

Surah Ghashiyah

Tafseer e Arshadi

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Dr. Shaikh Arshad Basheer Madani has not personally reviewed this English work word for word. Therefore, if you face any difficulty or confusion, please refer to the original Urdu book.

JazakAllaahu Khairan.

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First Part - General Overview of Surah Al-Ghashiyah

This part presents a general overview of the surah, in which the connection with the preceding and following surahs is highlighted. It also reviews the thematic style and objectives of the surah.

Note: The sectional divisions of the surahs and the units of their mutual relationships.

(88) – Surah Al-Ghashiyah

“The Overwhelming”

Al-Ghashiyah

Place of revelation: Makkah

Some objectives

- On the Day of Resurrection, due to their respective deeds, some faces will be humiliated and some faces will be fresh and bright; in which group do you want to be included???
- Mention of the states of the Hereafter, and the recompense and punishment for the believer and the disbeliever.
- Mention of the signs that indicate the oneness of Allah.
- Through these signs, mutual reminding (tadhkir) should be done with one another.
- It is Allah alone who gives reward and punishment.
- The map of the blessings of Paradise and the pains of Hell has been drawn in a brief and comprehensive manner.

A description of some manifestations of Allah’s power and Lordship: the camel, then the sky, then the mountains, then the

earth are mentioned step by step. The discourse does not move directly from the sky to the earth; rather, it fixes the gaze on the mountains in between and then brings it down to the earth, so that there may be depth and precision in reflection.

Overview of Surah Al-Ghashiyah

Surah Al-Ghashiyah (“The Overwhelming Event”) is the 88th surah of the Qur’an, revealed in Makkah, and consists of 26 verses. Its central theme is the Day of Resurrection, which is called “Al-Ghashiyah” because with its terrors it will cover all creatures. In the structure of the surah there is a contrast between the outcome of the disbelievers and the believers, a call to reflect on the signs of Allah, and a clarification of the Prophet’s role as a warner and reminder (not as one who compels).

Structure and thematic style

The surah is divided into several thematic sections:

- Verses 1–7: A vivid depiction of the horrors of the Day of Resurrection, in which the humiliation and punishment of the disbelievers is described. Their faces will be downcast and exhausted; they will be in severe torment, with blazing fire, scalding water, and food that gives no benefit.
- Verses 8–16: In contrast, the faces of the believers will be joyful and content; they will receive the blessings of Paradise – lofty gardens, flowing springs, comfortable couches and tranquility.¹
- Verses 17–20: The surah then turns towards an invitation to ponder the signs of Allah’s creation: the camel, the sky, the mountains and the earth. These signs are proof of Allah’s

power and wisdom, which strengthen faith in the Resurrection and Reckoning.

- Verses 21–26: The Prophet ﷺ is reminded that his task is only to convey the message and give reminders; the final decision and reckoning lie with Allah alone.

This structure reinforces the basic objectives of the surah: to warn about the Hereafter, to encourage reflection on the signs of Allah, and to clarify the mission of the Prophet ﷺ.

Thematic objectives

The main objectives of Surah Al-Ghashiyah are:

- Reminder of the Hereafter: The fundamental aim of this surah is to awaken heedless hearts to the reality of the Day of Resurrection, by highlighting severe punishment for the disbelievers and blessings for the believers.
- Affirmation of Allah's power: By drawing attention to the signs of creation, the surah emphasizes Allah's power and His ability to resurrect on the Day of Judgment, which strengthens the belief in tawhid (Oneness of Allah).
- Prophetic mission: The surah makes it clear that the responsibility of the Prophet ﷺ is only to remind and admonish, not to compel people to faith. This is a model of wisdom and patience in method and style.

Connection with the previous and following surahs

- Surah Al-Ghashiyah has a deep connection with the previous surah (Al-A'la) and the following surah (Al-Fajr).
- With Surah Al-A'la: Both surahs mention the two categories of people who will deserve Paradise or Hell. Al-

A‘la emphasizes the remembrance and glorification of Allah, while Al-Ghashiyah describes the consequences of acting upon this message or turning away from it. There is also a linguistic and thematic link: in Al-A‘la the word “khashyah” (fear combined with reverence) is mentioned, and in Al-Ghashiyah “khashi‘ah” (fear and humbleness) appears regarding faces on the Day of Resurrection, which deepens the concept of the Hereafter.

- With Surah Al-Fajr: The themes of the Resurrection, reward and punishment continue in Surah Al-Fajr as well, creating continuity and unity in the Qur’anic message.

Surah Al-Ghashiyah shows a strong **thematic harmony** and unity in both style and content.

All the core themes – the Resurrection, reward and punishment, the signs in creation, and the Prophetic ﷺ responsibility – work together to serve one central purpose: reminding humanity of the Hereafter and the power of the Creator. This internal coherence, where each passage reinforces the others and all are tightly connected to the main objective, is a clear mark of the Qur’an’s unique style and greatly enhances the surah’s impact on the heart and mind.

Second Part - Tafsiri Translation

(Presents the translation of the meanings of the Qur'an, along with verse-by-verse explanation)

Below is the verse-by-verse translation of Surah Al-Ghashiyah and a brief explanation of each verse:

Surah Al-Ghashiyah (The Overwhelming Event) – Verses 1–26

Verse 1:

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْعَاشِيَةِ

Translation:

Has the news of the Overwhelming (Event – the Day of Resurrection) reached you?

Explanation:

This verse begins in an interrogative style, which draws attention towards the Day of Resurrection, that will, with its severity, encompass and cover all creatures.

[Verse:] 2 – وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ

Translation:

On that Day, some faces will be humbled and downcast.

Explanation:

On that Day, many faces will be humiliated and distressed, reflecting the despair of the disbelievers.

Verse 3 – عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ

Translation:

Toiling, exhausted.

Explanation:

These are people who exerted themselves in the world, but their efforts were purposeless and misguided, resulting only in fatigue and with no reward in the Hereafter.

Verse 4 – تَصَلَّى نَارًا حَامِيَةً

Translation:

They will enter a blazing Fire.

Explanation:

Their end is the fiercely burning Hellfire, which is the direct outcome of their disobedience and evil deeds.

Verse 5 – تُسْقَى مِنْ عَيْنٍ آتِيَةٍ

Translation:

They will be given to drink from a boiling spring.

Explanation:

Their torment will be increased by being made to drink scalding, boiling water.

Verse 6 – لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيحٍ

Translation:

They will have no food except from a thorny, poisonous plant.

Explanation:

Their only food will be a bitter, thorny plant (ḍarīḥ), which neither provides nourishment nor satisfies hunger.

Verse 7 – لَا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنْ جُوعٍ

Translation:

Which neither nourishes nor relieves hunger.

Explanation:

This food is utterly useless; it neither gives strength to the body nor removes hunger, symbolizing the complete deprivation of the inhabitants of Hell.

