

Tafseer Surah Al-Taghabun (التغابن)

Notes on Nouman Ali Khan's Concise Commentary of the Qur'an
(Additional Sources Used as Well)

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Introduction

- I. This *surah* was revealed in the Medinan period
- II. This *surah* discusses some of the joys experienced by those with real faith
 - A. It is the opposite of the previous *surah*, which discussed the bankruptcy of faith

Tafseer of the Verses

- 1. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth 'constantly' glorifies Allah. The kingdom is His, and all praise is for Him. For He is Most Capable of everything.**
 - a. Everything in creation submits to Allah's commands
 - i. All things glorify Allah in their own way. Humans glorify Him by their tongues and inanimate objects glorify Him by their submission to Him even though we do not completely understand their form of glorification [Sabuni]
 - ii. General submission even applies to those who disbelieve in Him because it is Allah who decides their lifespan, success, failure, sustenance, cure, sickness, calamities, etc. [My comment]
 - b. All created things in the heavens and all created things on earth declare Allah's transcendence and purity from every attribute of deficiency that is not appropriate for Him [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]
 - i. Examples of created things in heavens: angels, sun, moon, stars, planets, etc. [Sabuni]
 - ii. Examples of created things on earth: mountains, oceans, trees, birds, etc. [Sabuni]
 - c. The present tense form of glorification is used in the verse because it is something that is continuous and always happening [Sabuni]
 - d. Allah has complete control and power over all things. He can do whatever He wants and nothing can oppose His command [Sabuni]
- 2. He is the One Who created you, yet some of you are disbelievers while some are believers. And Allah is All-Seeing of what you do.**
 - a. Meaning even though Allah created all humans, not all of them believe in Him
 - b. Allah mentioned the disbelievers first due to their large numbers and the believers second due to their small numbers [Sabuni]
 - c. Allah tells us at the end that He is well acquainted with our actions and will compensate us for them with reward or punishment [Sabuni]

3. **He created the heavens and the earth for a purpose. He shaped you ‘in the womb’, perfecting your form. And to Him is the final return.**
 - a. Meaning the heavens and earth were not created for amusement and jest but for a profound wisdom [Sabuni]
 - b. The ‘shaping’ here is in reference to the variety of colors, shapes, and sizes we see of human bodies across the globe
 - i. Some interpret it to mean that it is in reference to people’s individual personalities
 - c. Human beings have been given the best form in terms of beauty in comparison to other creatures on earth [Sabuni]
 - d. The inspirational ‘ideas’ that give rise to human productivity, invention, and creativity are also creations of Allah because He is the One who created those very human beings and their minds
 - e. In the end, we will all return back to Allah on the Day of Judgment for accountability and retribution [Sabuni]
4. **He knows whatever is in the heavens and the earth. And He knows whatever you conceal and whatever you reveal. For Allah knows best what is ‘hidden’ in the heart.**
 - a. Allah even knows the thoughts that reside in the deepest parts of our consciousness. He is more knowledgeable about the workings of our bodies than ourselves
 - b. This verse is meant to be a threat and warning. Whether people disobey Him openly in public or secretly in private, Allah knows it all [Sabuni]
5. **Have the stories of those who disbelieved before not reached you ‘pagans’? They tasted the evil consequences of their doings, and they will suffer a painful punishment.**
 - a. Now, Allah begins to mention some stories of the previous generations who did not abide by Allah’s laws and what happened to them in order to scare the Quraysh of Mecca [Sabuni]
 - b. The nations of Prophets Nuh, Hud, and Salih were destroyed due to their disbelief. In the afterlife, their punishment will be even more severe [Sabuni]
6. **That was because their messengers used to come to them with clear proofs, but they said ‘mockingly’, “How can humans be our guides?” So they persisted in disbelief and turned away. And Allah was not in need ‘of their faith’. For Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy.**
 - a. Their prophets had come to them with clear miracles as proof of their prophethood but they were ridiculed and rejected. This is quite strange because they denied human prophets but had no problem accepting gods made of stones! [Sabuni]
 - b. In general, human beings have a hard time following other humans because they like to be independent. They do not like to be told what to do by fellow humans. This is one of the reasons many of the prophets were rejected by their people
 - i. A prophet demands complete obedience and absolute authority because he is conveying Allah’s laws through revelation, whereas, other forms of obedience to authority in this life are restricted. A prophet tells you what to believe, disbelieve, love, hate, do, not do, etc. Therefore, the rejection against him by the people is very strong

