

## Commentary on Quran 30:17-27 – Signs of God in Nature and Creation

**Translation (M.A.S. Abdel Haleem):** *“So celebrate God’s glory in the evening, in the morning – praise is due to Him in the heavens and the earth, in the late afternoon, and at midday. He brings the living out of the dead and the dead out of the living. He gives life to the earth after death, and you will be brought out in the same way. One of His signs is that He created you from dust and– lo and behold!– you became human and scattered far and wide. Another of His signs is that He created spouses from among yourselves for you to live with in tranquillity: He ordained love and kindness between you. There truly are signs in this for those who reflect. Another of His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth, and the diversity of your languages and colours. There truly are signs in this for those who know. Among His signs are your sleep, by night and by day, and your seeking His bounty. There truly are signs in this for those who can hear. Among His signs, too, are that He shows you the lightning that terrifies and inspires hope; that He sends water down from the sky to restore the earth to life after death. There truly are signs in this for those who use their reason. Among His signs, too, is the fact that the heavens and the earth stand firm by His command. In the end, you will all emerge when He calls you from the earth. Everyone in the heavens and earth belongs to Him, and all are obedient to Him. He is the One who originates creation and will do it again – this is even easier for Him. He is above all comparison in the heavens and earth; He is the Almighty, the All Wise.”* <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>

### Praise at Dawn and Dusk (Verses 17–18)

Verses 17–18 open by urging believers to glorify God in the **morning and evening**, as well as at **midday and late afternoon** <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup>. Classical scholars note that these times correspond to the cycle of daily prayers (e.g. dawn, afternoon, sunset) and symbolize **constant remembrance** of the Creator <sup>4</sup>. The Qur’an embeds worship in the rhythm of **day and night**, implying that gratitude is due to God at all times. Philosopher-exegete Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī pointed out that human life is bounded by time, so praising the Eternal One during each phase of the day keeps one aware of life’s higher purpose. Modern readers can appreciate this as encouraging **mindfulness** – pausing regularly amid life’s bustle to reflect on something greater than oneself. Even in a secular age, many find value in morning or evening moments of meditation or gratitude, aligning with what the verse conveys in a spiritual context.

This call to praise also hints at the **orderly alternation of night and day**, a natural phenomenon that the Qur’an elsewhere invites people to reflect upon (for example, *“He makes the night merge into the day and the day merge into the night”* in 35:13). The cycles of light and darkness enable human activity and rest, a balance essential for life. Theologically, this regularity is a sign of *tadbeer* (divine governance) – an indicator of an underlying **intentional order** rather than chaos. For a general reader, it raises a philosophical question: why does the universe have such reliable patterns? The believer answers that this reliability is due to God’s sustaining command, a theme that will recur in verse 25.

## Cycles of Life and Resurrection (Verse 19)

Verse 19 highlights a cycle that humans observe constantly: *“He brings the living out of the dead and the dead out of the living. He gives life to the earth after its death, and you will be brought out in the same way.”* <sup>1</sup>. On a simple level, this refers to seeds (apparently lifeless) sprouting into living plants, and living plants producing seeds that later lie inert. Classical commentators like **Ibn Kathir** give vivid examples: **grains and date stones** buried in dry soil sprout into thriving crops, and from living birds or humans come inert eggs or drops of fluid <sup>5</sup>. This natural **cycle of life and death** is presented as an analogy for **resurrection** – just as rain revives dead land, God can revive dead people (*“and thus you will be brought forth [from death]”* <sup>1</sup>).

From a modern scientific perspective, we can reflect on how this cycle aligns with biology. Life is continuously **recycling matter**: the nutrients from dead organisms fertilize the soil, allowing new life to grow. Even on the cosmic scale, the death of stars spreads heavy elements that form new stars and planets – out of stellar “death” comes new celestial “life”. Yet, the verse implies something more: a **promise of literal resurrection** (“you will be brought out in the same way”), which goes beyond the closed-loop cycles science describes. Theological reflection here underscores **God’s power to enact unique events** outside the ordinary patterns. Classical scholars like **Al-Razi** argued that if one accepts that God created life initially (from dust or nothingness), restoring life after death is logically *even easier* <sup>2</sup>. Indeed, verse 27 later emphasizes this very point.