Verse 8 – وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاعِمَةٌ

Translation:

On that Day, some faces will be fresh with happiness.

Explanation:

In contrast, some faces will be bright and joyful; these are the faces of the righteous people.

Verse 9 – لِسَعْيِهَا رَاضِيَةٌ

Translation:

Pleased with their efforts.

Explanation:

They will be pleased with the efforts they made in the worldly life, because those efforts have brought them to reward and inner contentment.

Verse 10 – فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ

Translation:

In a high Garden.

Explanation:

Their abode will be the lofty and elevated gardens of Paradise.

Verse 11 – لَا تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا لَا غِيَةَ

Translation:

Where they will not hear any idle talk.

Explanation:

Paradise is a place of peace; there they will not hear any vain, obscene, or harmful speech to disturb them.

Verse 12 – فِيهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ

Translation:

Therein is a flowing spring.

Explanation:

They will enjoy flowing springs, which are a sign of abundance, comfort, and continual refreshment.

Verse 13 – فِيهَا سُرُرٌ مَّرْفُوعَةٌ

Translation:

Therein are raised couches.

Explanation:

They will be seated, reclining on raised, comfortable couches, which symbolize honor, dignity, and tranquility.

Verse 14 – وَأَكْوَابٌ مَّوْضُوعَةٌ

Translation:

And cups set out.

Explanation:

Cups and vessels will be prepared and laid out for them, which is a sign of hospitality, honor, and ease.

Verse 15 – وَنَمَارِقُ مَصْفُوفَةٌ

Translation:

And cushions lined up in rows.

Explanation:

There will be cushions arranged in rows, reflecting further comfort, relaxation, and refinement of their dwelling.

Verse 16 – وَزَرَائِبٍ مَبْنُوثَةٌ

Translation:

And spread-out velvet carpets.

Explanation:

Beautiful carpets will be spread out, completing a luxurious and welcoming atmosphere for the people of Paradise.

Verse 17 – أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ

Translation:

Do they not then look at the camel – how it has been created?

Explanation:

Now the surah invites reflection on the signs of creation, beginning with the camel – an amazing creature, perfectly suited to its harsh environment and full of benefits for people.

Verse 18 – وَإِلَى السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ

Translation:

And at the sky – how it has been raised high?

Explanation:

The vastness and elevation of the sky point to the power and wisdom of the Creator, and to the perfection of His design.

Verse 19 – *وَإِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ*

Translation:

And at the mountains – how they have been set up?

Explanation:

The firmness, stability, and towering nature of the mountains are further signs of Allah's greatness and His nurturing Lordship over creation.

Verse 20 – *وَإِلَى الْأَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ*

Translation:

And at the earth – how it has been spread out?

Explanation:

The expanse of the earth and the facilities for life placed in it are a reminder of Allah's mercy and creative power, making it a suitable, comfortable place for living.

Verse 21 – *فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ*

Translation:

So remind (O Muhammad ﷺ); you are only a reminder-giver.

Explanation:

The mission of the Prophet ﷺ is to remind people of these truths; guidance cannot be forced upon anyone.

Verse 22 – **أَسَأْتِ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ**

Translation:

You are not one to compel them.

Explanation:

The Prophet ﷺ is not responsible for forcing people to accept guidance; his duty is only to convey the message clearly.

Verse 23 – **إِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلَّى وَكَفَرَ**

Translation:

Except the one who turns away and disbelieves.

Explanation:

This refers to those who turn their backs on the reminder and persist in disbelief and rejection.

Verse 24 – **فَيُعَذِّبُهُ اللَّهُ الْعَذَابَ الْأَكْبَرَ**

Translation:

Then Allah will punish him with the greatest punishment.

Explanation:

Such people will face the most severe punishment in the Hereafter.

Verse 25 – **إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ**

Translation:

Indeed, to Us is their return.

Explanation:

In the end, everyone will return to Allah so that they may be brought back after death and gathered for reckoning.

Verse 26 – ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ

Translation:

Then indeed, upon Us is their account.

Explanation:

It is Allah alone who will take the full account of every soul and recompense each one for what it has done.

Meaning of the surah in a few words:

Surah Al-Ghashiyah contrasts the final outcome of disbelievers and believers, invites reflection on the signs of Allah's creation, and clarifies the role of the Prophet ﷺ as a warner and reminder. It is a powerful reminder of the reality of the Hereafter and of the necessity of faith and righteous action.

Tenth Part - Authenticated Points from Arabic Tafasir

Part Two: Detailed Tafasir

In this section, we rely on the major classical and contemporary tafasir to present a detailed explanation. Among them: Tafsir al-Tabari, Ibn Abi Hatim, al-Baghawi, Tafsir al-Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, and modern works such as Tafsir al-Sa'di. Along with this, we benefit from the summarized version of Ibn Kathir's tafsir known as "Al-Misbah al-Munir," as well as other commentaries on Ibn Kathir like the explanations of Shaykh al-Rajihi, Shaykh Khalid al-Sabt, Shaykh Muqbil's takhrij, and the tahqiq of Shaykh al-Huwayni and Hikmat Bashir on Tafsir Ibn Kathir.

We also take into consideration the research of Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, and Ibn al-Jawzi, and draw on Tafsir Adwa' al-Bayan, Fath al-Qadir by al-Shawkani, the tafsir of Shaykh Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan, the tafsir of Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymin and his students, as well as the tafsir collection in "Al-Durar al-Saniyyah" and "Mawsu'at al-Tafasir" under the supervision of Shaykh Musaid al-Tayyar.

By synthesizing all of this into Urdu form – and all praise is for Allah – we are able to benefit from both traditional and modern perspectives, which will, in sha' Allah, help us understand the surah more completely.

Al-Ghashiyah: It is one of the names of the Day of Resurrection, as Ibn ‘Abbas, Qatadah, and Ibn Zayd have said, because it will cover the people and encompass everyone.

“Has there come to you the story of the Overwhelming (Event)?” – meaning: has the news of Al-Ghashiyah come to you, as some (like Qutrub) say that “hal” here carries the meaning of “indeed/has already”, and others say it is upon its original sense of interrogative, i.e. to question. So what is meant by “Al-Ghashiyah” here?

Here, the saying of Ibn ‘Abbas, Qatadah, and Ibn Zayd is mentioned: that it is one of the names of the Day of Resurrection, because it will cover the people and encompass everyone; and this is the view of most of the Salaf and later scholars – i.e. the view of the majority – that it is from the names of the Day of Resurrection.

Some of the Salaf, such as Muhammad ibn Ka‘b al-Qurazi and Sa‘id ibn Jubayr, said: the Fire will cover the faces of the disbelievers – i.e. “Al-Ghashiyah” is the Fire which will envelope the faces of the disbelievers – “Has there come to you the story of the Overwhelming (Event)?” just as Allah the Exalted has said: “and the Fire will cover their faces” [Surah Ibrahim: 50]; so they took this as an explanation of “Al-Ghashiyah”.