- ii. Even today many people do not like the idea of religion being passed through a human prophet, thus, they reject the concept of revelation
 - c. Allah is free of any need from His creation and is praiseworthy in His very essence and attributes. He neither benefits from our obedience nor is harmed by our disobedience [Sabuni]
- 7. The disbelievers claim they will not be resurrected. Say, ‘O Prophet,’ “Yes, by my Lord, you will surely be resurrected, then you will certainly be informed of what you have done. And that is easy for Allah.”**
 - a. If Allah is our Master, then that fact by itself necessitates that He will ask us about what we did with our lives by resurrecting us
 - i. Believing in Allah automatically necessitates believing in the afterlife
 - b. Allah created us the first time from nothing so why would He not be able to bring us back again?! This is something very easy for Allah to do [My comment]
- 8. So believe in Allah and His Messenger and in the Light We have revealed. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.**
 - a. The ‘light’ is in reference to the Qur’an
 - b. We are being told to believe in three things because they’re all connected:
 - i. Allah
 - ii. His Messenger
 - 1. It includes his *hadiths* because they are also a form of revelation that came from Allah
 - iii. Qur’an
- 9. ‘Consider’ the Day He will gather you ‘all’ for the Day of Gathering—that will be the Day of loss. So whoever believes in Allah and does good, He will absolve them of their sins and admit them into Gardens under which rivers flow, to stay there for ever and ever. That is the ultimate triumph.**
 - a. Everyone will be gathered together in one place on the Day of Judgment. On that day, the disbelievers’ loss will be made apparent due to their lack of belief [Sabuni]
 - i. The believers will inherit the homes of the people of the fire in paradise, and the people of the fire will inherit the homes of the people of paradise in the fire [al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer]
 - b. Those who have faith in Allah and do righteous deeds, Allah will remit their sins from them and enter them into gardens, under the palaces and trees of which rivers flow, to live in them forever and never to come out, the bliss of which will not end. That which they attained is the great success, which no other success can come close to [al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer]
- 10. As for those who disbelieve and reject Our revelations, they will be the residents of the Fire, staying there forever. What an evil destination!**
 - a. Meaning those who disbelieved in Allah and reject His verses [i.e. Qur’an], which He revealed to His messenger, they are the people of the fire who will remain there forever. What an evil destination is theirs! [al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer]

11. No calamity befalls ‘anyone’ except by Allah’s Will. And whoever has faith in Allah, He will ‘rightly’ guide their hearts ‘through adversity’. And Allah has ‘perfect’ knowledge of all things.

- a. Any form of calamity that comes in our life was specifically targeted for us. It comes to us by Allah’s permission. It is all part of His predetermined decree. There are no ‘what-ifs’
 - i. The calamity could be in our bodies, family, wealth, or anything else
- b. We are being told to not lose our faith even when problems come in our lives because it is all happening through Allah’s Will
 - i. Many people lose their faith and become atheists because of evil that either happens in their own life or that they witness around them
 1. We must stay firm on our faith through any calamity that is thrown our way.
If we do so, then Allah will guide our hearts
 - a. The greatest treasure in this life is guidance from Allah
 - b. Ibn Abbas said, “Allah will guide his heart to faith and certainty until he realizes that whatever afflicted him would never have missed him and whatever missed him would never have afflicted him” [Sabuni]
 - c. Ibn Mas’ud said, “This is a person who when afflicted with a calamity is pleased and knows that it is from Allah” [Sabuni]
- c. Benefits of belief in the Divine decree [Sabuni]:
 - i. It eases the pain of the calamity so the believer can be patient over His decree and submit to His decision
 - ii. It provides comfort to the heart
 - iii. It provides solace to the soul
- d. Allah knows every single thing that goes on in His creation, whether good or evil, and He knows who is being patient and who is turning away from Him [Sabuni]

12. Obey Allah and obey the Messenger! But if you turn away, then Our Messenger’s duty is only to deliver ‘the message’ clearly.