Philosophically, verse 19 challenges the modern materialist worldview which might reduce life and death to mere biochemical processes. The Qur’an invites us to see **purpose** in these processes: the seasonal return of life each spring is a **sign** (“ayat”) reminding us that a *greater Spring* – the resurrection – is within divine capability <sup>1</sup>. Even the scientific concept of the **conservation of energy/matter** (that matter is not destroyed but transformed) resonates here; a believer could say God *conserves* the essence of individuals to recreate them in another form. However, modern thermodynamics also teaches an *arrow of time*: entropy increases and organized life eventually decays. In religious terms, God is not bound by entropy or time’s arrow – He can reverse what appears irreversible, bringing order from decay. As one commentary notes, nature’s revival after death is a recurring **reminder** that “what you are promised is true” <sup>6</sup> – i.e. that new life (in an afterlife) is as feasible to God as reviving a barren land.

## Human Origins from Dust (Verse 20)

Verse 20 declares: *“One of His signs is that He created you from dust and– lo and behold!– you became human and scattered far and wide.”* <sup>7</sup>. This refers to the humble origin of humankind. In Islamic tradition, this primarily alludes to the creation of the first human, **Adam**, from earthly clay or dust. **Ibn Kathir** cites a striking hadith: *“Allah created Adam from a handful (of dust) taken from all over the earth, so the children of Adam came out resembling the earth: some were red, white, or black and in between; some were easy-going, some difficult, some good and some evil.”* <sup>8</sup>. Classical exegesis saw this as explaining the **diversity of human temperaments and colors** by our literal material origin – different soils imparted different qualities <sup>9</sup>. The verse fast-forwards from that primordial moment to humanity spread across the globe (“scattered far and wide”), evoking how an initial pair gave rise to many nations and peoples.

Modern science of course offers a different narrative for human origins – through **evolutionary biology** – yet intriguingly, it still affirms that our bodies are composed of the **stuff of earth**. The elements in our bodies (carbon, iron, calcium, etc.) are literally the same atoms found in soil and rock. In a poetic sense, we

are dust come to life. The Qur'an elsewhere says *"He began the creation of man from clay, then made his descendants from an extract of humble fluid"* <sup>10</sup>, combining the idea of an initial clay creation with the biological process of procreation from sperm. This layered description resonates with modern understanding: life may have originated from simple inorganic matter (clay minerals are hypothesized by some scientists to have helped assemble early organic molecules), and then developed through reproductive biology. Some modern commentators even connect "created you from dust" with the notion that life's building blocks could have formed from Earth's raw materials over eons <sup>11</sup>. They also note the Quranic insight that **water** is fundamental – *"We made every living thing from water"* (21:30) – which science confirms since water is essential for life's chemistry <sup>12</sup>.

For a general reader, the spiritual takeaway is that human beings, despite all our intellect and civilization, come from **humble beginnings**. We are fashioned from dust by a Higher Power, a reminder against arrogance. It aligns with the existential idea that we are *part of nature*, yet (from a religious view) endowed with something beyond mere dust – a soul or spirit – by God's command. This verse, therefore, bridges **science and spirituality**: yes, our bodies originate from earthly elements (a scientific fact), but the Qur'an asks us to *ponder* how astonishing it is that inert matter was *elevated* into conscious life by divine design <sup>13</sup> <sup>14</sup>. The rapid phrase "then lo and behold!" emphasizes the **wonder** of this transformation – something that material processes alone struggle to fully explain. How did conscious, moral, creative humans emerge from lifeless matter? The verse invites the answer that it is through the intentional work of **Al-Khaliq** (The Creator).

## Companionship, Love, and Mercy (Verse 21)

Verse 21 moves from creation of humans in general to the creation of human **pairs**: *"Another of His signs is that He created spouses from among yourselves for you to live with in tranquillity: He ordained love and kindness between you. There truly are signs in this for those who reflect."* <sup>15</sup>. This beautiful verse touches on the **social and emotional fabric** of human life. Classical tafsirs like Ibn Kathir explain that God created Eve (Hawwa) from Adam's own self (traditionally, from his rib) so that humans would have an innate affinity for their mates <sup>16</sup> <sup>17</sup>. If men and women were of entirely different species, they reasoned, they would not find harmony; instead, God made them "of the same kind" to ensure intimacy and affection <sup>17</sup>. The verse highlights *tranquillity* (sukun) and *love and mercy* (mawadda and rahma) as the foundations of the marital bond.

Philosophically, one can reflect on how remarkable it is that **love** exists at all. A purely materialistic view might reduce love to hormones and evolutionary instincts for survival of the species. Yet why should such a profound emotional and spiritual experience accompany the biological drive? The Qur'an's answer is that this is a *divine gift* – one of the **signs (ayat) of God** in our personal lives. The capacity of two individuals to form a deep, compassionate union is seen as evidence of a benevolent higher design. Indeed, many people, regardless of religion, describe love as **mysterious or sacred**. The verse invites "those who reflect" to see in mutual love a pointer to the divine Creator who instilled that love.