The first view – that it is one of the names of the Day of Resurrection – is the view of the majority; and the second view – that what is meant is the Fire – is the view of some of the Salaf. Ibn Jarir (may Allah have mercy on him) mentioned both views, the first and the second: that it is a name of the Day of

Resurrection, or that it is the Fire because it will cover the faces of the disbelievers. He then kept the meaning broad and inclusive, saying that all of this enters into its meaning: so “Al-Ghashiyah” is among the names of the Day of Resurrection because it will cover the people; and likewise, the Fire will cover the faces of the disbelievers – “Has there come to you the story of the Overwhelming (Event)? Faces on that Day will be humbled, toiling, exhausted, entering a blazing Fire.”

When the majority (jumhūr) said that this (Al-Ghashiyah) is one of the names of the Day of Resurrection, they said: His statement “تَصَلَّى نَارًا حَامِيَةً” indicates that this condition has not yet befallen them; rather, they will be in this state on the Day of Resurrection – that they will be in humiliation and will be presented to the Fire, “خَاشِعِينَ مِنَ الذُّلِّ يَنْظُرُونَ مِنْ طَرْفٍ خَفِيٍّ” [Surah Ash-Shura: 45]. So this is their condition before entering the Fire. They said: in this very verse there is an indication: “تَصَلَّى نَارًا حَامِيَةً”, therefore it (Al-Ghashiyah) is one of the names of the Day of Resurrection. And Ibn Jarir says: and the Fire will also cover their faces, so it too is “Al-Ghashiyah”.

And the statement of Allah the Exalted: “وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ” – meaning: humbled and lowly, as Qatadah said; and Ibn ‘Abbas said: it will be humble and its deeds will not benefit it.

This is also in line with the previous meaning: that it will be in a state of khushu‘ and its deeds will not avail it. “Khushu‘” here means humiliation, lowliness and brokenness, unless some other meaning is intended; and if the words of Ibn ‘Abbas are taken to mean that this is their description in the worldly life, then, in sha’ Allah, it will come ahead as to when these attributes will occur.

And the statement of Allah the Exalted: “عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ” – meaning: it worked a lot and toiled therein, and on the Day of Resurrection it will enter the Fire.

The words of Ibn Kathir: “it worked a lot and toiled therein” – when? In the worldly life – and on the Day of Resurrection it will enter the blazing Fire.

Al-Hafiz Abu Bakr al-Barqani narrated from Abu ‘Imran al-Juni that ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) passed by a monk in his monastery. It is said: he called him, so the monk came up; ‘Umar began to look at him and weep. It was said: O Commander of the Believers, what made you weep because of him? He said: I remembered the statement of Allah the Exalted: “عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ تَصَلَّى نَارًا حَامِيَةً” – so that is what made me weep.

And Al-Bukhari said: Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) said: “عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ” – they are the Christians. And ‘Ikrimah and As-Suddi said: “Those who worked in the worldly life in disobedience, and are worn out in the Fire by punishment and fetters (chains).”

Now look: these statements of the Salaf (may Allah be pleased with them) go back to two meanings.

- The first meaning: that these descriptions apply to them in this worldly life.
- And the second view: that they are in the Hereafter.

Here it is said regarding “عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ”: that it means “it did a lot of deeds and toiled therein”; this is the wording of Ibn Kathir, that these are attributes in the world. And what he mentioned

about ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) when he saw that monk and wept, this too he carried upon this (worldly) meaning – even though this athar is munqati‘ (disconnected) and not firmly established. So there is a possibility that these descriptions are in the world – “وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ ۖ عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ” – that this is their description in the world. Perhaps what led them to this view is that in the Hereafter there is no (new) action, rather it is the abode of recompense. So they said: the action is in the world; thus they act – “عاملة ناصبة”.

But what deeds do they perform? They exhaust themselves in non-legislated acts of worship; they “worship” Allah without the religion of Islam and without truth – or they act in disobedience, opposing Allah the Exalted. So perhaps this is the reason they adopted this view: that the Hereafter is a place of recompense, not of action; then how could it be said “عاملة ناصبة”? Thus, they said: this is in the world.

However, those who said that it is in the Hereafter – some of the Salaf from among them clarified the meaning. For example, Qatadah said: Allah will make them work and toil in the Fire, dragging heavy chains, carrying shackles, and standing barefoot in the plain of gathering.

And if it is said that “عاملة ناصبة” is before entering the Fire – because after it He said “تَصَلَّى نَارًا حَامِيَةً” – then this is before entering the Fire. So it is possible that this is for them in the arena of gathering (mawqif al-ḥashr). And it has been narrated from al-Hasan and Sa‘id ibn Jubayr that: since they did not exert themselves in obedience to Allah, He made them exert themselves in the Fire of Hell.

And this view – that it is in the Hereafter, that all these descriptions “وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ ۖ عَامِلَةٌ تَأْسِبَةٌ” are in the Hereafter – is what Ibn Jarir (may Allah have mercy on him) chose, and Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy on him) considered it the stronger view. He says: they are working in the Fire, toiling in it.

And here, “... هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْعَاشِيَةِ ۖ وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ” – the phrase “يَوْمَئِذٍ” returns to “Al-Ghashiyah”, so it becomes clear that this description “خَاشِعَةٌ ۖ عَامِلَةٌ تَأْسِبَةٌ” is all in the Hereafter. This is what Ibn Jarir and Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah used as proof: that it is their description in the Hereafter and not in the world. Therefore, it is not correct to use this verse as evidence regarding the deeds of the disbelievers in this world by which they seek closeness to Allah, and to quote the verse in that context – “وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ ۖ عَامِلَةٌ تَأْسِبَةٌ ۖ تَصَلَّى نَارًا حَامِيَةً” – because this is their description in the Hereafter, and Allah the Exalted knows best.

As for the statement of Ibn ‘Abbas: “عَامِلَةٌ تَأْسِبَةٌ” – meaning: the Christians – this is by way of example, not restriction. It is not limited to them alone; however, since in the Christians, worship and monasticism appear more prominent than among the Jews, he mentioned the Christians specifically. That is, among the Christian monks, the practice of harming the body and immersing themselves in worship in a way that humans can hardly bear is present. Perhaps one of them might stand in a well, as they say, for a very long period, even exceeding forty years, putting himself through such torment. Reports about Christian monks, their strange states, and their extreme reduction of food and drink – to the point of taking only what

keeps them barely alive – are such that a person can hardly believe them; yet on what basis? Upon misguidance.

The books that relate the history of the Indian religions mention that Buddha used to eat only one grain of rice per day – this is what they say – but can a human being live like that? Perhaps he could live on water alone for some period, but on one grain of rice a day? And what benefit is there in that? If he were even an ant, then perhaps – and Allah knows best.

