

# Tafseer Surah at-Takwir (التكوير)

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

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## Introduction

- I. The surah begins with an elaborate description of the cosmic signs of the Day of Resurrection, when souls rejoin bodies. This first passage culminates with the scene of people presenting their deeds before Allah, knowing exactly what they have done
- II. This surah can be broken up into three parts
  - A. When statements
  - B. Verses 15-26 is the second section
  - C. Concluding last three verses

## Tafseer of the Verses

### 1. When the sun is wrapped up [in darkness]

- a. The Arabic word *idhaa* (when) is used for future in classical Arabic
  - i. Even when it is used with a past tense verb, it is still in reference to the future
- b. Meaning it is going to happen all of a sudden and it is bound to happen
  - i. The word 'when' suggests that there is no doubt about it
- c. The 'wrapping up' of the sun could mean either:
  - i. The sun itself on the Day of Judgement will look like as if it is being folded up
  - ii. The light of the sun on the Day of Judgement will look like as if it is being wrapped up
    1. The planet will begin to darken all of a sudden
    2. It is a shocker to start that terrifying Day

### 2. And when the stars fall, dispersing

- a. The people will now try to see if they can use the light from the stars because the planet is dark
- b. It could mean either:
  - i. The stars will begin to look dirty and will not be visible to us as they are in this world
  - ii. The people will feel as if the stars are being plucked out of the sky
    1. They will begin to disappear before their eyes
    2. The stars will seem to fall like raindrops

### 3. And when the mountains are removed

- a. Mountains being destroyed is often mentioned as an attribute of the Day of Judgement because they are symbols of stability and the most prominent structures on the planet

### 4. And when full-term she-camels are neglected

- a. Meaning the type of investment that the Arabs used to hold most valuable and would treat in a royal manner would be neglected due to the horrors of the Day of Judgement
  - i. Just to get perspective for our own times, it is like someone leaving a Ferrari with the doors open in a bad neighborhood
    - 1. Nobody would do this unless they had bigger problems
- b. The point of mentioning this is to show that such things will no longer carry any value to man on that Day

**5. And when the wild beasts are gathered**

- a. Meaning the wild animals will be gathered together with the humans in the same place
  - i. Everyone will be in one place together
  - ii. However, due to the horrors of that Day nobody will care that they are standing next to a wild beast

**6. And when the seas are filled with flame**

- a. All the bodies of water will merge into one and then they will be ignited which will cause them to boil over

**7. And when the souls are paired**

- a. Meaning the body and the soul will be merged together again
- b. Some also interpreted it to mean that the personal devil that every person has assigned to them called the *qareen* will be paired up with the person
  - i. This devil will testify against you on the Day of Judgement
- c. It could also mean that the people will be paired up with those they used to spend time with in this world
  - i. This is why it is essential that we surround ourselves with righteous believers
- d. It could also mean that people with similar prominent qualities will be paired together
  - i. Ex: the charitable ones will be in one section while the greedy ones in another

**8. And when the girl [who was] buried alive is asked**

- a. This was a pre-Islamic practice in Arabia where girls were considered a burden so would be killed while still young. They used to consider having girls as humiliating
  - i. They also used to feel that others would take them over and then take their daughters, thereby, having an upper hand over them

**9. For what sin she was killed**

- a. Meaning she will be asked for what embarrassing crime was she murdered?
  - i. The objective is to condemn this evil practice

**10. And when the records 'of deeds' are laid open**

- a. Meaning when book of deeds for each individual is laid open so that everyone may read their own records

**11. And when the sky is stripped away**

- a. Meaning the sky on the Day of Judgement will be peeled away like the skin of a sheep

**12. And when Hellfire is set ablaze**

- a. Hell already exists but the meaning here is that Allah will ignite it anew like a fresh flame

**13. And when Paradise is brought near**

- a. Meaning paradise will be brought close to the obedient slaves of Allah

**14. A soul will [then] know what it has brought [with it]**

- a. This is the conclusion of all the previous statements
- b. Everyone will know what they have put forth for themselves on the Day of Judgement

