

Tafseer Surah Al-Insaan (الانسان)

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

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Introduction

- I. According to *Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer*, this surah addresses the following points:
 - A. Reminding human beings of their origin
 1. The wisdom behind their creation
 2. Their return to one of two places after death
 - B. Showing the bliss of paradise
 - C. Fastening on the believers
 - D. Inviting the disbelievers to Islam

Tafseer of the Verses

1. **Has there [not] come upon man a period of time when he was not a thing [even] mentioned?**
 - a. This is in reference to semen. The objective is to remind us of our filthy origin in order to humble us
 - b. Meaning, there was once a long period of time when the human being was nonexistent and nobody even spoke about him/her [*Al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer*]
 - c. This question is being asked in order to make us reflect on questions, such as, where were we before we existed? How did we come into existence? Who shaped us the way we are? The answer, of course, is that it is by Allah's power, blessings, and grace. This verse is referring to the stage of the fetus in the womb before the soul is blown into it [Al-Sabuni]
2. **Indeed, We created man from a sperm-drop mixture that We may test him; and We made him hearing and seeing**
 - a. This small 'sperm-drop mixture' contains our whole DNA which determines how we will turn out physically. We come from our mothers' wombs to this planet which is also like a womb, so we go from one womb to another until we get to our final destination in the afterlife
 - b. The mixture is in reference to the fluids of both the male and female [Al-Sabuni]
 - c. The testing is in reference to fulfilling Islamic legal obligations enjoined on him/her [Al-Sabuni]
 - i. In other words, the test is whether we will abide by the commandments of Allah or not
 - d. At the end, Allah mentions two qualities which He gave us: hearing and sight

- i. These two qualities encompass intellect, understanding, and recognition and that is why they are the greatest of the senses. We hear the verses of Allah, see the marvels of the creation, which leads us to recognizing the greatness of the Creator through our intellect [Al-Sabuni]

3. Indeed, We guided him to the way, be he grateful or be he ungrateful

- a. Meaning Allah left it up to each individual whether he/she wants to be grateful or ungrateful after He shows us the way
- b. The 'way' is explained to us through the tongues of the messengers when they clarify to us the way of guidance and misguidance. After this, the person either chooses to believe and be grateful to Allah or be ungrateful by going astray and rejecting the verses of Allah [Al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer]

4. Indeed, We have prepared for the disbelievers chains and shackles and a blaze

- a. This is the end of those who chose to be ungrateful. The image is being given that of a prisoner. Such a person will be in chains and shackles in Hell. It's sort of a double torture because not only is the person being burned but the chains and shackles are also heating up adding to the pain

5. Indeed, the righteous will drink from a cup [of wine] whose mixture is of *Kafur*

- a. The subject is now being changed to make us feel better by discussing what will happen to those who chose to be grateful
- b. *Kafur* was a mixture the Arabs put in their drink to add exotic flavoring to it

6. A spring of which the [righteous] servants of Allah will drink; they will make it gush forth in force [and abundance]

- a. These people will have their own private access to the spring of *Kafur*, which will gush out in large amounts like a waterfall. They can make it flow and run it whenever they want like a faucet
- b. Meaning the *Kafur* is a running spring in paradise from which the righteous will drink whenever they want. There are many different types of springs in paradise and *Kafur* is just one of them [Al-Sabuni]

7. They [are those who] fulfill [their] pledges and fear a Day whose evil will be widespread

- a. The 'pledge' here is the promise they made to Allah that they will do good work and they feared the evil of the Day of Judgement, which will be all over the place
- b. Now, we begin to see a discussion on the characteristics of those who will enjoy the blessings mentioned in the previous two verses [Al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer and Al-Sabuni]:
 - i. These were people who in this world used to abide by the laws of Allah by engaging in good deeds
 - ii. They also used to fear the horrors of the Day of Judgement which will be widespread on that dreadful day

8. And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive

- a. Meaning these righteous people used to give their food to those in need despite their love of wealth and desire for this very food. In fact, they used to prefer giving to them over their own selves [Al-Sabuni]