Ibn ‘Abbas, Al-Hasan, and Qatadah said regarding “تَصَلَّى نَارًا حَامِيَةً”: that it means a very intensely hot and fiercely burning Fire. And “تُسْقَى مِنْ عَيْنِ آنِيَةٍ” – that its water will have reached the utmost limit in heat and boiling; this is the statement of Ibn ‘Abbas, Mujahid, Al-Hasan and As-Suddi. This is the point: “آنِيَةٍ” means extremely intense, having reached the peak of heat and boiling; and whatever has been narrated from some of the Salaf also returns to this meaning – and Allah knows best.

(تَصَلَّى نَارًا حَامِيَةً)[Al-Ghashiyah: 4]

Ibn ‘Uthaymin said: meaning, they will be made to enter a blazing Fire – this scorching Fire of Hell (we seek refuge with Allah) whose heat has reached such a degree that it has an excellence of sixty-nine (69) parts over the fire of this world; that is, all the fires of this world, including the hottest and most intense, Hellfire is seventy times hotter than them. And the proof for the intensity of its heat is also what you see from this Sun – whose heat reaches you – despite the very great distance between us and it, and despite the fact that its rays pass through layers of the atmosphere that are extremely cold, yet its heat still reaches you in a way you feel, especially in the summer days. So

the Fire of Hell (may Allah protect us and you from it) is an extremely fierce, blazing Fire. (End of the quotation from Ibn ‘Uthaymin.)

As for the statement of Allah the Exalted: “لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ صَرِيحٍ” – ‘Ali ibn Abi Talhah narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas that he said: it is a tree of Hell. Ibn ‘Abbas, Mujahid, ‘Ikrimah, Abu Al-Jawza’ and Qatadah said: it is “shibriq”. Qatadah said: Quraysh call it “shibriq” in the spring, and in the summer they call it “ḍarī”.

Meaning: when it is green they call it “shibriq”, and when it dries up they call it “ḍarī”, i.e. thorny. ‘Ikrimah said: it is a thorny plant that clings close to the ground.

Al-Bukhari said: Mujahid said: “ḍarī” is a plant which is called “shibriq”; the people of Hijaz, when it dries, call it “ḍarī”, and it is poisonous.

This is exactly what Ibn Jarir (may Allah have mercy on him) said – that all these statements return to the point that “ḍarī” refers to a thorny, dry, hard and harsh plant; and this is the view of the majority of the mufassirun and the scholars of language. This is in contrast to what is narrated from Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him), that it is a green, foul-smelling plant which the sea throws up, for this is contrary to the statement of the Salaf and the general body of later scholars.

Ma‘mar narrated from Qatadah: “There is no food for them except from Ḍarī” – it is *shibriq*; when it dries, it is called ḍarī’. Sa‘id narrated from Qatadah: “There is no food for them except

from Ḍarī“” – this is the worst, most detested, and most filthy food.

That is to say, the statement transmitted from Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) – “a tree of Hell” – is unrestricted, and likewise “the worst and most detested food” is also unrestricted. The detailed descriptions between them explain it as a thorny, dried-up tree. However, the Qur’an addressed them in their own language, and they knew what “Ḍarī“” was. Yet the Ḍarī‘ they knew in this world was so hard that even animals would not eat it, while the Ḍarī‘ that will be in Hell is very different – just as Allah has mentioned the fire of this world, although there is a vast difference between the fire of this world and the fire of Hell.

His statement: “which neither nourishes nor avails against hunger” – that is, no purpose is fulfilled by it, nor is any harm or need removed through it.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“So if someone were to say: how will this spring (of boiling water) be inside the Fire of Hell, when normally water extinguishes fire? Is it not so?

The answer is that the matters of the Hereafter cannot be measured by the matters of this world. If they are measured by the standards of this world, we will not be able to understand how they will be. Has it not come (in hadith) that on the Day of Resurrection the sun will be brought near to the people until it is as close as one mile? And by ‘mile’ is meant either the stick of the kohl container (the applicator), which is about half a finger

in length, or the mile of distance – approximately one and a third kilometres or thereabout. And if, hypothetically, it were exactly so (and the nature of the Hereafter were just like this world), then the sun would roast the people completely. But the Hereafter cannot be weighed by the scale of this world.

Likewise, on the Day of Resurrection, people will be gathered in one place; some of them will be in severe darkness, and some will be in light, as in the statement of Allah the Exalted: ‘Their light will run before them and on their right’ [At-Tahrim: 8]. They will all be gathered in one place and will be sweating; for some of them their sweat will reach their ankles, for others their knees, and for others their waist (or hips), yet all of them will be in that same place. Thus it becomes clear that it is not permissible to analogize the conditions of the Hereafter with the conditions of this world.”

If someone now says: “How can water exist inside the Fire?”

Then we will say:

Firstly: The states of the Hereafter cannot be measured by the states of this world.

Secondly: Indeed Allah is fully capable of everything. We ourselves see in this world that fire is produced from green trees, as Allah the Exalted has said: “He who made for you from the green tree, fire, and then you kindle from it” [Ya-Sin: 80]. The green tree is moist (cool and full of moisture), yet when some of its twigs are rubbed together, or rubbed with a fire-making tool, a spark comes out, and from it there emerges hot, dry fire – even though the tree itself is moist and cool. So Allah is capable of all

things. Thus, they (the people of Hell) will be given to drink from a boiling spring inside the very Fire, and this in no way conflicts with the power of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic. (Tafsir Ibn al-‘Uthaymin)

Allah the Exalted has said: “Faces that Day will be blissful, pleased with their striving, in a high Garden, wherein they will hear no idle talk. Therein is a flowing spring. Therein are raised couches, and cups set out, and cushions lined up, and carpets spread out” [Surah Al-Ghashiyah: 8–16].

When the condition of the wretched was mentioned, then the condition of the fortunate was mentioned: “Faces that Day” – i.e. faces on the Day of Resurrection – “will be blissful (na‘imah)” meaning, bounty and blessing will be visible upon them, and this blessing they obtained because of their striving. Sufyan said regarding “pleased with their striving”: that they will be pleased with their deeds.

“Faces on that Day will be blissful” – meaning, on that Day some faces will be happy because of the joy and blessing that Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, will have granted them... for they already come to know this while in their graves; a person is in bliss even in his grave, and a door to Paradise is opened for him. (Tafsir al-Sa‘di)

“Pleased with their striving” – meaning, they will be pleased with the deeds they did in the worldly life, because it was by means of those very deeds that they reached this bliss, joy, and delight. (Tafsir al-Sa‘di)

His statement: “In an elevated Garden” – meaning, they will be in the upper, beautiful chambers of Paradise in complete security. (Fath al-Bayan by al-Qinnawji — Siddiq Hasan Khan)

“(In an elevated Garden)” – that is, elevated in place, raised above other dwellings; or elevated in rank and status, because it contains all that souls desire and eyes delight in.