**15. So I swear by the retreating stars**

- a. The 'retreating stars' mean the twinkling stars that continuously seem to appear and disappear

**16. Those that run [their courses] and disappear**

- a. Meaning they move in a sweeping fashion like a shooting star

**17. And by the night as it closes in**

- a. Meaning when the sky is not fully dark yet right before it becomes night
  - i. This is when the sky appears blue in the horizon
- b. It could also be in reference to the end of the night right before the day appears
  - i. This is also when the sky begins to appear blue in the horizon
  - ii. Ustaadh Nouman believes it is in reference to this one due to the next verse

**18. And by the dawn when it breathes**

- a. Meaning the day when it emerges with its light
  - i. The stars now begin to disappear due to the light of the sun
- b. The day is given the imagery of breathing and coming to life
  - i. The purpose of mentioning the above verses could be to show that the Qur'an has come like an emerging light that gives life to everything around it. Before it, there was darkness everywhere with just a few bits of goodness here and there

**19. [That] indeed, the Qur'an is a word [conveyed by] a noble messenger**

- a. Verses 15-18 are building up to this point
  - i. Allah first spoke about the book of deeds and now He is speaking about the book of revelation (i.e. Qur'an)
- b. The noble messenger is in reference to the angel Jibraeel, who is trusted by Allah to deliver the Qur'an to Muhammad (pbuh)
  - i. Jibraeel in Hebrew means 'the powerful creature of God'

**20. [Who is] possessed of power and with the Owner of the Throne, secure [in position]**

- a. Meaning Jibraeel possesses great power and holds a great station with Allah
  - i. This is all to show the integrity and reliability of Jibraeel's delivery of the message

**21. Obeyed there [in the heavens] and trustworthy**

- a. Meaning he is obeyed by those in the heavens and trusted to deliver the Qur'an to Muhammad (pbuh)
  - i. Meaning this revelation from Allah is very secure

**22. And your companion is not [at all] mad**

- a. Meaning the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) whom you falsely accuse of being insane is speaking the truth
  - i. In addition, the Quraysh knew of his integrity, reliability, and truthfulness before the revelation. They used to refer to him as Al-Amin (the trustworthy one)

**23. And he has already seen Gabriel in the clear horizon**

- a. This is in reference to the first meeting of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) with Jibraeel when he ran out of the cave of Hira

- i. Jibraeel had taken over the whole sky and the Prophet (pbuh) could see nothing but Jibraeel all over the sky. He was huge in size

**24. And Muhammad is not a withholder of [knowledge of] the unseen**

- a. Meaning the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) does not hold back what is revealed to him from the unseen. He's not trying to sell us anything
- b. Another meaning could be that Muhammad (pbuh) is not greedy and was not looking for such information from the unseen, rather, he was chosen and it came to him
  - i. Those who go out looking for such information from the unseen on their own are fake

**25. And this 'Qur'an' is not the word of an outcast devil**

- a. Meaning this Qur'an is not the speech of the devil who is expelled from Allah's mercy
  - i. It may be a refutation against the Quraysh who were accusing the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) of being possessed by a jinn

**26. So where are you going?**

- a. Meaning so why are you walking away from this Qur'an given the preceding facts?!

**27. It is not except a reminder to the worlds**

- a. Meaning the Qur'an is a reminder for all people for all times
  - i. It also includes the jinns

**28. For whoever wills among you to take a right course**

- a. Meaning whoever among you is strong willed and wants to remain steadfast on the true path, then let him follow this Qur'an

**29. And you do not will except that Allah wills - Lord of the worlds**

- a. This is in reference to the afterlife
  - i. Meaning nothing will be allowed to happen on the Day of Judgement except as Allah wills. There will be no more options but only obedience
- b. It could also mean that the only reason we are being allowed to do what we want in this life is because Allah has allowed it
  - i. Allah has allowed us some time to do as we please in this life
- c. Some said it means that you do not will becoming steadfast on guidance or being astray except with the will of Allah [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]
  - i. The will of the slave follows the will of Allah