From a social perspective, this verse also underscores the importance of family and stable partnerships. Modern readers can appreciate its wisdom: psychological studies confirm that healthy, loving relationships contribute greatly to one's mental tranquillity and well-being. The phrase "find tranquillity in them" captures the ideal of marriage as a source of emotional refuge. Notably, the verse does not restrict the "sign" to only the context of marriage; one could extrapolate it to the broader human need for companionship and community. Humans are not meant to live in isolation – we are created social beings, finding peace with

each other. This too aligns with scientific observations in fields like evolutionary psychology: cooperation and pair-bonding are key to human survival. The Qur'an, however, frames it as part of **God's intentional plan**, embedding mercy into human relations.

In classical tafsir, the mention of "love and mercy" was sometimes linked to stages of life: love (passionate attraction) often initiates a union, and mercy (kindness, compassion) sustains it, especially as couples face life's challenges and grow older. One can see how this Quranic insight harmonizes with lived human experience, and challenges modern cynicism that might treat love as merely contractual or utilitarian. The verse subtly suggests a **moral dimension** too: that marriage is not just for gratification but for *sukoon* (tranquillity) and mutual care. In an era where the meaning of marriage is widely discussed, this ancient verse contributes a thoughtful perspective: the enduring things that make us human – love, empathy, the longing for understanding – are, in the Islamic view, *Signs of God* implanted in our nature.

## The Heavens, the Earth, and Human Diversity (Verse 22)

Shifting to a grander scale, verse 22 reads: *"Another of His signs is the creation of the heavens and earth, and the diversity of your languages and colours. There truly are signs in this for those who know."* <sup>18</sup> . Here we see two domains of wonder: the **cosmic** and the **human**. The creation of the heavens and earth is the Qur'an's usual shorthand for the entire **universe** – everything above (stars, skies, space) and everything below (earth, world around us). It is presented as an evident sign of a Creator. Classical scholars like *Al-Razi* often mused on the marvels of the heavens: the orderly movements of sun, moon, and stars, the expansive sky holding itself up without pillars (as alluded to in Quran 13:2), and the earth perfectly suited for life. They treated these as rational proofs (*dalā'il*) of an intelligent, purposeful **Cosmic Designer** <sup>19</sup> <sup>20</sup> .

Modern cosmology has only deepened the awe one might feel. We now know the universe had a **beginning** (the Big Bang) and has been expanding ever since. Some commentators see a striking resonance with Quran 21:30, which says the heavens and earth were once a "joined entity" before being split apart, and Quran 51:47, where God says *"We built the heaven with strength and indeed We are expanding it."* Classical exegetes interpreted 51:47 as referring to God's **power** and the vastness of the sky <sup>19</sup> , but the phrasing *"expanding it"* remained intriguingly open. Today, after Edwin Hubble's 1929 discovery that galaxies are racing apart, many see this as a Qur'anic anticipation of an expanding universe <sup>20</sup> <sup>21</sup> . While skeptics might argue this is coincidental or a later interpretation, it undeniably shows the verse is **compatible** with modern cosmology in a way that ancient readers couldn't fully appreciate. For believers, this alignment bolsters the sense that the Qur'an's author is the Creator Himself, who "tells us truths about the universe that humans would only discover much later" <sup>11</sup> . At the very least, it provides a wonderful point of reflection: the *entire cosmos*, with its billions of galaxies, operates by laws of physics that make life possible – a fact that science describes and the Qur'an invites us to **interpret** as God's sign.



*The star-filled heavens have long inspired both scientific inquiry and spiritual reflection. The Qur'an praises "those who remember God...and reflect on the creation of the heavens and earth," concluding "Our Lord, You have not created all this in vain" (3:191). The vast, lawful cosmos is seen as an unmistakable sign of Divine wisdom and power.* <sup>22</sup> <sup>23</sup>

The second part of the verse zeroes in on human diversity: **different languages and colors**. How fascinating that the Qur'an, in the 7th century, highlighted linguistic and ethnic diversity as a *sign* of God, rather than a curse or a flaw. In the Bible, the diversity of languages was portrayed as a result of the Tower of Babel incident (often interpreted as a punishment scattering people). The Qur'an offers a different perspective: the many tongues and hues of humanity are **intentional and positive signs**. Classical commentators like **Al-Tabari** and **Ibn Kathir** remark that no two humans are exactly alike in voice or appearance – and this reflects God's creative artistry and wisdom in managing human affairs. By giving people different languages, communities formed and knowledge grew in unique ways; by giving different skin colors and features, humanity was made able to adapt to varied environments, and also to **recognize** one another (as another verse, 49:13, says). In fact, an **early hadith** explicitly links this verse to the idea that all humans come from Adam but were made diverse so they could learn and benefit from each other's differences <sup>8</sup> .