- 9. [Saying], "We feed you only for the countenance of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude**
- a. Meaning, they do not want any reward, compensation, praise, or recognition from those to whom they give their food. They only do this for the sake of Allah alone, for His pleasure, and with the hope to see Him
- 10. We fear from our Lord a horribly distressful Day**
- a. Meaning, they fear the Day of Judgement and the intensity of the horrors of that day, thus, they are feeding those in need with hopes that Allah will protect them on that day due to this deed of theirs [Al-Sabuni]
 - b. The faces of the wretched that horrible day will be gloomy due to its intensity and awfulness [Al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer]
- 11. So Allah will protect them from the evil of that Day and give them radiance and happiness**
- a. Meaning, Allah will protect them on the Day of Judgement due to their obedience to Him and doing good deeds in this world. The faces of such people will be blooming with radiance and their hearts filled with happiness which is the opposite of the wretched [Al-Sabuni]
- 12. And will reward them for what they patiently endured [with] a garden [in Paradise] and silk [garments]**
- a. Meaning he compensated them for the patience that they showed with paradise and all kinds of joys
 - b. Their reward of entering paradise and wearing silk garments is due to the fact that they endured the following in a patient manner [Al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer]:
 - i. Their patience over acts of obedience to Allah
 - ii. Their patience over the Decrees of Allah
 - iii. Their patience over holding themselves back from sins
- 13. [They will be] reclining therein on adorned couches. They will not see therein any [burning] sun or [freezing] cold**
- a. In this verse, Allah is describing their place of seating and residence in paradise. They will be lying down on decorated couches and wearing stunning clothes. They will also be under constant shade so that they will neither experience burning heat nor freezing cold. There will be sparkling lights and a blowing breeze coming from Allah's Throne reviving the souls [Al-Sabuni]
- 14. And near above them are its shades, and its [fruit] to be picked will be lowered in compliance**
- a. Meaning the shades of the trees will be close and the person will have to put in little to no effort in getting what he/she wants of the fruits of paradise. The person could get it while sitting or standing because the fruits of paradise are subservient to whoever wants to eat them [Al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer]
 - i. Ibn Abbas said, "Whenever someone desires to eat the fruits of paradise, the branches lower themselves so that the person may pick whatever fruit he/she wants" [Al-Sabuni]

15. And there will be circulated among them vessels of silver and cups having been [created] clear [as glass]

- a. Meaning there will be servants revolving around them with silver vessels and glasses also made up of silver but they are so crystal clear that they are transparent like glass [Al-Sabuni]
 - i. The silver in the cups is so refined that you can see right through them

16. Crystalline silver, filled precisely as desired

- a. You can see what's inside these silver transparent glasses from the outside because they are so crystal clear. There is nothing like it in this world. They will be poured drinks in it according to exactly how much they want without increase nor decrease [Al-Sabuni]

17. And they will be given a cup [of pure wine] flavoured with ginger

- a. Ibn 'Abbas said, "Every cup mentioned in the Qur'an is in reference to wine." The drink that is flavored with ginger is the best of drinks. The righteous in paradise will be given such drinks [Al-Sabuni]

18. [From] a fountain within Paradise named *Salsabeel*

- a. There is a spring in paradise flavored with ginger called *Salsabeel*, which is named this way due to the intensity of its sweetness and the ease with which it is swallowed without causing any sort of discomfort. The righteous are sometimes given drinks mixed with *Kafur* and at other times drinks mixed with ginger. The former are cold drinks and the latter hot ones. However, the *Muqarraboon* are of a higher status than the righteous, therefore, they can go to such springs and drink directly from them and are not restricted by being given drinks that are only mixed with liquids from such springs [Al-Sabuni]

19. There will circulate among them young boys made eternal. When you see them, you would think them [as beautiful as] scattered pearls

- a. These are young boys that Allah created specifically for the purpose of serving the people of paradise. They will remain eternally on their beauty and youth without ever growing up or getting old [Al-Sabuni]
- b. If we were to look at them, we would think they are pearls spread across paradise due to the freshness in their faces, beautiful colors, large quantity, and scattered distribution [Al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer]
 - i. If this is the case with the servants of paradise, then imagine how much more magnificent will be those whom they serve! [Al-Sabuni]

20. And when you look there [in Paradise], you will see pleasure and a vast kingdom

- a. The previous things mentioned were just the appetizer and when the person looks at his actual assets in paradise, he/she will see a huge dominion
- b. Meaning, if you were to look into paradise, you would see pleasures that are impossible to describe and a vastly large kingdom that no other king has ever possessed [Al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer]
- c. We know from authentic *hadiths* that the lowest ranked person in paradise will get a kingdom ten times then that of this whole earth, so what do you think about those who are higher than him in rank?! [Al-Sabuni]