- a. We stay firm on our faith when calamity strikes by obeying Allah and His Messenger even more
- b. Meaning obey Allah and His Messenger (pbuh) in whatever has been legislated as lawful or prohibited, which will lead to success and happiness. If you turn away, then this will not hurt the Messenger (pbuh), rather, it will only hurt you because the prophet’s only duty is to deliver clearly the message of Allah, which he did [Sabuni]

13. Allah—there is no god ‘worthy of worship’ except Him. So in Allah let the believers put their trust.

- a. Meaning if the people believe in the *kalimah*, then how can they not have trust in Allah despite the calamities?!
 - i. Remember, the companions were facing many difficulties during their lives due to their constant conflict with the Quraysh, thus, they are being told to place their trust in Allah despite the calamities

14. O believers! Indeed, some of your spouses and children are enemies to you, so beware of them. But if you pardon, overlook, and forgive 'their faults', then Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

- a. This verse was revealed when some early Muslims in Mecca were prevented from emigrating to Medina by their own spouses and children, so they could not join the Prophet (pbuh) and the rest of the believers. Later, when they eventually met those who had emigrated and saw that they had preceded them in worship, knowledge, and obedience, they wanted to punish their families who had prevented them from emigrating [Sabuni]
 - i. The lesson is that those spouses or children who take a person away from Allah are enemies, so one should be cautious around such family members and not fall into sin by being influenced by them
- b. We are also being told not to hold grudges against our families, when they do something wrong, and to move on. We should just forgive and forget
 - i. If we want Allah to be forgiving towards us, then we should be forgiving towards others as well

15. Your wealth and children are only a test, but Allah 'alone' has a great reward.

- a. The word 'test' here means an extremely difficult trial
 - i. Wealth and children are given by Allah to test us to see who will obey Him and who will not, thus, a person should not let wealth nor children distract him from the obedience of Allah [Sabuni]
 1. Wealth and children may entice you to earn the unlawful and leave out following Allah. Allah has with Him great reward for those who give preference to following Him over following their children and becoming occupied with wealth. This great recompense is Paradise [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]

16. So be mindful of Allah to the best of your ability, hear and obey, and spend in charity—that will be best for you. And whoever is saved from the selfishness of their own souls, it is they who are 'truly' successful.

- a. Meaning we should do our best to obey Allah as much as we can in all of His instructions
 - i. When it comes to Allah's commands related to doing good things, then we must try to do them to the best of our ability. However, when it comes to prohibitions, then we must abandon them entirely [Sabuni]
- b. The command to 'hear and obey' is in reference to Allah and His Messenger (pbuh) and that we must submit to their commands and not deviate left or right from them [Sabuni]
- c. One of the things that destroys us is being obsessed with ourselves. Self-absorption is an extremely negative trait in a human being
 - i. It leads to other forms of evils as well like being selfish, stingy, envious, etc.

17. If you lend to Allah a good loan, He will multiply it for you and forgive you. For Allah is Most Appreciative, Most Forbearing.

- a. Meaning if you give Allah a good loan, by spending your wealth in His path, He will multiply the reward for you by making each good deed equal to ten of its like, up until seven hundred times or even more, and He will overlook your sins. Allah is Appreciative and gives huge reward for little action, and He is Forbearing and does not rush to punish [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]
- b. It's amazing that Allah is the One who gives us wealth yet asks us to loan some of that same wealth back to Him with a promise of a great return! [Sabuni]

18. 'He is the' Knower of the seen and unseen—the Almighty, All-Wise.

- a. Meaning Allah knows what is unseen and He knows what is present. Nothing of that is hidden from Him. He is the Mighty, Whom none can overpower, the Wise in His creating, decrees and laws [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]