Scientifically, the evolution of varied languages and ethnic traits can be explained by historical and genetic processes. Linguistics traces language families branching over time, and genetics shows how isolated populations developed distinguishing features due to climate and gene flow. Yet, beyond the mechanisms, there is a philosophical wonder: humans, unlike animals, have *thousands of languages* – sophisticated vehicles of thought – and a spectrum of appearances, yet we are one species capable of interbreeding and understanding one another (with effort). The Qur'an invites "*those who know*" to see in this not a random outcome, but a **sign of intentionality**. One could draw a modern parallel: just as biodiversity in ecosystems is now understood as valuable and even necessary, human diversity enriches our collective life. It challenges us to practice tolerance and curiosity, arguably aligning with God's intent that we "*come to know one another*" (49:13).

This verse also subtly combats any notion of racial superiority: if all colors and languages are God's signs, none is inherently better than another. Medieval Islamic commentators, living in multicultural societies, often used this verse to remind Muslims that **unity of faith** does not require homogeneity of race or tongue. In a modern context, this message is still deeply relevant. It aligns with the inclusive view that **multiculturalism** is a strength, not a weakness – a view now supported by studies showing diverse teams are more innovative. For a general reader, seeing a 1400-year-old scripture celebrate diversity can be eye-opening, especially given the tribal context of Arabia at that time. It underscores how the Qur'an consistently links **cosmic phenomena** and **human realities** as mirrors of each other – both the starry heavens and the human family in all its variety are signs pointing to the same truth: a Wise Creator behind it all.

## Sleep and Seeking Livelihood (Verse 23)

Verse 23 turns to a deeply personal sign within our daily experience: *"Among His signs are your sleep, by night and by day, and your seeking His bounty. There truly are signs in this for those who can hear."* <sup>24</sup> . Sleep is something we often take for granted, yet here it is highlighted as a wonder. Think about it: we spend roughly a third of our lives asleep, in a state of **powerlessness and unconsciousness**, and yet it is vital for our survival. The Qur'an in another passage (39:42) describes sleep as a kind of *minor death* where God temporarily takes the souls, returning them upon waking until the appointed day of one's death. Thus, classical scholars likened each day's waking to a **resurrection** and each night's sleep to a **preview of death** – a daily reminder of our dependence on God's mercy (that we *wake up* at all) <sup>24</sup> .

Ibn Kathir and others note the contrast in this verse: night is mainly for rest (sleep), and day is for *seeking God's bounty*, i.e. working and earning livelihood <sup>25</sup> <sup>26</sup> . This rhythm is part of the natural order God set up. Pre-modern commentators were aware that not everyone sleeps at night (some have night jobs or worship at night), and that naps by day are also common (siesta cultures, etc.), which is why the verse says "by night **and** by day" – covering all human patterns of rest. The pairing of sleep and work in the verse teaches balance: neither perpetual toiling with no rest (which would burn a person out), nor endless sleep with no endeavor (which would waste one's life). There is a **harmony** in alternating rest and effort.

Scientifically, modern research has uncovered just how essential sleep is. It's when memories consolidate, the brain clears toxins, and the body repairs itself. Chronic lack of sleep impairs almost every cognitive function. This was not fully known historically, yet the Qur'an already draws attention to the blessing of sleep. It calls it one of God's signs – implying intention. One could say the **circadian rhythm** built into us is a sign of wise design. The verse invites "those who can hear" (i.e. who are attentive or willing to listen) to ponder this. Indeed, if one listens to their body and mind, one **hears** the need for sleep regularly – a need programmed in our very biology.

The phrase "seeking His bounty" (ابْتِغَاءَ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ) is a gentle reminder that while we exert ourselves in work, the *provision* ultimately comes from God's bounty. This guards against pride in one's own efforts and against the anxiety of thinking it's all on one's shoulders. You work, but you trust the outcomes to God. This mindset can be healthy even for the non-religious: it encourages one to do one's best, yet not be consumed by stress over results beyond one's control.

For modern readers, there's also a socio-economic reflection: humans have designed societies with artificial schedules (24/7 businesses, night shifts, etc.), but our bodies are still tuned to day-night cycles. Recognizing **our natural limits** is important. In an age of electric light and the internet, many struggle with insomnia or

burnout from ignoring the need for downtime. Verse 23, read with “ears to hear,” is strikingly relevant: we have to respect the signs within us. There is almost a *theology of self-care* here – rest is a divine gift, not a waste of time.

