

# Tafseer Surah al-Fajr (الفجر)

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

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## Introduction

- I. This *surah* is about:
  - A. Human beings struggling to come close to Allah through the ritual of hajj
  - B. The person whose *nafs* has not attained tranquility
    1. He/she is all over the place
  - C. The person whose *nafs* has attained tranquility
- II. Purposes of the *surah* according to *Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*:
  - A. Present the spectacles of Divine greatness and power in the universe
  - B. Conditions of mankind
  - C. Declaration of the bad ending of the conceitful

## Tafseer of the Verses

### 1. By the *fajr* (dawn)

- a. This is when the beginning of the *fajr* prayer starts
- b. Why swear by it? Various opinions on it, such as:
  - i. It is a time when a believer is closest to Allah and the heart softest because he struggles to wake up for it
  - ii. It is in reference to the dark time between the time of Prophet Eesa and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them both) when there was no communication between the heaven and earth
    1. So the *fajr* is seen as metaphorical to refer to the Quran coming down after hundreds of years of no revelation from Allah. This is why the word *fajr* is used to indicate that the Quran broke that continuation and came through as a light just like the light of dawn breaks through the darkness of the night
  - iii. It is in reference to Hajj
    1. The *fajr* is in reference to the morning of the 10th of Dhul Hijjah
    2. Ustaadh Nouman follows this view

### 2. And by ten nights

- a. Various opinions on what this means such as:
  - i. It is in reference to the last ten nights of Ramadan
  - ii. It is in reference to the first ten days of Dhul Hijjah
    1. Ustaadh Nouman follows this view

### 3. And [by] the even [number] and the odd

- a. Various opinions on what this means such as:
  - i. It is in reference to the even and odd nights during the last ten nights of Ramadan
  - ii. It is in reference to the two or three days of *Tashreeq* for pilgrims during Hajj to stay in Mina
    - 1. Ustaadh Nouman follows this view

**4. And [by] the night when it passes**

- a. It is in reference to the night of Muzdalifah passing quickly
- b. Some said it is in reference to the night in general when it spreads with its darkness (*Tafseer al-Muyassar*)

**5. Is there [not] in [all] that an oath [sufficient] for one of perception?**

- a. Meaning the rituals of Hajj are there to learn to control desires, however, that is not what is happening and the Quraysh seem to have lost the spirit of Hajj
  - i. You are suppose to become a transformed person after the experience of Hajj
  - ii. Ustaadh Nouman favors this because he believes the first four verses are in reference to the Hajj
- b. Some said it means are the previous oaths not sufficient for the one who is able to reason? (*Tafseer al-Muyassar*)

**6. Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with 'Aad**

- a. People of 'Aad are being given as an example of those who were destroyed because they did not control their desires

**7. [With] Iram - who had lofty pillars**

- a. Iram could be their ancestor's name or it could be the capital of their state
  - i. Some said it could also be in reference to their king or elite tribe
- b. What do 'lofty pillars' mean?
  - i. Some said it is in reference to the massive size of the people of 'Aad
    - 1. There was no one like them before
  - ii. Some said it means their great ability to make columns
    - 1. They were geniuses at it

**8. The likes of whom had never been created in the land?**

- a. Meaning they were physically huge unlike anyone before or architecturally more advanced than anyone else depending on which interpretation one goes by for the previous verse
- b. Allah wants to draw Quraysh's attention to it because they could see the ruins of 'Aad and realize how architecturally advanced they were yet still destroyed

**9. And [with] Thamud, who carved out the rocks in the valley?**

- a. The Thamud are from the descendents of 'Aad
- b. They used to build their homes in mountains

**10. And [with] Pharaoh, owner of the pegs?**

- a. Some said it is in reference to the fact that the Pharaoh used to have a large army that would camp every few distances when traveling
  - i. Others said it is in reference to the pegs on which the Pharaoh would crucify people, a form of torturous death

- ii. Others said it is in reference to the Pharaoh's massive construction projects by which he built a huge empire

**11. [All of] whom oppressed within the lands**

- a. Meaning they oppressed the people
  - i. Even today there are very harsh conditions in constructing large buildings that jeopardize poor workers and put their lives in danger. Wealthy corporations and individuals take advantage of the poor till today

**12. And increased therein the corruption**

- a. Meaning they did too much of corruption inside the land
  - i. They were abundant in it

**13. So your Lord poured upon them a scourge of punishment**

- a. Meaning these elites were unjustly punishing those under them and then Allah punished these elites
  - i. Allah is using these stories to teach Quraysh a lesson because they too commit crimes against those under them

