

Tafseer Surah al-Ghashiyah (الغاشية)

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

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Introduction

- I. The entire *surah* is dedicated to warning
 - A. It just briefly delves into pleasure of paradise as a relief to the believing listeners but then returns to the warning
- II. It is a very visual depiction of some of the things that will occur on Day of Judgement
- III. It can be divided into three parts
 - A. Warning of the Day of Judgement
 1. A brief relief for the believer
 - B. Contemplation of the world around us
 - C. Warning of punishment

Tafseer of the Verses

1. Has there reached you the report of the covering one?

- a. Listener here is being told to remember something and revisit that memory anew
- b. The 'covering one' is in reference to the Day of Judgement
 - i. It is called this because nobody will be able to escape it and it will cover everyone
 1. It will also hover over our minds on the Day of Judgement and we will not be able to think of anything else. People will not be able to believe what is happening before their eyes due to its horrors

2. [Some] faces, that Day, will be humbled

- a. People will be able to tell the sadness of people just through the expression on their faces on the Day of Judgement
- b. They will be humbled, fearful, and overpowered on that day
 - i. Such people did not volunteer themselves to feel this way in this life so they will be forced to feel it on the Day of Judgement

3. Working [hard] and exhausted

- a. This is because their time in the grave was not that of rest but punishment
- b. This verse is alluding to the fact that there is a life that occurs in the grave

4. They will [enter to] burn in an intensely hot Fire

- a. This is in reference to hell
- b. It is a fire that will be at its max heat

5. They will be given drink from a boiling spring

- a. There are wells in hell that are scorching and bubbling and are constantly at their max temperature
 - i. This will be such people's drink as an additional form of punishment
- b. Perhaps even their very faces will be stuffed in the boiling spring
 - i. Some readings of the verse suggest that the inhabitants will voluntarily stuff their faces in this boiling spring in order to try and get some sort of relief from the intensely hot fire of hell

6. For them there will be no food except from a poisonous, thorny plant

- a. They will find no nourishing food for themselves
- b. The people in hell will try to search for food but will not be able to find anything except this poisonous plant. It is the dried up version of the onion plant, which becomes poisonous when dried up
- c. Some said that the plant is in reference to a special type of fruit found on a tree in hell because there is no other variation of food in hell

7. Which neither nourishes nor avails against hunger

- a. Meaning they keep trying to fill their stomach with it but it does not fill them up
 - i. They keep doing it even though they are finding it disgusting and painful to eat due to starvation

8. [Other] faces, that Day, will show pleasure

- a. Now a temporary relief is being given to the believing listeners
- b. These are faces that will be relaxed, comfortable, happy, and softened
 - i. This is due to the luxury and beauty they witness before them

9. With their effort [they are] satisfied

- a. Meaning they put up the effort in this life to achieve a comfortable afterlife
 - i. They worked hard to earn Allah's pleasure and abide by His commands
- b. They are also happy that they got to make those efforts in the worldly life which resulted in their current state of pleasure

10. In an elevated garden

- a. Now we get to see what these satisfied people are looking at
- b. Their garden is physically raised high so they have an excellent view
 - i. It will be a heavenly landscape

11. Wherein they will hear no unsuitable speech

- a. Meaning they will not hear any nonsense or speech that is of no benefit
 - i. Even our speeches and discussions will be elevated to a higher degree

12. Within it is a flowing spring

- a. Meaning it will be continuously fresh

13. Within it are couches raised high

- a. It is elevated so they can view the entire company
- b. It is also to show the luxurious nature of paradise
 - i. They will be treated like royalty

14. And cups put in place

- a. Meaning the person does not even need to get up to serve himself/herself, rather, the cup will already be there for him/her and a servant will fill it up

15. And cushions lined up

- a. Meaning the pillows stacked up in rows which is another indication of luxury
- b. It could also suggest that there will be company of guests because people will visit each other

16. And carpets spread around

- a. These carpets will be unlike anything we are used to seeing in this life

17. Then do they not look at the camels - how they are created?

- a. The Arabs used to travel on their camels for days so they had quite bit of a time staring at it through their journeys
 - i. They are being asked to realize the blessings of the camel and how Allah created it for their travels. It's a way to teach them humility

18. And at the sky - how it is raised?

- a. They also got to stare at the sky a lot and marvel at its beauty
- b. Allah is asking them to ponder over it and humble themselves

19. And at the mountains - how they are erected?

- a. Meaning how they were put down and made prominent

20. And at the earth - how it is spread out?

- a. When the Arabs used to travel, they would just see a flat land far and wide

21. So remind, [O Muhammad]; you are only a reminder

- a. Meaning keep reminding the Quraysh and inviting them to the truth
 - i. The Prophet's (pbuh) only job is to deliver the true message
- b. The previous verses indicate that if they were to truly ponder over the creation, they would come to realize the truth of Islam and follow it

22. You are not over them a controller

- a. Meaning the Prophet (pbuh) is not in charge over them and cannot do more than delivering the message. Guidance only comes from Allah

23. However, he who turns away and disbelieves

- a. Meaning the one who rejects the message that the Prophet (pbuh) came with

24. Then Allah will punish him with the greatest punishment

- a. Two interpretations:
 - i. It means that Allah will punish them in the afterlife
 - ii. It means that they will be subdued by the Prophet (pbuh) eventually having power over them in the future
- b. They would be given the 'greatest' punishment because they rejected the Prophet (pbuh) in his lifetime
 - i. The disbelievers who rejected the Prophet (pbuh) in his lifetime are worse than those disbelievers who came after his death

25. Indeed, to Us is their return

- a. Meaning these disbelievers will eventually die and be returned to Allah with humility and then will be judged. There is no escaping it

26. Then indeed, upon Us is their account

- a. Meaning Allah alone will pass judgement over them and hold them accountable for their actions