Additionally, by calling our daily toil “seeking God’s bounty,” the verse dignifies **all honorable work**. Earning a living is not separate from spiritual life; it’s intertwined, as long as one remembers the ultimate Provider. Classical Islam made much of this point, encouraging people to work ethically and view their profession as part of worship. In sum, the alternation of sleep and striving is both a mercy and a test. It structures our lives and points to higher truths: that we are **dependent creatures** (who must sleep) and **responsible agents** (who must strive) – a duality at the heart of the human condition.

## Lightning and Rain: Fear and Hope (Verse 24)

Verse 24 brings our attention to dramatic weather events: *“Among His signs, too, is that He shows you the lightning that terrifies and inspires hope; and He sends water down from the sky to restore the earth to life after death. There truly are signs in this for those who use their reason.”* <sup>27</sup> . This vivid imagery would have been viscerally familiar to the first Arab audience – and it remains relatable to us today. A thunderstorm can indeed invoke *fear* (the flash and boom of lightning can be frightening, and in older times lightning could set fires or kill, causing real dread) and *hope* (as dark clouds also promise rain, vital for crops and life, especially in arid regions). The Qur’an captures this dual emotional response in a single phrase, showing a keen observation of human psychology in face of nature.

Classical commentators often mention that lightning (**barq**) causes fear in travelers or those exposed, yet farmers and parched land dwellers rejoice in the rain that follows <sup>28</sup> <sup>29</sup> . The pairing of fear and hope here has also been moralized by scholars: a believer, seeing these signs, feels fear of God’s power and hope in His mercy – an ideal spiritual state is between fear and hope. Thus nature’s spectacle is linked to one’s inner moral and spiritual life. Ibn Kathir, for instance, cites how lightning’s flash can almost blind the eye (referencing Qur’an 24:43) and notes that the **beneficial rain** comes with the potentially dangerous lightning, all within God’s wisdom <sup>29</sup> .

Scientifically, lightning is an electrical discharge caused by charge separation in storm clouds. We now know it even has a fertilizing effect: lightning strikes convert atmospheric nitrogen into nitrates that fertilize soil. Rain, of course, is crucial for the water cycle, renewing life continuously. The phrase “revives the earth after its death” is both poetic and accurate – a dry field blooms after rainfall as if resurrected. Modern ecology observes how deserts flower when rare rains come. This recurring natural “resurrection” is another pointer to the possibility of literal resurrection, as earlier verses noted. And interestingly, the **water cycle** itself is described in several Quranic passages with remarkable accuracy for a 7th-century text – e.g., Quran 30:48 (just a few verses after these) describes how winds drive clouds, which then pour rain. Such descriptions show that even without modern instruments, early peoples, and certainly the Qur’an’s author, paid close attention to **patterns in nature** and attributed them to divine arrangement.

One might also consider this verse in light of modern climate awareness. Water “from the sky” isn’t magic; it’s part of a global system. But the Qur’an’s phrasing encourages seeing the **providence** in the system: the fact that Earth has a climate cycle that sustains life is not a random accident but a calibrated gift. Our reason (“people who use their reason”) should lead us to recognize that the delicate balance of temperature, evaporation, atmospheric pressure, etc., which yields rain, points to a **Mind behind nature’s laws**. Today, as we understand how easily that balance can be disrupted (climate change), one might also

read this verse as a caution to respect those divine **laws of nature**. Abuse the environment, and the hoped-for rain may turn to punishing storms or droughts – reminders of our dependence on greater forces.

For the general reader, the emotional impact of the verse is striking: it's essentially saying, "Look at the storm. Why do you *feel* both fear and hope? Who designed a world where the same event can elicit two opposite feelings and bring both peril and mercy?" The Qur'an's answer: a **purposeful, compassionate God** designed it so. Lightning becomes more than a physical phenomenon; it's almost a *metaphor* for life's trials that come with both danger and mercy. And indeed, many people, religious or not, find thunderstorms eerily sublime – frightening yet captivating. The verse suggests that by **reasoning** on this experience, one can move from awe of nature to awe of the One who made nature.



*Lightning splits the night sky, a vivid union of fear and hope. The Qur'an says God "shows" us this striking phenomenon as a sign. The fearsome power of lightning – capable of splitting trees or dazzling the eyes – comes hand-in-hand with life-giving rain. In this duality, believers see a lesson: with Divine power (which can inspire awe and fear) comes Divine mercy (which brings hope and sustenance). The balance of natural forces that revive a barren earth testifies to a wise Creator* <sup>27</sup> .