“Wherein they will hear no idle talk” – that is, in this Garden they will not hear any vain or frivolous speech, as Allah the Exalted has said: “They will not hear therein any idle talk, except (greetings of) peace” [Maryam: 62], and He said: “Therein is no idle talk and no sinful speech” [At-Tur: 23], and He said: “They will not hear therein idle talk nor anything sinful – nothing but the saying: ‘Peace, peace’” [Al-Waqi‘ah: 25–26].

And here He said: “You will not hear therein any idle talk” – i.e. in the Garden in which they are – this is understood as a description of an omitted noun (i.e. ‘a Garden in which...’), and this is what Ibn Jarir (may Allah have mercy on him) chose.

Allah the Exalted has said: “They will not hear therein idle talk nor anything sinful” and “They will not hear therein idle talk, except (greetings of) peace” – all of this carries the meaning that they will hear no vain speech there; “They will not hear therein idle talk nor anything sinful, nothing but the saying: ‘Peace, peace.’”

“Therein is a flowing spring” – meaning, a running river; and it is mentioned in the indefinite form in a context of affirmation, which indicates not just a single river, but the *kind* – that there will be flowing rivers there.

Ibn Abi Hatim narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “The rivers of Paradise gush forth from beneath hills or mounds of musk.”

The indefinite (nakirah) used in a context of affirmation does not itself give generality, rather it is unrestricted. But we know that in Paradise there are *rivers*, not just a single river, as Hafiz Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said; so this is a generic expression – i.e. *flowing rivers*. And these rivers, in their flow, will not run in channels (banks) like the rivers of this world; instead, they will flow over the surface of the ground without channels.

- “Therein are raised couches” – meaning: high, soft, and abundantly adorned thrones.

Regarding His statement “Therein are raised couches”: “surur” is the plural of “sarir”, and they are “raised” in order that when the believer sits upon them, he can see all that his Lord has granted him there of bounty and dominion, and so that his gaze can extend to everything that has been prepared for him.

- “And cups set out” – meaning: drinking vessels placed ready.

“And cups set out” – i.e. vessels for drinking, and we have already come to know the difference between “akwāb” and “ku’ūs”: the cups without handles are “akwāb”. “Akwāb mawḍū‘ah” – that is, placed in front of them; they will drink from them. And it is possible, as Ibn Jarir said, that when the flowing river was mentioned, these cups are found on the banks

of the river – that in Paradise there will be cups, whether on the riverbank, as Ibn Jarir suggested, or elsewhere. The cups of Paradise are far more general and widespread than to be restricted only to that, but Ibn Jarir (may Allah have mercy on him) considered the link with the previous mention. However, he mentioned the couches (“surur”) after the river, so perhaps there is no need to attach the cups specifically to the river; rather, they will be near them, ready and prepared, as Ibn Kathir said – whoever wishes may take.

- “And cushions lined up” – Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) said: “namāriq” are pillows. The same was said by ‘Ikrimah, Qatadah, Ad-Dahhak, As-Suddi, Ath-Thawri and others.

“Namāriq” are cushions; this is what Ibn Jarir preferred, and Al-Wahidi attributed this meaning to all the mufassirun: that “namāriq” are pillows, and these pillows are arranged in rows.

Fath al-Bayan by al-Qinnawji — Siddiq Hasan Khan:

“And cushions lined up” – what is meant is bolsters (gāw-takiyah, large cushions). Al-Wahidi said: According to all the mufassirun, its singular is “numruqah” with dammah on the nun, and Al-Farra’ also transmitted from the Arabs, by hearing, “nimriqah” with kasrah on the nun – both are valid dialects, of which the more famous is the first. Al-Kalbi said: large cushions arranged in rows, one next to another.

In As-Sihah it is said: “nimruq” and “nimruqah” are small cushions; likewise “nimriqah” (with kasrah) is another form, which Ya‘qub transmitted. And it is narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas

that “namāriq” means “majālis” (seating places), and in another narration from him that it means “marāfiq” (places to lean with the elbow). It has also been said that it means “pillows and bedding”: wherever he wants to sit, he will sit on one large cushion and lean on another. Al-Wahidi said: “mṣfūfah” means placed in rows on top of carpets. (End of quoted passage)

Allah Ta‘ala’s statement: “وَزَرَ ابْنِي مَبْثُوثَةً” – Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) said: “zarābī are carpets,” and the same was said by Ad-Dahhak and many others.

“وَزَرَ ابْنِي مَبْثُوثَةً” – Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) said: “zarābī” are carpets; the same was said by Ad-Dahhak and many others. Carpets – these are the *zarābī*; this is the view of many of the Salaf. Some, such as Abu ‘Ubaydah, Al-Farra’ and Ibn Jarir, said: they are those carpets that have fine, soft pile, and it is the plural of “zirbiyyah”; here, these *zarābī* are described as “mabthūthah” (spread out everywhere).

- “Mabthūthah” means: scattered here and there, so that whoever wishes may sit where he likes. That is, it indicates abundance; because of their great number it is said “mabthūthah” – these carpets. For this reason some said: “mabthūthah” means “laid out,” as Qatadah said; some, like ‘Ikrimah, said: some of them are stacked upon others; and some, like Ibn Qutaybah, said: scattered throughout the seating areas.

The point is what Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said: namely, that they are scattered here and there so that

whoever wishes sits where he wishes; they are in a place of pure bliss: raised couches, cushions beside them – whoever wants sits and reclines; and carpets surpassing all the carpets of this world in every way, spread in abundance in every direction – wherever they wish, they sit. This is certainly something that brings joy to the hearts, a station of comfort, delight and blessing. If you were to enter a garden and see cushions, couches and carpets spread everywhere, to sit wherever you wish, to cast your gaze wherever you wish and your heart becomes pleased – then indeed these are images of the kinds of blessings that people can understand.

Fath al-Bayan by al-Qinnawji — Siddiq Hasan Khan (d. 1307 H):

{وَزَرَ ابِي مَبْثُوثَةً} [الغاشية: 16]

“And carpets spread out” – that is, broad, magnificent carpets; its singular is “zirbī” or “zirbiyyah.” Abu ‘Ubaydah and Al-Farra’ said: *zarābī* refers to the fine-piled *ṭanāfis* (thick cloths / precious beddings), whose singular is “zirbiyyah.” In Al-Qamus it is stated: *az-zarābī* are large cushions and beddings, or anything that is spread out and upon which one leans; its singular is “zirbī” (with kasrah on the zāy), and it is also read with ḍammah.

And “al-mabthūthah” means “spread out,” which is the saying of Qatadah; and ‘Ikrimah said: some of them placed upon others (i.e. layered).

