

The signs of the Last Day in the Qur'an

What are they awaiting but for the Hour to come upon them suddenly? Its Signs have already come. What good will their Reminder be to them when it does arrive? (Surah Muhammad: 18)

From this verse we learn that the Qur'an describes signs that announce the coming of the Last Day. In order to understand the signs of this 'great announcement' we must reflect upon these verses. Otherwise, as the verse indicates, our thinking will be of no use when the Last Day is suddenly upon us.

The Hour is near

Allah reveals in the Qur'an that there can be no doubt that the Last Day is near.

And the Hour is coming without any doubt ... (Surat al-Hajj: 7)

We did not create the heavens and earth and everything between them, except with truth. The Hour is certainly coming. (Surat al-Hijr: 85)

There may be some who think that the message of the Qur'an concerning the Last Day was revealed more than 1400 years ago and that this is a long time compared to the length of a human life. But here, it is a question of the end of the world, the sun and the stars, in short, of the universe. When we consider that the universe is billions of years old, fourteen centuries is a very short period of time.

The supremacy of the morality of Islam in the world

Allah announces that those who serve Him purely, without associating any of His creatures as divinities besides Him, and do good works to win His favor, will be endowed with power and authority.

Allah has promised those of you who believe and do right actions that He will make them successors in the land as He made those before them successors, and will firmly establish for them their religion with which He is pleased and give them, in place of their fear, security. 'They worship Me, not associating anything with Me.' Any who are disbelievers after that, such people are deviators. (Surat an-Nur: 55)

In a number of verses, it also says that it is a divine law that those servants who are faithful and live the true religion in their hearts will be made the inheritors of the world:

We wrote down in the Psalms, after the Reminder came: 'It is My righteous servants who will inherit the earth.' (Surat al-Anbiya': 105)

We will leave you the land to live in after them. That is the reward of those who fear My station and fear My threat. (Surah Ibrahim: 14)

There is no doubt that Allah will keep His promises. The high morality that will conquer perverse philosophies, distorted ideologies and false religious understanding is Islamic morality. The disbelievers and pagans cannot prevent this from happening.

The splitting of the moon

The 54th Surah of the Qur'an is called 'Surat al-Qamar.' In English *qamar* means moon. In several instances, this Surah tells about the destruction that befell the people of Nuh, Ad, Thamud, Lut and Pharaoh, because they rejected the warnings of the prophets. At the same time, there is a very important message stated in the first verse, concerning the Last Day.

The Hour has drawn near and the moon has split. (Surat al-Qamar: 1)

The word 'split' used in this verse is the Arabic *shaqqa*, which in Arabic it has various meanings. In some commentaries on the Qur'an, the meaning 'split' is preferred. But *shaqqa* in Arabic can also mean 'ploughing' or 'digging' the earth.

As an example of the first usage, we can refer to the 26th verse of Surat al-Abasa:

We pour down plentiful water, then split the earth into furrows. Then We make grain grow in it, and grapes and herbs and olives and dates. (Surah 'Abasa: 25-29)

It can be clearly seen that the meaning of *shaqqa* here is not to 'split.' It means to plough the earth in order to grow various plants.

If we went back to the year 1969, we would see one of the great wonders of the Qur'an. The experiments carried out on the surface of the moon on July 20, 1969, may be hinting at the fulfillment of news given 1,400 years ago in Surat al-Qamar. On that date, American astronauts set foot on the moon. Digging at the lunar soil they carried out scientific experiments and collected samples of stones and soil. It is surely very interesting that these developments are in complete agreement with the statements in the verse.