## Sustaining the Cosmos and Calling Forth Life (Verse 25)

Verse 25 takes a cosmic and eschatological turn: "Among His signs, too, is the fact that the heavens and the earth stand firm by His command. In the end, you will all emerge when He calls you from the earth." <sup>30</sup> . The first part of this verse asserts that the very **existence and persistence** of the universe is dependent on God's command (amr). Classical commentators explained that the sky remains aloft, and the earth stable, only because God **sustains** them. In an era before scientific gravity, they expressed amazement that the "sky does not fall down" and the earth doesn't just disintegrate <sup>31</sup> . The Qur'an in another verse (22:65) says God holds up the sky from falling on the earth except by His leave. To us moderns, "holding up the sky" might sound quaint, but think of it as a way of saying: the **laws of physics** that keep planets in orbit, that keep our atmosphere intact, and prevent cosmic chaos are, in the Qur'anic worldview, an extension of God's *constant*



*command*. Rather than God winding up a clockwork universe and leaving it be, Islamic theology tends to emphasize continuous sustenance – a kind of divine **immanence** in maintaining creation at every moment.

Interestingly, many scientists today talk about the fine-tuned constants of nature (like gravitational constant, cosmological constant). The heavens and earth “stand firm” only because these constants have just the right values to allow stars, planets, and life. A tiny change and the universe might collapse or never form galaxies. A believer would see this fine-tuning as exactly what the verse hints: a **command** behind the scenes, keeping everything in balance. The phrase “by His command” (bi-amrihi) can also be understood as “by His order or permission” – implying intentional governance. In Islamic thought, natural laws are basically God’s *customs* (sunnat Allah) in creation; He can override them (miracles) but generally sustains them consistently (hence science is possible). So, while the ancients marveled in a pre-scientific way, a modern person can marvel in a scientific way: *Why* do the laws of physics exist and hold universally? Why is there something rather than nothing, and an ordered something at that? The verse’s answer: it’s a sign of the One who commands existence.

The second half of the verse abruptly shifts to the **Resurrection**: one day, a single call will resound and “*you will emerge*” from the earth (graves, or dust) instantaneously <sup>32</sup> <sup>33</sup>. Classical tafsirs fill in the detail: this refers to the **Trumpet Blast** or the angel Israfil’s call at God’s behest, which will raise the dead on Judgment Day. The juxtaposition in the verse is powerful: the same **command** currently holding the cosmos together will be the command that shakes it and brings forth new life at the end of time. In Quran 39:68, it’s described that when the Trumpet is blown, all in heavens and earth will swoon, and on the next blast, they will rise. Verse 25 compresses that into one image – God calling, and humanity responding out of the earth’s dust.

To the modern skeptical ear, resurrection may sound like fantasy, a violation of all we know about death’s finality. But the Qur’anic logic consistently is: if you accept the **first creation**, why reject the second? If an entire universe could originate from nothing (as many scientists now agree happened in the Big Bang), then reviving creatures on a planet is a smaller task in comparison. It’s worth noting that some scientists foresee scenarios (far in the future) where information or consciousness might be *uploaded* or particles reassembled – ideas that, while speculative, show that the concept of re-creating a person is not considered metaphysically impossible, just currently beyond reach. The Qur’an, of course, attributes that power solely to God, whose knowledge encompasses every atom of our being.

The verse calls those who deny resurrection to consider the **precedent** of creation’s order and life’s cycles. It aligns with the theme found in verse 19 and others: the one who can make a dead earth green can surely make dry bones live. As **Maududi** comments, “no human processes serve, for the Call of Allah Himself has come” – meaning at that moment, normal processes are bypassed by God’s direct command <sup>34</sup>. For a believer, this is a reassuring promise of justice (everyone will be brought to account) and reunion (with lost loved ones, for instance). For a general reader, it’s at least a thought-provoking challenge: perhaps the *finality* we ascribe to death is not an absolute truth, but a relative one within the closed system of current nature. If there is a God who created nature itself, such a God could *open that closed system* at will.

Finally, “those who use reason” were addressed in the prior verse, and here implicitly as well – implying it’s not blind faith, but reflective faith. The Quran consistently argues that belief in afterlife is not a blind leap but inferred from observations of nature and morality. In a sense, modern worldviews that accept a beginning of the universe but balk at an end orchestrated by God are being nudged here: if we already live in a universe where **the incredible has happened once** (existence from non-existence), why can it not

happen again? The verse thus ties together **cosmology** (heavens/earth upheld) and **eschatology** (resurrection call) in one sweep of divine command – a sweep that challenges us to see **all of time** (from creation to the end) as a coherent story under God's authorship.