Al-Wahidi said: it is also possible that its meaning is that these *zarābī* are scattered around in the seating places, and this is the view of Qutaybah; and Al-Farra' said: "mabthūthah" means: very many. And the apparent meaning is that *bathth* means to spread widely and in great quantity, as in Allah's statement: "and He scattered therein from every creature" – i.e. spread them out. Al-Qurtubi and others said that this meaning is the soundest. (End of quotation)

"Do they not then look at the camel – how it has been created; and at the sky – how it has been raised high; and at the mountains – how they have been set up; and at the earth – how it has been spread out? So remind; you are only a reminder-giver. You are not a controller over them – except the one who turns away and disbelieves. Then Allah will punish him with the greatest punishment. Indeed, to Us is their return; then indeed, upon Us is their account." [Surah Al-Ghashiyah: 17–26]

Tafsir: some scholars have said that these mountains are just as deep in the earth as their visible height above it – that is, the root of the mountain penetrates the ground to a depth equal to what appears above the surface – and this is not far-fetched. (Tafsir al-Sa'di)

(Regarding the camel:) Reflection and contemplation over its creation are encouraged, because there are great and strange things within it: in its strength, and despite that it becomes compliant even for the weak; in its patience over thirst; and in the numerous benefits it has – for riding, for carrying loads, for eating its meat, for drinking its milk, for (uses related to) its urine, and other benefits. [Ibn Juzayy 2/566]

(From Tafsir al-Qurtubi – some points on Surah Al-Ghashiyah)

“Do they not look at the camels – how they are created?”

Because the camel is more comprehensive in its benefits than the rest of animals, as its types of benefit are four: it is a milk-giver, a riding beast, eaten as food, and a beast of burden. The camel gathers together these four characteristics, so the blessing through it is more general, and the manifestation of (Allah’s) power in it is more complete.

Al-Hasan (al-Basri) said: Allah mentioned it specifically because it eats date stones and rough herbage, yet still produces milk.

Al-Hasan was also asked about it and people said: the elephant is more amazing. And Shurayh used to say: “Come out with us to the rubbish heap so that we may look at the camel – how it has been created.”

And “al-ibil” (camels) – it has no singular from its own form, and it is grammatically feminine, because the names of collective nouns that have no singular from their wording, when they are for non-human beings, are necessarily treated as feminine. When you make a diminutive of it, the tā’ (of femininity) enters it, so you say: “ubaylah, ghunaymah” and similar forms. Sometimes they also say “ibl” with sukun on the bā’ for lightening (ease of pronunciation), and its plural is “ābāl”.

“And at the camels – how they are created?”

Because the camel (male or female) is, compared to other animals, the more beneficial: it has four uses – milk-giver, mount to ride, eaten for meat, and bearer of loads – and the camel combines all four qualities. Thus, through it the blessing is more complete, and Allah’s power appears more manifestly.

Al-Hasan al-Basri said: Allah singled out the mention of the camel because it eats the date stone and rough fodder, yet still produces milk.

Al-Hasan al-Basri was asked about this same point, and the people said: the elephant is more astonishing! Shurayh used to say: “Come! Let us go out to the rubbish-heap so that we can look at the camel and see how it was created!”

“Ibil”: it has no singular directly from that same word, and it is treated as feminine, because in the language those plural words which have no singular from their form, when they refer to non-humans, are necessarily feminine. And when you form the diminutive, the “hā” of the feminine enters it, as in “ubaylah, ghunaymah,” and the like.

Sometimes, for lightening, the word is pronounced “ibl” with a sukūn on the bā’, and its (regular) plural is “ābāl”. (End of the excerpt from Tafsir al-Qurtubi)

The strength of camels and their load-carrying capacity

- Scholars such as Abu ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ala’, Ibn Jarir and Az-Zajjaj have clarified that the camel is the only animal upon which a load is placed while it is sitting, and then it rises and walks with that load.

- Other animals (like donkeys or mules), if they are seated and a load is placed on them, cannot get up.
- This is a sign of Allah’s power.

Why are other animals not mentioned?

Elephants, giraffes and the like are not mentioned because they were not present in the Arabian region. The Qur’an addressed the Arabs through things that were within their observation and experience – whether in the signs of power in creation or in the descriptions of the delights of Paradise and the punishments of Hell.

Mountains: purpose and reflection

“And at the mountains – how they have been set up?” points to how mountains have been fixed as pegs so that the earth does not sway with its inhabitants. In their colors, forms, and minerals are clear signs of Allah’s greatness, and when a person sees mountain ranges in new regions, he is left in awe and wonder.

The Bedouin’s question (the story of Dhumām ibn Tha‘labah)

Imam Ahmad narrated from Thabit, from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him): “We were forbidden to ask the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (excessive questions), and we liked it when an intelligent Bedouin would come and ask him. A Bedouin came and said: ‘O Muhammad! Your envoy came to us and said that Allah has sent you.’

(He asked:) ‘Did he speak the truth?’ He ﷺ said: ‘Yes.’

(He then asked:) ‘Who created the heaven?’ He ﷺ replied: ‘Allah.’

‘Who created the earth?’ ‘Allah.’

‘Who erected these mountains?’ ‘Allah.’

Then he said: ‘By the One who created the heaven, the earth, and the mountains, has Allah really sent you?’ He ﷺ said: ‘Yes.’ (Then he asked about the obligations of prayer, zakah, and Hajj, and affirmed them.)

In the end, he said: ‘By the One Who sent you with the truth, I will not add to this nor will I diminish from it.’

The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘If he is truthful, he will enter Paradise.’”

This wording and its variants are also found in Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Nasa’i and Ibn Majah.

Comment of Ibn ‘Uthaymin on “Do they not look...”

Allah the Exalted says: “Do they not then look at the camels – how they are created?” – here the interrogative is for alerting and reproaching; that is, Allah is rebuking those who denied the reports He has given about the Day of Resurrection and about reward and punishment, and censuring them for turning away from the divine signs that are right before their eyes.

And Allah began with the camel because, at that time, people’s lives were most intertwined with camels: they were their mounts, they milked them, they ate their meat, they benefited from their hair, and gained many other benefits from them. That is why He said: “Do they not look at the camels” – and this (the camel) is what is called *abawir* (pl. of ba‘ir).

“How they are created” – meaning: how Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, created them with this massive, enduring body. You see the camel covering long distances that a human being cannot reach except with great hardship, yet the camel bears it patiently.

And you see that when the camel is sitting under a load, it stands up by itself and does not need anyone to help it, whereas normally, if another animal is loaded while sitting, it can hardly get up. But these camels Allah has given a strength and capacity that serves the benefit of human beings, because due to its height a person cannot load it while it is standing; so Allah made it easy for people to load it while it is seated, and it rises with its load.