We must make this clear, however: The phenomenon of the splitting of the moon is, of course, one of the miracles vouchsafed by Allah to our Prophet (saas). This miracle is revealed as follows in one hadith:

The people of Mecca asked Allah's Apostle to show them a miracle. So he showed them the moon split in two halves between which they saw the Hiram' mountain. (Bukhari)

The miracle described above is the phenomenon of splitting of the moon revealed in the verse. However, since the Qur'an is a book which addresses all times it is also possible that it is referring to the landing on the moon in our own age. (Allah surely knows best)

The signs described by the Prophet (saas) are occurring one after the other

In the hadiths that have come down to us from the Prophet (saas), news is given concerning the End Times and the Golden Age of Islam. When we compare these signs with the events that are taking place in our time, we can see many indications that we are living through the End Times and which also herald the arrival of the Golden Age of Islam.

The hadiths used in the coming sections of this book contain such information given by the Prophet (saas) in this regard.

At this point, there may arise some doubt in the reader in regards to the truth and authenticity of these hadiths about the end. There is a method to distinguish those that are true from those that are false. As we know, hadiths about the Doomsday relate to events that are to take place in the future. For this reason, when a hadith comes true in the course of time, all doubt as to the source of the words is removed.

Several Islamic scholars who conducted research on the subject of the End Times and of the signs of the Last Day have used this criterion. An expert on the subject, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, said that the fact that the hadiths concerning the End Times correspond to events observed in our day shows the truth of the hadiths.¹

Some of the signs related in the hadiths were observable in some part of the world in any period during the 1400 year history of Islam, but that would not have proven that that period was the the End Times. For a certain period to be called the End Times, all the signs of the Last Day must be observed to be occurrence in that same period. This is expressed in a hadith:

Signs following one another like the pieces of a necklace falling one after the other when its string is cut. (Tirmidhi)

In the hadiths, the beginning of the End Times is described as when discord grows, and war and conflict are on the increase, when there is chaos and moral degeneration rears its head and people turn away from the morality of religion. At the time in question, natural disasters will occur all over the world, poverty will reach unseen levels, there will be a large increase in the crime rate, and murder and brutality everywhere. Yet this will be only the first stage. During the second phase, Allah will rescue mankind from this chaos and replace it with a blessed existence full of plenty, peace and security.

Wars and anarchy

Allah's Messenger (saas) said: 'The Harj (will increase).' They asked, 'What is the Harj?' He replied, '(It is) killing (murdering), (it is) murdering (killing).' (Bukhari)

The Hour will come when violence, bloodshed, and anarchy become common. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Muntakhab Kanzul Ummaal)

The world will not come to an end until a day would come to the people on which there will be general massacre and bloodshed. (Muslim)

If we look at the last fourteen centuries, we see that wars were regional before the twentieth century. However, wars that affected everyone in the world, political systems, entire economies and social structures, have happened only comparatively recently, in the two world wars. In World War I, more than 20 million died; in World War II, the toll was more than 50 million. At the same time, World War II is acknowledged to have been the bloodiest, the greatest and the most destructive war in history.

The conflicts that occurred after World War II—the Cold War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Gulf War—are among the most critical events of our time. Likewise, regional wars, conflicts and civil wars, have caused destruction in many parts of the world. In places such as Bosnia, Palestine, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Kashmir and many others, problems continue to afflict humanity.

Another instance of a type of 'chaos' that concerns human beings as much as war is organized international terror. As authorities on the subject also agree, acts of terror have multiplied in the latter half of the twentieth century.² Indeed, it is even possible to say that terror is a phenomenon particular to the twentieth century.² Organizations devoted to racism, communism and similar ideologies, or with nationalistic aims, have engaged in acts of brutality with the help of the developing technology. Within the world's recent history, acts of terror have, time and again, fomented chaos. Much blood has been shed and countless innocent people have been maimed or killed.

The destruction of great cities: wars and disasters

Great cities will be ruined and it will be as if they had not existed the day before. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-Zaman, p. 38)

The ruin of great cities spoken of in this hadith brings to mind the destruction that now arises from war and various natural disasters. Recently developed nuclear weapons, aircraft, bombs, missiles, and other modern weapons, have caused untold destruction. These weapons with their enormous destructive power have brought about a degree of destruction never before seen. Indeed, the great cities targeted are most affected by this destruction. The incomparable destruction of the Second World War is an example of this. With the use of the atom bomb in world's greatest war, Hiroshima and Nagasaki were completely destroyed. As a result of heavy bombing, European capitals and other important cities suffered a great amount of damage.

