

# Tafseer Surah Az-Zalzalah (الزلزلة)

Notes on Nouman Ali Khan's Concise Commentary of the Quran

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## Introduction

- This surah only speaks about the Day of Judgement
- This surah can be divided into three parts:
  - When the earth expels the dead from inside of it and human beings are in horror and shock
  - The testifying of the earth over the deeds of its inhabitants and the categorizing of people into groups
  - The shock of human beings when they see every tiny deed of theirs, whether good or bad, recorded

## Tafseer of the Verses

### 1. When the earth is shaken with its [final] earthquake

#### a. The Arabic word *zalzalah* (earthquake)

- i. It means a violent movement or intense disturbance
  1. It is in reference to the quake that will take place on the Day of Judgement
- ii. In the Arabic, the past tense is being used because this will be the final earthquake after which no other earthquake will take place
- iii. The language suggests that this earthquake was hidden and part of the earth all along and is now being released. It was Allah who was holding it back
  1. It is as if the earth has always wanted to rattle in this violent manner perhaps due to the sins of all mankind

### 2. And the earth discharges its burdens

- a. The word 'earth' is mentioned again to remind and bring emphasis to the point that this very earth we are inhabiting is the one that will rattle
- b. The Arabic word *athqaal* (burdens)
  - i. The word is usually used to indicate a pregnant women
    1. It is also used to refer to when someone is overwhelmed with debt
  - ii. In the context of this verse, it means the dead bodies buried inside of it that the earth will spit out on the Day of Judgement
    1. So the earth is given an image of a pregnant female. Just as the pregnant woman can no longer hold her child inside and gives birth, the same way the earth will no longer be able to hold what is inside of it and release it
    2. Not only the bodies are buried inside of it but also the deeds of those dead corpses

- a. So this verse is in reference to the sins of people as well, which are a sort of burden on them

### **3. And man says, "What is [wrong] with it?"**

- a. Some said that the 'man' in this verse is in reference to the disbelievers because the believers were already expecting this day
  - i. However, the interpretation that it is in reference to all mankind is stronger
    - 1. The early parts of the Day of Judgement will be horrifying for everyone
      - a. In the confusion and fear, mankind will make this statement

### **4. That Day, it will report its news**

- a. Meaning the earth will testify and speak about what occurred on it
- b. We have some reports in our tradition which suggest that the earth will be given the ability to speak. It bears witness to our deeds, good and bad, and will testify accordingly on the Day of Judgement

### **5. Because your Lord has commanded it**

- a. Meaning Allah inspired it to speak. He is able to do whatever He wills and has power over all things
  - i. Allah will also give other things the ability to speak that usually do not, such as, our body parts and Hellfire

### **6. That Day, the people will depart separated [into categories] to be shown [the result of] their deeds**

- a. Meaning the people that day will be categorized by their deeds and no other attribute will matter that day
  - i. They will return from the station of the Judgment in separate groups. This means that they will be divided into types and categories: between those who are miserable and those who are happy, and those who are commanded to go to Paradise and those who are commanded to go to the Hellfire [Ibn Katheer]

### **7. So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it**

- a. When you compare two things by measure of weight, it is called *mithqaal* in Arabic
- b. The Arabic word *dharrah* (atom)
  - i. Refers to one part of the small fibers of dust
    - 1. It's a small speck of dust within the fibers of dust
  - ii. In the context of this verse, it means that any good deed that we do, no matter how small, we will see it that day in our book of deeds
    - 1. Some may even find good deeds that they never even imagined to be counted because in their minds it was nothing
    - 2. The word *ya'amal* (does) means he did the deed consciously with intention
  - iii. The scales on the Day of Judgement are different than we are used to here in this life. In this life, we measure success based on results but in the afterlife we will be rewarded for the smallest of good deeds even if they did not produce any results
    - 1. Ex: a poor person giving \$50 may be worth more on the Day of Judgement than a wealthy person giving \$10,000

2. Our intentions also play a big role in how heavy a deed will be in the afterlife. The more sincere the intention, the more valuable the deed
- c. The word *khayr* (good) can also mean doing what is better or best
- d. Allah mentions the good deeds first because He wants to give us hope

**8. And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it**

- a. The Arabic word *sharr* (evil) is not just in reference to an evil deed but could also mean the worst deed or even harm caused to others
- b. Meaning every single bad deed that was done by us, no matter how small, we will see it on the Day of Judgement in our book of deeds
  - i. Some may find deeds which they thought to be insignificant but they will be heavy in their book of evil deeds