And as Allah has said in Surah Ya-Sin: “And for them therein (in these animals) are benefits and drinks, will they not then give thanks?” [Ya-Sin: 73]. Its benefits are very many, uncountable, and the owners who live with them and handle them know these benefits better than we do. On this basis Allah said: “Do they not then look at the camels – how they are created,” and did not mention other animals like goats, cows or gazelles, because – as I have said to you – these (camels) are the most beneficial and most useful to people among all animals. (End of Ibn ‘Uthaymin’s quotation)

The responsibility of reminding

“فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ ۖ لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ”

- Meaning: You are only one who gives reminder; you are not imposed over them as a controller.
- Ibn ‘Abbas and Mujahid: “لست عليهم بجبار” – that is, you are not the one who forces them or creates faith in their hearts.
- Ibn Zayd: “لست بالذي تُكرهم على الإيمان” – that is, you are not the one who can compel them to believe.

“‘So remind’ – Allah commanded His Prophet to give reminder, and He did not command him to remind some specific individual, i.e. He did not say ‘remind so-and-so and so-and-so’; therefore the reminder is general, because the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was sent to all people. That means: remind everyone, in every situation, and in every place. So the Prophet ﷺ gave reminder, and after him his successors – who were his deputies in knowledge, action and da‘wah – they too continued to remind.”

“But does this reminder benefit everyone? The answer is: no. ‘For indeed the reminder benefits the believers’ [Adh-Dhariyat: 55]. As for the non-believer, the reminder establishes the proof against him, but it does not benefit him (in the sense of acceptance and inner effect). The reminder benefits only the believer. And we say: if you see that your heart is not affected by the reminder, then blame your own heart, because Allah says: ‘And remind, for indeed the reminder benefits the believers.’”

So if you receive admonition and find no effect or benefit in your heart, then consider that there is some deficiency in your faith, because if your faith were complete, you would certainly benefit from the reminder – since the reminder definitely benefits the believer.”

“‘Indeed you are only a reminder-giver’ – that is, Muhammad ﷺ is only one who reminds and conveys; guidance itself is in the Hand of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic: ‘Not upon you is their guidance, but Allah guides whom He wills’ [Al-Baqarah: 272].”

“And the Prophet ﷺ fulfilled the right of admonition and reminding until the last moments of his life, to the point that

even at the end he kept saying: ‘Prayer, prayer, and (fear) Allah regarding those whom your right hands possess (your slaves).’ Until these were the last words on his tongue.

Thus, from the time he was addressed with ‘Arise and warn’ [Al-Muddaththir: 2] until Allah took his soul, the Prophet ﷺ did not fall short in giving reminder at any opportunity and in any time, no matter how much harm reached him from his own people or from others.”

“Whoever studies history and the Prophetic sīrah will know that the people of Makkah – who were the closest to him, knew him well, and called him ‘Al-Amīn’ (the Trustworthy) – even to the point that when the Ka‘bah collapsed and the issue came of placing the Black Stone, all the tribes said: ‘We will place it,’ until the Prophet ﷺ came and they all agreed to make him the arbitrator. He spread out a cloth, each tribe held a corner, and when the Black Stone reached its place, he ﷺ placed it with his own hand.

They used to call him ‘Al-Amīn’, but when Allah honoured him with prophethood, the measures changed; they began to say, ‘He is a sorcerer, a soothsayer, a poet, mad, a liar,’ and they hurled every kind of insult at him.

So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ continued to give reminder, and all that was obligatory upon him was to remind. From this we understand that guidance is in the Hand of Allah; we cannot guide even the closest of our relatives: ‘Indeed, you do not guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom He wills’ [Al-Qasas: 56].

Therefore, if we advise someone and he persists (in rejection), argues, or says, ‘I will do whatever I want,’ then we should not be broken-hearted over that. Allah the Exalted said to His Prophet: ‘Perhaps you would destroy yourself with grief because they will not be believers’ [Ash-Shu‘ara: 3]; meaning, do not kill yourself in sorrow if they do not believe. Their faith is for their own benefit, and their disbelief is not against you. For this reason He said: ‘You are not over them a controller’ – that is, you have no authority over them; you do not possess any rule over them. The rule belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds. Your duty is only to convey the message; authority and dominion are in the Hand of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic.” (Tafsir Ibn ‘Uthaymin)

If you see that your heart is not affected by admonition, then blame your own heart... If you are given a reminder and you find no effect or benefit in your heart, then blame yourself and know that there is a deficiency in your faith. (Tafsir al-Sa‘di)

Imam Ahmad narrated from Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him):

“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘I have been commanded to fight the people until they say: Lā ilāha illā Allah. When they say it, their blood and their wealth are protected from me, except by right, and their reckoning is with Allah.’”

Then he recited this verse: “So remind; you are only a reminder-giver. You are not a controller over them.” This hadith is also found in the two Sahihs (al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Key points

1. Qitāl vs. qatl (fighting vs. killing)

- The Prophet ﷺ said: “I have been commanded to *fight* the people (umirtu an uqātil an-nās),” not “to *kill* the people (aqtul an-nās).”
- The difference: the purpose of fighting was not to force people to accept Islam, nor to spread terror, but to establish peace and remove the obstacles in the path of the message.

2. Prohibition of compulsion

- Under the verse “There is no compulsion in religion” (Lā ikrāha fī d-dīn), it is not permissible to force anyone to become Muslim.

3. Division of responsibility

- The role of the Prophet ﷺ: only to convey and to make the truth clear.
- Reckoning and judgement: upon Allah alone.

Summary of verses 25–26

- “Indeed, to Us is their return” – i.e. their return is to Us.
- “Then indeed, upon Us is their reckoning” – i.e. then upon Us is to take their account.
This affirms certainty of returning to Allah and of recompense.

As for what is narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) regarding that people who will be entered into Paradise in chains, its explanation is that captives are seized,

then Allah guides their hearts and they enter into Islam. Here the Prophet ﷺ said: “I have been commanded to fight the people,” he did not say, “I have been commanded to kill the people,” and for this reason Allah the Exalted said: “There is no compulsion in religion” [Al-Baqarah: 256], meaning that no one will be compelled to enter into Islam.

If they are from the People of the Book and become dhimmis, then they may remain in their homeland on condition that they pay jizyah and make a covenant with the Muslims; thus they remain and are not forced to enter Islam. This has continued from that very time; the Prophet ﷺ conquered Khaybar and left the Jews there, and likewise in many other lands that the Muslims conquered, the people were never told: “Accept Islam, otherwise we will strike off your necks,” this absolutely did not happen.

Thus there is no contradiction between the statement of Allah here, “So remind; you are only a reminder-giver,” and the statement of the Prophet ﷺ: “I have been commanded to fight the people until they say Lā ilāha illā Allah.”

And the statement of Allah the Exalted: “Except the one who turns away and disbelieves” – meaning the one who turns away from acting upon the pillars of the religion and denies the truth with his heart and tongue – is like His saying: “So he neither affirmed nor prayed, but rather he denied and turned away” [Al-Qiyāmah: 31–32]; for this reason He said: “Then Allah will punish him with the greatest punishment.”

