



ANSWER

وَنَفْسٍ

and by the soul [91:7]



COMMENTARY

(and by the soul, and the One who made it well,...91:7) If, in this phrase, the particle *mā* is taken to function as infinitival particle, it signifies 'by the human soul and its perfection'. If *mā* is taken in the sense of man (من), it signifies 'by the soul and the One who proportioned it'. The word *taswiyah* means, to proportion, balance, perfect. The meaning of this word has been explained in the previous Sūrah.

(then inspired it with its [instincts of] evil and piety ... 91:8) The word *ilbām* denotes 'to cast into the heart'. The word *fujūr* denotes 'open transgression'. The meaning of *taqwā* is well-known. This sentence is linked with the seventh oath: '**and by the soul, and the One who made it well, [91:7]**', signifying that Allah has equipped man with human soul which has the capacity to distinguish between good and bad, and right and wrong. In other words, in his make-up Allah has built in him a special ability to choose freely the righteous path or the sinful path. Whichever way he takes out of his own free will, he will be rewarded or punished. This interpretation is deducible from a traceable Hadīth which is transmitted by Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Imrān Ibn Husain *radi'allāhu 'anhū*. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was sitting in the company of his followers. They asked him a question regarding Divine Destination. In response, the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited this verse. This verse will allay the doubt about Divine Destination only if the words 'then inspired it with its (instincts of) evil and piety, [91:8]' are taken in the sense that human soul has been inspired with conscience to distinguish between right and wrong, and has also been granted the ability to do good as well as the ability to commit sin. Man is not a creature of pure force or coercion. He has free will to choose his path of good or evil. He, in fact, has the option to do good or refrain from sin. The choice is his, for which he is rewarded or punished.

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah and Ibn 'Abbās *radi'allāhu 'anhumā* report that whenever the Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the verses [91:7-8] under comment would stop and recite the following supplication aloud:

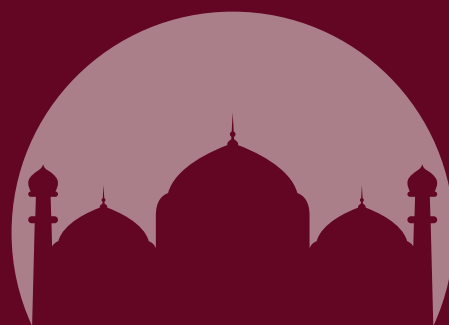
اللَّهُمَّ آتِ نَفْسِي تَقْوَاهَا أَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَ مَوْلَاهَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ رَزَّاهَا

'O Allah! Give my soul its good. You are its Guardian and Master, and the best to purify it.'

(success is really attained by him who purifies it, and failure is really suffered by him who pollutes it 91:10). This is the subject of the seven oaths. The primitive meaning of *tazkiyah* is 'inner cleanliness', signifying 'he who obeyed Allah and purified his inner and outer selves.' Verse [10]

DAY 8

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signifies 'he who caused his soul to sink in the swamp of sins will be deprived'. The word *dassa* is derived from the basic word *das*' which denotes 'to bury in the ground' as for instance it occurs elsewhere in the Qur'ān, thus: '**...or put it away into the dust? [16:59]**'

Some of the commentators have analysed that the pronouns of *zakka* 'He purified' and *dassa* 'He caused to pollute' as referring to 'Allah', signifying that 'he is successful indeed whose soul Allah has purified and he has failed whose soul Allah pollutes'. This verse has divided the entire mankind into two groups: [1] successful; and [2] unsuccessful. An example of the second group has been cited to show how it rejected the message of Allah and consequently how Allah destroyed them. Such a group will receive severe punishment in the Hereafter. Sometimes, however, an instalment of punishment is meted out to them in this world as in the case of Thamūd. Their story is recounted fully in Sūrah A'rāf [S.7:73-79; S.11:61-68; S. 26:141-159; S.27:45-53; S.41:17-18; S.54:23-32; and S. 69:4-51. Here a brief reference is made to that story and their punishment.

(... So their Lord sent eradicating torment upon them, and made it equal for all. And He has no fear of its consequence... 91:14-15). The word *damdama* refers to such tormenting scourge as is unleashed on a person or a nation again and again, until it destroys or crushes them completely. *Fa-sammahā* signifies that the scourge overtook the entire nation, men, women, children, and young and old.

In conclusion, the verse says: '**Allah has no fear of its consequence**'. It means that Divine torment that destroys a nation completely cannot be compared to the torment inflicted by the greatest king of this world, because a tyrant king who destroys his people on a large scale, fears for his life, lest the survivors or the supporters of the people destroyed should revenge on him and rebel against him. Whoever destroys others is himself in danger of avenge. Those who attack others must necessarily bear the brunt of counter-attack except Allah. When a people incur Divine punishment and are thus destroyed, Allah has no fear from any one.

And Allah Ta'ālā knows best.

