

Tafseer Surah al-Buruj (البروج)

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

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Introduction

- I. Allah begins this *surah* with a powerful oath connecting the sky, full of towers and vigilant stars, to the Day of Judgment. It ends with a reminder not only of Allah's might, but also of the mercy He has bestowed on us by giving us the noble Qur'an

Tafseer of the Verses

1. By the sky containing great stars

- a. If there is something that is spectacular or captivating and gets your attention, it is included in the word *burj*
 - i. It is used in this verse because the stars captivate us by their beauty
 - ii. The word *burj* is also used to indicate a large fortress for protection
 1. In this context, it could also be in reference to the security in the heavens that was increased after the revelation of Qur'an started to keep the *jinn*s out

2. And [by] the promised Day

- a. This is in reference to the Day of Judgement, a day in which all creation is promised to be gathered for judgement
 - i. Its details are well defined and clear to us through the Qur'an and Sunnah

3. And [by] the witness and what is witnessed

- a. Meaning the sky and the stars are witnesses over us and the Day of Judgement is what will be witnessed
- b. Other interpretations:
 - i. Allah is the witness and the *kalimah* is the witnessed
 - ii. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) will bear witness over his nation on the Day of Judgement
 - iii. Every nation will bear witness over its prophet that was sent to it on the Day of Judgement
 - iv. Angels who write our deeds bearing witness against us on the Day of Judgement
 - v. Our body parts testifying against us on the Day of Judgement

4. Cursed were the companions of the trench

- a. Some said this is in reference to the persecution that took place at the hands of the disbelievers against believers in one of the previous nations. Those believers were rounded up, tortured, and killed
 - i. The details of what happened is mentioned in a [hadith](#)

- ii. Ustaadh Nouman is of the view that it is not in reference to a particular historical account but those who will be put in Hell and punished in its trenches because of their atrocities against the believers
- b. How does it tie to the previous verses?
 - i. We are being told that there were witnesses to such atrocities and they will be held accountable for them on the Day of Judgement

5. [Containing] the fire full of fuel

- a. Meaning the fire that will burn them in Hell and torture them for their harms against the believers
- b. Those who understood it to be in reference to a particular historical account said it is in reference to the disbelievers that prepared the fire to throw the believers into it alive (*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*)

6. When they were sitting near it

- a. Meaning the people of Hell right before they are cast into it on the Day of Judgement
 - i. It is a form of psychological torture before the actual punishment in the Hellfire
- b. Those who understood it to be in reference to a particular historical account said it is in reference to the disbelievers sitting on chairs next to the fire to punish the believers (*Baghawi*)

7. And they, to what they were doing against the believers, were witnesses

- a. Meaning these disbelievers that are thrown into Hellfire are fully aware of the atrocities they committed against the believers. They are witnesses over their own actions

8. And they resented them not except because they believed in Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy

- a. The Arabic word *naqam* (resent)
 - i. When something agitates you and you hate it very much to the point that you are disgusted with it
 - ii. Those who carry this type of resentment do not want to hear any defense of the object of their hate and dismiss any argument in its defense
- b. Allah uses the words Might and Praiseworthy to describe Himself despite the suffering of the believers. Why?
 - i. Might - to show the believers that Allah has the power to make this right and those who behaved in this manner against the believers will be held accountable
 - ii. Praiseworthy - to tell the believers that He is worthy of praise in all cases whether people suffer or not
 - 1. This is actually the perfect time to remember Allah because the *Shaytan* will come to the believer in that weak moment to destroy his faith in Allah

9. To whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. And Allah, over all things, is Witness

- a. Everything in the heavens and earth is under surveillance and Allah is a witness Himself over everything that is happening in them

10. Indeed, those who have tortured the believing men and believing women and then have not repented will have the punishment of Hell, and they will have the punishment of the Burning Fire

- a. Believing men and women are mentioned separately because they could each suffer different types of trials
- b. It could also be applied to believers hurting other believers because the verse is general
 - i. It is a warning against anyone who causes harm to other believers
- c. The trials of the believers in this world are a way to purify them from sins and strengthen their faith in Him

11. Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds will have gardens beneath which rivers flow. That is the great attainment

- a. This is the opposite case of those in the previous verse
- b. This is the ultimate success and there is no greater success than this

12. Indeed, the crushing grip of your Lord is severe

- a. Meaning the vengeance of Allah against His enemies and their punishment is severe
- b. There is a hint in this verse for the believers that the help of Allah is coming

13. Indeed, it is He who originates [creation] and repeats

- a. It could mean either:
 - i. Allah can punish the disbelievers in this life and then again in the afterlife
 - ii. Allah created life the first time and can bring it back again after its demise to execute His justice

14. And He is the Forgiving, the intensely Loving

- a. Allah may be highlighting these two Attributes to show the believers that:
 - i. Allah is forgiving their sins through the harms of the disbelievers
 - 1. It could also be a message to the disbelievers to repent since that door is still open to them
 - ii. The word used for love is a type of love that never gets old or rusty
 - 1. He loves His supporters from the righteous

15. Owner of the honorable Throne

- a. Allah here is describing the nobility and beauty of His Throne
 - i. This Throne has goodness in it

16. Effector of what He intends

- a. Meaning Allah does whatever He wants over and over again because whatever He does is good
 - i. Ex: He forgives whomever He wants, punishes whomever He wants, and there is nothing that can force Him to do anything (*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*)

17. Has there reached you the story of the soldiers

- a. Now Allah is telling us of the powerful armies that He dealt with in the past
 - i. The point is to show the Quraysh that they are nothing compared to those who had come before them

18. [Those of] Pharaoh and Thamud?

- a. These are the two examples being given of those nations with powerful armies

19. But they who disbelieve are in [persistent] denial

- a. Meaning these disbelievers just deny these previous accounts as if they did not happen

- b. Some said it means that what inhibits these disbelievers in Mecca from believing is not that the news of the previous nations has not reached them, rather, it is because they want to follow their desires (*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*)

20. While Allah encompasses them from behind

- a. The image being painted here is that these armies thought they were in control and had their victims surrounded but it was actually Allah who was in control and had them surrounded from behind
 - i. The same fate could come onto disbelievers of Mecca as well

21. But this is an honored Qur'an

- a. Meaning Allah could punish them as He did the previous nations but instead He has sent them an honorable Qur'an
 - i. Had it not been for the Qur'an, the nations may have been wiped out because they deserve it

22. [Inscribed] in a Preserved Tablet

- a. Meaning the Qur'an is guarded in a preserved tablet from any change or corruption taking place in it
- b. We should feel honored that such a noble book has been given to us and no amount of hate from the disbelievers should discourage us from it