



ANSWER

وَالْفَجْرِ

I swear by the dawn [89:1]



COMMENTARY

The first among the five oaths sworn at the beginning is Fajr (dawn). It may refer to the dawn of every day that brings about a great change in the world, and thus directs man's attention to the absolute Omnipotence of Allah. It is also possible that it refers to the dawn of some specific day.

Commentators like Sayyidnā 'Alī, Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn Zubair *radi'allāhu 'anhu* say that the word is general, and it refers to any dawn. According to another narration of Ibn 'Abbās *radi'allāhu 'anhu*, it refers to the dawn of the first of Muharram which is the start of the lunar-Islamic calendar. Sayyidnā Qatādah, among others, has interpreted it in the same way.

Some commentators, like Mujāhid and 'Ikramah, refer this to the dawn of 'the Day of Sacrifice' on the tenth of Dhul Hijjah. A narration from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās *radi'allāhu 'anhu* concurs with this view. The reason for this specification is that according to Islamic principles, Allah has made a night to precede the day. All days are preceded by their respective nights, except the 'the Day of Sacrifice', because the night that precedes the Day of Sacrifice is not the night of Sacrifice. In fact, the preceding night, according to Shari'ah, is the night of 'Arafah. Staying at 'Arafāt is the most important and foremost rite of Hajj. If a pilgrim is not able to reach 'Arafāt on the 9th of Dhul Hijjah, any time in the day or in the night following it to halt there for a while, he will not be considered to have performed Hajj at all. However if he arrives there any time during the night before the break of dawn on the 10th of Dhul Hijjah, his halt in 'Arafah will be acceptable and his Hajj will be considered valid. This shows that the day of 'Arafah has two nights, one preceding it, and another following it. The Day of Sacrifice [10th of Dhul Hijjah] has no night. From this point of view, the dawn of the day of Sacrifice, among all the days of the year, occupies a special position. [Qurtubī].

And Allah Ta'ālā knows best.