- 21. Upon the inhabitants will be green garments of fine silk and brocade. And they will be adorned with bracelets of silver, and their Lord will give them a purifying drink**
- a. We are being described in this verse the decorative elements of the people of paradise. They will wear various types of clothes but the best of them will be made of silk. They will be given silver bracelets to wear and there is even mention of gold bracelets in other places. They will also be given drinks which were never spoiled by any hands, are not impure like the wine of this world, and do not transform into urine [Al-Sabuni]
 - b. This *surah* discusses three stages of drinks:
 - i. When we get them ourselves
 - ii. When they are served to us by the servants of paradise
 - iii. When they are given to us by Allah Himself
- 22. [And it will be said], "Indeed, this is for you a reward, and your effort has been appreciated"**
- a. Meaning, these pleasures are being given to you as a reward for your good deeds and your deeds were accepted [Al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer]
- 23. Indeed, it is We who have sent down to you, [O Muhammad], the Qur'an progressively**
- a. Meaning, the Qur'an has been sent down to Muhammad (pbuh) in stages and not all at once [Al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer]
 - i. The reason for this was so that the companions could be [constantly] reminded of what is in the Qur'an of promises and threats [Al-Sabuni]
- 24. So be patient for the decision of your Lord and do not obey from among them a sinner or ungrateful [disbeliever]**
- a. Meaning, be patient over the decisions of Allah, whether they relate to religious laws or not, and do not obey the sinner who invites you to sin nor the disbeliever who invites you to disbelief [Al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer]
 - b. Some said this verse is telling the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to wait for the decision of Allah and His decree because his enemies will be avenged and destroyed before his eyes [Al-Sabuni]
- 25. And mention the name of your Lord [in prayer] morning and evening**
- a. Meaning, remember your Lord in the Fajr prayer in the morning and the *Dhuhr* and 'Asr prayers in the afternoon [Al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer]
 - b. Some said it means to remember your Lord all the time, morning and evening, and be abundant in obeying and worshipping Him all the time [Al-Sabuni]
- 26. And during the night prostrate to Him and exalt Him a long [part of the] night**
- a. Meaning, remember Allah in the two night prayers, *Maghrib* and *Isha*, and then pray the *Tahajjud* prayer during the night [Al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer]
- 27. Indeed, these [disbelievers] love the immediate and leave behind them a grave Day**
- a. Meaning, the disbelievers prefer the worldly life over the afterlife. They are preoccupied with this temporary life. They ignore the Day of Judgement which is a severe day due to the horrors and adversities that will occur on it. They do not prepare themselves for it nor do they think about it [Al-Sabuni]
- 28. It is We Who created them and perfected their [physical] form. But if We will, We can easily replace them with others**

- a. This is in reference to the Quraysh [Ibn 'Atiyyah]
- b. Meaning, it is Allah who brought them into existence from nothing and strengthened them both outwardly and inwardly with nerves, veins, tendons, joints, etc. so that their bodies are perfected [*Tafseer al-Sa'di*]
- c. The last part of the verse means that if Allah wanted, He could destroy them and replace them by creating new people that would be submissive and obedient to His commands [*al-Tafseer al-Muyassar*]

29. Surely this is a reminder. So let whoever wills take the [Right] Way to their Lord

- a. Meaning, the promises and warnings mentioned in this chapter are a reminder to whoever wants good for himself/herself in this life and the afterlife. If so, then let him/her adopt faith and be mindful of Allah (*taqwa*) which will lead the person to Allah's forgiveness and pleasure [*al-Tafseer al-Muyassar*]
- i. The 'right way' to Allah is by being obedient to Him and following His Messenger (pbuh). The means to happiness and success are paved and feasible for those who want to do so [Al-Sabuni]

30. And you do not will except that Allah wills. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Wise

- a. Meaning, we cannot will any task except that it is [preceded] by the decree and will of Allah and He is well acquainted with what benefits or harms His slaves and wise in His creation, decree, and legislation [Al-Sabuni and *Al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer*]
- i. When connecting it to the previous verse, the meaning becomes that we cannot even will to take the 'right way' on our own unless Allah wants that from us [*Al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer*]

31. He admits whom He wills into His mercy; but the wrongdoers - He has prepared for them a painful punishment

- a. Meaning, Allah admits into paradise whomever He wills by guiding them to correct faith and righteous deeds. As for the wrongdoers, the He has prepared for them a painful punishment in the Hellfire [Al-Sabuni and *Al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer*]