made known. Ibn Kathir explains that on the Day of Resurrection hidden matters will become apparent and what was concealed will be exposed. A person will have neither an independent power within himself nor an outside helper able to rescue him from Allah's judgement. The passage extends accountability beyond what other people happened to observe during worldly life.

Ayat 11–14: A decisive word. Ibn Kathir records the explanation of the returning sky through repeated rain and the splitting earth through the emergence of plants. These signs introduce the declaration that the Qur'an is a decisive word. His commentary describes it as truth and just judgement, rather than play. The reader is therefore called to receive revelation with the seriousness appropriate to guidance from Allah.



Tafsir of the Surah • Continued

Ayat 15–17: Plotting and a limited respite. Ibn Kathir explains the opponents' plotting through their efforts to draw people away from the Qur'an. Their plans do not place them beyond Allah's authority. The Prophet ﷺ is instructed to give them a little time rather than demand an immediate outcome. The conclusion combines reassurance for the Messenger with a warning that delay does not remove the eventual consequences of rejection.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ

By the sky and at-Tariq.



وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الطَّارِقُ

But what will let you know what at-Tariq is?



النَّجْمُ الثَّاقِبُ

The Piercing Star.



إِنْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ

There is no soul without a protector over it.



فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ

Let man consider what he was created from.



خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ

He was created from gushing liquid.



Memorisation · Continued

يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ



Memorised

Issuing from between the backbone and the breastbones.

إِنَّهُ عَلَى رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ



Memorised

He is certainly Able to return him.

يَوْمَ تَبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ



Memorised

On the Day when the secrets are disclosed.

فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَلَا نَاصِرٍ



Memorised

He will have no strength, and no supporter.

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ



Memorised

By the sky that returns.

وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدْعِ



Memorised

And the earth that cracks open.



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سورة الطارق

Memorisation · Continued

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ فَصْلٍ

١٣

Memorised

It is a Decisive Word.

وَمَا هُوَ بِالْهَزْلِ

١٤

Memorised

It is no joke.

إِنَّهُمْ يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا

١٥

Memorised

They plot and scheme.

وَأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا

١٦

Memorised

But I plot and scheme.

فَمَهْلٍ الْكَافِرِينَ أَمْهَلَهُمْ رَوْدًا

١٧

Memorised

Therefore, give the blasphemers respite, a brief respite.

Parent tafsir: adapted from Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, 86:1-17.

Arabic commentary: quran.ksu.edu.sa/tafseer/katheer/sura86-aya1.html

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