## God's Absolute Dominion (Verse 26)

In verse 26, we get a concise, overarching principle: *"Everyone in the heavens and earth belongs to Him, and all are obedient to Him."* <sup>35</sup>. This is a statement of **God's sovereignty** and ownership of creation. Everything and everyone – from the largest galaxy to the tiniest microbe, from angels to humans to animals – are God's possession, and ultimately **submit to His will**.

One might ask, "Are all creatures really obedient to God? Don't humans disobey?" Theological scholars distinguish between different types of obedience. In one sense, all creatures follow the **natural laws** God set for them (stars follow their orbits, cells obey biology, etc.). In this way, even a human who might defy God's moral commands still cannot escape obeying God's decree in terms of mortality, aging, physical needs, and so on – they remain "under God's dominion". The Arabic "kullun lahu qanitun" (all are devoutly obedient to Him) <sup>36</sup> <sup>35</sup> can imply a **universal submission**: the entire universe is "muslim" (in the literal sense of submitted) to God's governing rules. Another Quranic verse (17:44) says *"The seven heavens and the earth and all within them glorify Him, but you do not understand their glorification."* This suggests that in ways beyond our perception, the creation is in a state of worshipful order towards God. Classical commentators often took this to mean that non-living things and animals glorify God by their very nature or even literally, though humans can't perceive it <sup>37</sup> <sup>38</sup>.

For humans, who have free will, their moral obedience is indeed often lacking. But even their rebellion only occurs because God allowed that scope as a test; they still cannot avoid ultimately meeting God's command (as verse 25 showed with resurrection). A modern analogy might be how characters in a story may have wills of their own in the narrative, but they still all "belong" to the author and can't jump out of the story. Similarly, we exist within the framework of God's creation and lordship – we can choose actions, but we can't, for instance, choose to not age or to ignore gravity.

Philosophically, this verse invites reflection on **ownership and humility**. If everything we are and have actually belongs to God, then our **ego-driven sense of possession** is an illusion. We don't *own* ourselves even; our life is on loan, so to speak. This can foster humility and responsibility (a steward knows the estate isn't his, but he must care for it knowing the true Owner will hold account). It also offers comfort: if I belong to God, I'm not a stray or meaningless being in a vast cosmos – I'm part of a **bigger plan** under a loving Master's care.

Modern worldview, especially secular, places heavy emphasis on individual autonomy ("my life is mine"). The Qur'anic worldview balances that by saying, yes, you have been given *agency*, but you are still within God's dominion. Interestingly, even secular thought acknowledges our lack of ultimate control – we're beholden to genetics, environment, chance events. The Qur'an attributes that overarching control to God rather than impersonal fate.

There is also a unifying message here: all creatures are *equally* God's subjects. This theoretically undermines any claim to divinity or lordship by part of creation over another. For example, it's a rebuttal to those who worship saints, stars, or spirits – since those entities "belong to Him" and obey Him, why worship something that is itself under God? In Islam's context, this was a direct challenge to pagan Meccans who worshipped

celestial bodies and idols; the Qur'an reminds them those very things are God's possessions and obey His laws, so only **Allah** is worthy of worship <sup>37</sup> <sup>39</sup> .

For the general reader, this verse can speak to a sense of **cosmic order**: rather than a random universe, here everything is depicted as part of a grand submission – like an orchestra playing under a conductor. Even if one doesn't initially share the faith perspective, it's a poetic way to view reality: as a vast domain ruled by one benevolent King, where each creature's existence is purposeful under that rule. It certainly provides a counter-narrative to the existentialist idea of a cold, indifferent cosmos. The Qur'an asserts instead an **intimately governed cosmos**, full of signs of its Lord.

## The Cycle of Creation and Re-Creation (Verse 27)

The passage culminates with verse 27: *"He is the One who originates creation and will do it again – this is even easier for Him. He is above all comparison in the heavens and earth; He is the Almighty, the All Wise."* <sup>2</sup> . This serves as a conclusion and summary: establishing God's unmatched power, affirming resurrection (re-creation), and emphasizing God's transcendence and wisdom.

"He originates creation" refers to God as the **Prime Originator** (Al-Mubdi'). In Islamic theology, the term *ibda'* (originating) means creating without any prior model – creatio ex nihilo. "And then repeats it" clearly alludes to **resurrection** or possibly the cyclical renewal of creation. The **classical commentators** unanimously took it as resurrection of humans after death <sup>40</sup> . Some also extrapolated a general truth: God could recreate *anything* He created the first time. Interestingly, the Qur'an elsewhere (21:104) speaks of God folding up the heavens and producing a new creation, which some interpret as perhaps even cycles of cosmic creation (though that's speculative). The phrase "even easier for Him" is meant for human understanding – logically, repeating a feat is easier than doing it first time. As Al-Razi and others point out, nothing is "difficult" for an omnipotent God in an absolute sense <sup>2</sup> . But from our limited perspective, if we already accept the harder task (the origination of everything from nothing), why doubt the easier task (resurrecting the dead)? The Qur'an employs this **a fortiori** argument in several places to drive home the reasonableness of belief in afterlife.