In the last few years, hurricanes, storms, typhoons and other such disasters have had a destructive effect on the American continent as well as in several other places in the world. In addition, floods have caused mudslides, which have engulfed certain centers of population. Furthermore, earthquakes, volcanoes and tidal waves have also caused great devastation. Therefore, all this destruction brought on upon the great cities by these calamities is an important sign in each case.

Earthquakes

The Hour (Last Day) will not be established until ... earthquakes will be very frequent. (Bukhari)

There are two great hadiths before the Day of Judgment... and then years of earthquakes. (Narrated by Umm Salama r.a.)

In the last few years, major earthquakes have occurred repeatedly and are among the foremost fears of people around the world. If we look at the data collected by the American National Earthquake Information Center for 1999, we find that 20,832 earthquakes happened somewhere in the world. As a result, an estimated 22,711 persons lost their lives.³

When the figures of the past are examined, we see that the number of earthquakes was very few. According to US Geological Survey (USGS) reports, the number of earthquakes with a magnitude of 5.0 or greater that took place during the four hundred years between 1955 and 1975 was only 110. According to the data of the same institution, within only the 23 years between 1980 and 2003, the number of earthquakes with a magnitude of 6.5 or more was 1685.⁴

Poverty

The poor will grow in number. (Amal Al-Din Al-Qazwini, Mufid Al-'ulum Wa-mubid Al-humum)

Gains will be shared out only among the rich, with no benefit to the poor. (Tirmidhi)

Obviously, that period indicated by the Prophet (saas) describes conditions in our day. If we look at past centuries, we see that the difficulties and anxiety brought about by drought, war and other calamities were temporary and limited to a particular region. However, today, the poverty and difficulty of earning a living are permanent and endemic.

In the world today, poverty has reached grave proportions. The last report by UNICEF stated that one in four people of the world's population lives in 'unimaginable suffering and want.'⁵ 1.3 billion of the world's people survive on less than \$1 a day. Three billion people in the world today struggle to survive on \$2 a day.⁶ Approximately 1.3 billion people lack safe water. 2.6 billion people are without access to adequate sanitation.⁷

The collapse of moral values

The Hour will come when adultery becomes widespread. (Al-Haythami, Kitab al-Fitan)

The Last Hour will not be established until they (wicked people) commit adultery on the roads (public ways). (Ibn Hibban and Bazzar)

Men will imitate women; and Women will imitate men. (Allama Jalaluddin Suyuti, Durre-Mansoor)

People will indulge in homosexuality and lesbianism. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Muntakhab Kanzul Ummaal)

There will be prevalence of open illegal intercourse. (Bukhari)

The Hour (Last Day) will not be established until murders will increase. (Bukhari)

In our day, there is a great danger that threatens the world's social fabric. In the same way as a virus kills the human body, this danger brings about subtle social collapse. This danger is the degradation of those moral values that help to maintain a healthy society. Homosexuality, prostitution, pre-marital and extra-marital sex, sexual misdemeanors, pornography, sexual harassment and the increase of sex-related illnesses, are a number of important indications of the collapse of moral values.

Hadiths on the rejection of the true religion and the moral values of the Qur'an

Near the establishment of the Hour there will be days during which (religious) knowledge will be taken away (vanish) and general ignorance will spread... (Bukhari)

There will be a brief dark trial which will not fail to afflict everyone of this community and then when people think it is finished it will start all over again. During it a man may be a believer in the morning and an unbeliever in the evening. (Abu Dawud)

There will come a time upon the Ummat when people will recite the Qur'an, but it will not go further than their throats, (into their hearts). (Bukhari)

Before the Last Hour there will be commotions like pieces of a dark night in which a man will be a believer in the morning and an infidel in the evening, or a believer in the evening and infidel in the morning. (Abu Dawud)