**14. Indeed, your Lord is in observation**

- a. Meaning Allah is ready to ambush and punish the Quraysh

**15. And as for man, when his Lord tries him and [thus] is generous to him and favors him, he says, "My Lord has honored me."**

- a. Meaning the person fails to see the generosity and favor of Allah on him as a test
  - i. He may even start to believe that he is worthy of it somehow and begin looking down on others. He may start to feel entitled
- b. Whatever good we have been given by Allah should be used for good
- c. *Rizq* (sustenance) in this verse is defined in two ways:
  - i. When Allah dignifies you
    - 1. Whoever gives us dignity is part of the *rizq* of Allah
  - ii. When Allah gives you blessings

**16. But when He tries him and restricts his provision, he says, "My Lord has humiliated me."**

- a. Meaning the person fails to see that this is also a form of test for him from Allah
  - i. Ex: when someone used to be rich but now is poor
- b. The verse means that when Allah gives him his exact measure without anything extra
  - i. He gives him the bare minimum
- c. As humans, we all waver between verses 15 and 16. When we are bestowed with blessings, we begin to feel entitled. When we are restricted in our provisions, we begin to feel depressed
  - i. In both cases, we forget about Allah and His testing us. We get consumed in our *nafs*

**17. No! But you do not honor the orphan**

- a. The Arabic word *kalla* (No)
  - i. This is an emphatic negation, which means the views expressed are not the truth but the truth is something else under the surface
- b. Why would Allah honor the Quraysh when they do not even honor the orphan?

- c. What does it mean to honor the orphan?
  - i. It means to take care of them
  - ii. Honoring them is part of honoring the religion of Allah

**18. And you do not encourage one another to feed the poor**

- a. Meaning that such people do not motivate others to feed the poor
- b. Ibn 'Ashoor said that it means they do not encourage the right to feed the poor
- c. Such actions are also a means of earning Allah's forgiveness
- d. The Arabic word *miskeen* (poor)
  - i. Means someone who is stuck in a place and cannot get out of it

**19. And you consume inheritance, devouring [it] altogether**

- a. Meaning the person is so lost in himself/herself that he/she eats the inheritance of a dead relative quickly so that it is not shared among the other relatives
  - i. The strong among the Quraysh would devour the weak family members' inheritance
- b. This is a problem of greed

**20. And you love wealth with immense love**

- a. The previous is done because such people love wealth too much
  - i. When people's love of wealth exceeds too much, they begin to violate other people's rights just so they can get as much wealth as possible

**21. No! When the earth has been leveled - pounded and crushed**

- a. Meaning all of this is going to come to an end
  - i. It is in reference to the Day of Judgement
- b. The earth will be flattened
  - i. Meaning there will be no structures on it but just a wide flat land
    - 1. So no one will be able to hide anywhere

**22. And your Lord has come and the angels, rank upon rank**

- a. The angels have different ranks, therefore, they will descend on the Day of Judgement in rows based on their ranks
  - i. Just picture a military of angels

**23. And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but what good to him will be the remembrance?**

- a. This verse shows that Hell already exists
- b. Mankind will fully remember their evil deeds on the Day of Judgement when they witness Hell
  - i. However, it will be of no benefit because it will be too late

**24. He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life."**

- a. Meaning he/she will regret not prioritizing his/her life properly
  - i. The person will have made no investment for his/her afterlife, which is the real life

**25. So on that Day, none will punish [as severely] as His punishment**

- a. Meaning the punishment of Allah is more severe than anyone else's

**26. And none will bind [as severely] as His binding [of the evildoers]**

- a. Meaning no one imprisons the way Allah will imprison and arrest the evildoers on the Day of Judgement

**27. [To the righteous it will be said], O reassured soul**

- a. Allah is dignifying this type of soul
- b. The Arabic word *mutmainnah* (reassured)
  - i. Means something that is meant to rise or erupt and you go out of your way to calm it down
    - 1. Our *nafs* wants to erupt all the time through desires, hunger, temptations, etc. but it came to Allah with submission and calmed all those things down. In other words, it controlled itself
  - ii. In the context of this verse, it means this person controlled themselves and did not let his/her temptations, desires, greed, etc. take hold of them

**28. Return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him]**

- a. Meaning it will be happy to go back to Allah at the time of death and this will be a great joy for it
- b. The happiness is mutual in this case between both the slave and his Maker

**29. And enter among My [righteous] servants**

- a. Allah will introduce this type of soul to His other righteous slaves in the afterlife

**30. And enter My Paradise.**

- a. This is the third item being mentioned given to this type of soul
  - i. It is the entrance into paradise with all its promised rewards