Modern cosmology doesn't speak of resurrection in religious terms, but it does consider scenarios of a cyclic universe (Big Bang, Big Crunch, possibly repeating). While the standard model now is an indefinitely expanding universe towards heat death, some theories suggest a "big bounce". If the universe can potentially oscillate, one could poetically relate that to God "repeating creation" on a cosmic scale. However, the Quran is likely focused on the renewal of life (the human drama of ending and resurrection) rather than endless cosmic cycles. Still, the openness of Quranic language means it isn't at odds with whichever way science goes about the ultimate fate of the cosmos – because *however* it ends, the theological point is **God is in control of it**, not blind physics. In fact, the verse says God will do it again *even more easily* – implying the second creation (the afterlife world) will be instant and effortless at God's word, unlike the toil and labor we associate with making things in our world.

"He is above all comparison in the heavens and earth" (Arabic: *walahu al-mathalu al-a'la*) <sup>40</sup> is a dense phrase. It can mean God has the highest description or example; nothing we know in creation can fully analogize Him. Classical scholars often glossed it as: *the loftiest attribute belongs to God* <sup>41</sup> . In context, it might be emphasizing that **nothing is comparable to His power** in originating and re-originating creation. Some have also read it as *to Him belongs the supreme analogy*, meaning the argument given (of first creation vs second) is the definitive analogy to grasp His ability. Either way, it asserts **transcendence** – God is not like

the created order, not limited by the processes and difficulties we know. The names **Almighty (Al-'Aziz)** and **All-Wise (Al-Hakim)** at the end combine power and wisdom, as throughout this passage. It's a final reminder that God's power is wielded with purpose and wisdom. Creation wasn't aimless (a theme earlier in verse 8 of this surah, and elsewhere), and resurrection too serves a wise purpose: moral reckoning and the fulfillment of promises.

For a modern reader, these attributes might resonate with the search for meaning: if an Almighty and Wise being created us, then our lives have meaning and the injustices of the world are not permanent – there will be a wise re-balancing (hereafter). Conversely, one could say if there is no such being, one confronts a universe that doesn't guarantee ultimate justice or renewed life. The Qur'an posits that because God is both able and just, **resurrection must happen**. The Spanish existentialist Unamuno once wrote about the emotional need for immortality – the cry that our thirst for justice and life not be ultimately futile. Verse 27 essentially promises that it isn't futile, because **God's power and wisdom ensure a coherent moral narrative** to existence: creation, probation, resurrection, judgment, and finally a perfected eternal life for each soul, in line with divine justice and mercy.

In summary, these verses (17–27) elegantly interweave **scientific** observations (day-night cycles, life-death cycles, human biological origins, weather phenomena, cosmic stability), **philosophical** contemplation (purpose in diversity, meaning of love, necessity of an initial cause, logical plausibility of resurrection), and **theological** doctrines (God's oneness, power, wisdom, mercy, afterlife). They invite *general readers* to look at the everyday world – from the ground we walk on to the spouse by our side to the stars overhead – and see not just nature, but **signs pointing beyond themselves**. Each verse says in its own way: *This did not happen by chance; it is meant to teach you about the One who made you*. The classical tafsirs of Al-Razi, Ibn Kathir, and others often marvel in flowery language at these verses, and today's scientific insights give us *even more* reasons to marvel. The alternation of night and day, the water cycle, the composition of our bodies, the genetic unity of diverse races, the Big Bang and the expanding cosmos – all are things humanity has come to know in detail, and far from diminishing the wonder, this knowledge can **deepen** it. As the Qur'an elsewhere challenges: *“Do they not look into the realm of the heavens and earth and everything that God has created?...”* (7:185). In an age of Hubble telescopes and genome sequencing, one might respond: *Yes, we do look – and what we see is astonishing*. These verses in Sura Ar-Rum remind us that astonishment can be a path to faith and understanding, as long as we maintain that blend of **intellectual inquiry and humble reflection** that the Qur'an encourages. They align with a worldview that does not pit God against science, but sees God's handiwork *through* science – and they gently push back against a reductive, purposeless view of the world, offering instead a picture of a living, meaning-filled universe continually pointing us to its Wise Originator and the ultimate destination He has prepared for us.

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