A time will come when a man will not care about how he gets things, whether lawful or unlawful. (Bukhari)

There will appear in latter times a people who will gain this world with the help of religion. (Tirmidhi)

The Last Hour will not be established until there will remain those people who will neither be aware of the virtues and never prevent the vices. (Ahmad)

The Last Hour will not come before Allah takes His religion away from the people of the earth, leaving no one in it but heathens who do not recognize right or object to wrong. (Reported by Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As)

The emergence of false prophets

The Last Hour will not come before there come forth thirty Dajjals (imposters), each presenting himself as an apostle of Allah. (Abu Dawud)

Experts have noted that there has been a proliferation of so-called messiahs that began to appear in the 1970's and which has since increased substantially. According to these experts, there are two basic reasons for this increase. First is the collapse of communism, and the other is the possibilities afforded by Internet technology.⁸

The Qur'an tells of 'Isa's return to earth

Allah did not allow the disbelievers to kill 'Isa (as), but took him up into His own presence, and announced the good news to humanity that he will return to Earth in the End Times. The Qur'an provides information about 'Isa (as)'s return in several instances:

- One verse says that the disbelievers who set a trap to kill 'Isa (as) did not succeed;

(And We cursed them) for their saying, 'We killed the Messiah, 'Isa son of Maryam, Messenger of Allah.' They did not kill him and they did not crucify him but it was made to seem so to them. Those who argue about him are in doubt about it. They have no real knowledge of it, just conjecture. But they certainly did not kill him. (Surat an-Nisa': 157)

- Another verse says that 'Isa (as) did not die, but was taken from the human sphere into the presence of Allah.

Allah raised him up to Himself. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. (Surat an-Nisa': 158)

- In the 55th verse of Surah Al 'Imran, we learn that Allah will place the people who follow 'Isa (as) above those who disbelieve until the Day of Rising. It is an historical fact that, 2000 years ago, 'Isa (as)'s disciples had no political power. Christians who lived between that period and our own have believed a number of false doctrines, the chief of which is the doctrine of the Trinity. Therefore, as is evident, they will not be able to be referred to as followers of 'Isa (as), because, as it says in several places in the Qur'an, those who believe in the Trinity have slipped into denial. In such a case, in the time before the Hour, the true followers of 'Isa (as) will overcome the deniers and become the manifestation of the divine promise contained in Surah Al 'Imran. Surely, this blessed group will be made known when 'Isa (as) returns again to earth.

- Again, the Qur'an states that all the People of the Book will believe in 'Isa (as) before he dies.

There is not one of the People of the Book who will not believe in him ('Isa) before he dies; and on the Day of Rising he will be a witness against them. (Surat an-Nisa': 159)

We learn clearly from this verse that there are still three unfilled promises concerning 'Isa (as). First, like every other human being, the Prophet 'Isa (as) will die. Second, all the People of the Book will see him in bodily form and will obey him while he is alive. There is no doubt that these two predictions will be fulfilled when 'Isa (as) comes again before

the Last Day. The third prediction about 'Isa (as)'s bearing witness against the People of the Book will be fulfilled on the Last Day.

- Another verse in Surah Maryam discusses the death of 'Isa (as).

Peace be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die and the day I am raised up again alive. (Surah Maryam: 33)

When we compare this verse with the 55th verse of Surah Al 'Imran, we can recognize a very important fact. The verse in Surah Al 'Imran speaks about 'Isa (as)'s being raised to the presence of Allah. In this verse, no information is given as to whether 'Isa (as) died or not. But in the 33rd verse of Surah Maryam, 'Isa (as)'s death is referred to. This second death is possible only if 'Isa (as) came to earth again and died after living here for some time. (Allah surely knows best)

- Another verse that alludes to 'Isa (as)'s return to earth reads:

He will teach him ('Isa) the Book and Wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel. (Surah Al 'Imran: 48)

To understand the reference to the 'Book' mentioned in this verse, we must look at other verses in the Qur'an that are relevant to this subject: if the Book is stated in one verse together with the Torah and the Gospel, then it must mean the Qur'an. The third verse of Surah Al 'Imran serves as such an example:

Allah, there is no god but Him, the Living, the Self-Sustaining. He has sent down the Book to you with truth, confirming what has there before it. And He sent down the Torah and the Gospel, previously, as guidance for mankind, and He has sent down the Furqan (the criterion of judgment between right and wrong). (Surah Al 'Imran: 2-4)

- In that case, the book referred to in verse 48, that 'Isa (as) is to learn, can only be the Qur'an. We know that 'Isa (as) knew the Torah and the Gospel during his lifetime, that is, approximately 2000 years ago. Clearly, it will be the Qur'an that he will learn when he comes to earth again.

- What verse 59 of Surah Al 'Imran offers is very interesting: **'The likeness of 'Isa in Allah's sight is the same as Adam...'** In this verse we can see there must be a number of similarities between the two prophets. As we know, both Adam (as) and 'Isa (as) had no father, but we may draw a further similarity from the above verse, between Adam's (as)

descending to earth from Paradise and 'Isa (as)'s descent from Allah's presence in the End Times.

- The Qur'an says this about 'Isa (as):

He ('Isa) is a Sign of the Hour. Have no doubt about it. But follow me. This is a straight path. (Surat az-Zukhruf: 61)

We know that 'Isa (as) lived six centuries before the Qur'an was revealed. Therefore, this verse must refer, not to his first life, but to his coming again during the End Times. Both the Christian and the Islamic world are eagerly awaiting 'Isa (as)'s second coming. This blessed guest's honored presence on the earth will be the important sign of the Last Day.

- Further evidence of the second coming of 'Isa (as) can be found in the use of the word *wakahlan* in Surah Maida, 110 and Surah Al 'Imran 46. In these verses, we are revealed these commands:

Remember when Allah said, 'Isa, son of Maryam, remember My blessing to you and to your mother when I reinforced you with the Purest Spirit so that you could speak to people in the cradle and when you were fully grown (*wakahlan*) ...' (Surat al-Ma'ida: 110)

He will speak to people in the cradle, and also when fully grown (*wakahlan*), and will be one of the righteous. (Surah Al 'Imran: 46)

This word occurs only in these two verses and only in reference to 'Isa (as). The word is used to describe 'Isa (as)'s more mature age. The word refers to the age between 30 and 50, that is, to the end of youth and the beginning of old age. Islamic scholars are agreed in translating this word to refer to a period after the age of 35.

Islamic scholars rely on a tradition related by Ibn Abbas to the effect that 'Isa (as) was raised to the presence of Allah when he was young, that is, at the beginning of his 30's, and that when he comes to earth again, he will have 40 years left to live. 'Isa (as) will progress into his old age after he has returned to earth, so this verse may be said to be a proof of 'Isa (as)'s second coming to earth.⁹

The Prophet (saas) told of 'Isa's second coming

There are a few hadiths from the Prophet (saas) that refer to the second coming of 'Isa (as). The Islamic scholar Shawkani stated that there are 29 hadiths about 'Isa (as)'s return,

and that the information contained in these hadiths could not have been falsified. (*Ibn Majah*)

By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, son of Maryam, 'Isa, will shortly descend amongst you people (Muslims) as a just ruler. (Bukhari)

The Hour will not be established until the son of Maryam (i.e. 'Isa) descends amongst as a just ruler. (Bukhari)

The Prophet (saas) tells what 'Isa (as) will do when he returns:

'Isa (as), son of Maryam (as), will descend, rule for 40 years with the book of Allah and my sunnah, and die. (Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Al-Burhan fi Alamat al-Mahdi Akhir al-Zaman)

Isa (as), son of Maryam (as), will be a just judge and just ruler (in my community), break and crush the cross and kill the pig ... The earth will be so filled of peace as a vessel is filled with water. The entire world shall recite and follow one and the same Word and none shall be worshipped except Allah. (Ibn Majah)