Consider here the exception: “So remind; you are only a reminder-giver. You are not a controller over them, except the

one who turns away and disbelieves.” Is this a connected exception, meaning: “except the one who turns away and disbelieves, so you are a controller over him, you kill him”? No, it is not so. Rather this is a disconnected exception, meaning: “So remind; you are only a reminder-giver. You are not a controller over them, but as for the one who turns away and disbelieves, then Allah will punish him with the greatest punishment.” This is the meaning. Even those who said it is a connected exception said that it returns to His saying: “So remind; you are only a reminder-giver. You are not a controller over them, except the one who turns away and disbelieves,” i.e. you remind those who are prepared to accept the reminder and benefit from it; but as for the one who turns away and disbelieves, whose faith and guidance you despair of, then you have nothing to do with him – or: you remind those in whom there is hope of faith, as has preceded: “So remind, if the reminder benefits.” Some of the scholars said this, but the first view is closer: that the exception is disconnected, i.e. “but as for the one who turns away and disbelieves, then Allah will punish him with the greatest punishment, not you.”

And the statement of Allah the Exalted: “Indeed, to Us is their return” – i.e. their return and coming back is to Us; “Then indeed, upon Us is their reckoning” – i.e. We alone will take their account and recompense them according to their deeds: if they did good, then (with) good, and if they did evil, then (with) evil.

There are also lesser punishments in this world: sometimes a person is tried in his body, sometimes in his intellect, sometimes in his family, sometimes in his wealth, sometimes in his society;

and all of these are small punishments compared to the punishment of the Hereafter. (Tafsir al-Sa‘di)

No matter how much a person runs, he will only return to Allah; even if his life is long, in the end he must return to Allah. So, O brother, prepare yourself for this meeting, for you will certainly meet your Lord. (Tafsir al-Sa‘di)

From Fath al-Qadīr and Aḥsan al-Bayān – some key points

1. Al-Ghāshiyah: By “al-Ghāshiyah” is meant the Day of Resurrection, because its terrors will cover and overwhelm all of creation.
2. “Faces, that Day, will be humbled” – i.e. the faces of the disbelievers: humbled, bowed, low and abased, like a worshipper who is bent down in humility in the state of prayer.
3. “Working, exhausted” – i.e. such a laborious, toilsome punishment will befall them that their condition will become extremely bad. A second meaning is that they will have tired themselves in the world through deeds – they did many actions – but those actions were upon a false religion and based on innovations; therefore, despite worship and strenuous practices, they will enter Hell. According to this sense, Ibn ‘Abbās took “working, exhausted” (‘āmilah nāṣibah) to refer to the Christians. (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī)
4. Here, what is meant is that intensely boiling water whose heat has reached the utmost extreme. (Fath al-Qadīr)
5. “Ḍarī” is a thorny tree which, when it dries up, even animals do not like to eat it. In any case, it will be – like

zaqqūm – an extremely bitter, foul-tasting and utterly filthy food, which will not become part of the body, nor will hunger be relieved by it.

6. It is commonly said that one should respond (to the verse about reckoning) by saying: “Allāhumma ḥāsibnā ḥisāban yasīrā (O Allah, call us to an easy reckoning).” This du‘ā’ itself is authentically established from the Noble Prophet ﷺ, who used to recite it in some of his prayers, as has preceded under Sūrat al-Inshiqāq; however, reciting it specifically as a response to this verse is not established from him ﷺ.

Eleventh Part - lessons derived from the surah

In the end, we will discuss the lessons that are to be learned from each surah. These lessons – which are more than four thousand in total – are practical in nature and help us to implement the teachings of the Qur’an in our day-to-day lives. These lessons are taken from Arshad Basheer Madani’s book “Ahdāf wa Asbāq-e-Qur’ān.”

Some topics

- Mention of the terrors of the Day of Resurrection for the disbelievers (verses 1–7).
- Mention of the rewards bestowed upon the believers in Paradise (verses 8–16).
- Mention of some manifestations of divine power and **Lordship** (verses 17–20).
- Mention of the affirmation of the occurrence of resurrection after death (verses 21–26).

Some lessons

(A person who reflects on the universe and thinks about it – if he does not fall into denial – can become a Muslim.)

- Heedlessness ends in regret: Among the names of the Day of Resurrection is “al-Ghāshiyah” – “the Overwhelming” – because it will descend upon people with its severities at

the very time of their heedlessness. On that day their negligence will turn into intense remorse.

- Worldly blessings are temporary: The blessings of this world will inevitably come to an end, and the disbeliever who has enjoyed worldly favors can never match, even to the extent of a particle, the blessings that the believer will be given in the Hereafter.
- The world as prison and paradise: The world, for a believer who lives a truly believing life, is like a prison that is preparing him for the lofty ranks of the Hereafter; while the worldly life, for the disbeliever, is a kind of paradise which ultimately makes him deserving of the blazing Fire once he dies.
- “Do they not then look...?”: Whoever’s heart is alive is constantly reflecting on the structure and signs of the heavens and the earth, and this reflection ignites his heart even more and increases it in light and life.
- “So remind; you are only a reminder-giver...”: The responsibility of the callers to Allah is that they continue to admonish people with sincerity, warning them of Hell and of Allah’s seizure, and then leave the outcome to Allah. They are accountable before Allah for doing the work of da‘wah itself; they are not accountable for bringing guidance into the hearts of those who are called.

Connection / subtleties of tafsīr

- In Sūrat al-A‘lā and Sūrat al-Ghāshiyah, there is a strong urging towards remembrance, reflection and contemplation; that is, the dā‘ī should engage in continuous self-development, and on a personal level should keep

developing himself both in knowledge and in practice, so that he becomes capable of seizing opportunities and truly effective in the right of the people he is calling.

Verses and hadith

Verse 1

“Have they not looked at the camels – how they were created, and at the sky – how it was raised, and at the mountains – how they were set firm, and at the earth – how it was spread out?”

Hadith

It is narrated from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “O Abū Sa‘īd, whoever is pleased with Allah as (his) Lord, and with Islam as (his) religion, and with Muḥammad as (his) Prophet, Paradise is guaranteed for him.”

Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (may Allah be pleased with him) reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “O Abū Sa‘īd, whoever is pleased with Allah as Lord, with Islam as religion, and with Muḥammad ﷺ as Prophet, then Paradise becomes obligatory for him.” (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: 1884)

Hadith

It is narrated from Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “You will most certainly enter Paradise, except for the one who refuses and bolts away from Allah like the bolting of a camel.”

Abū Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “You will surely enter Paradise, except the one who refuses and runs away from Allah like a camel that bolts away (from its owner).” (al-Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah: 2043)

Hadith

“The likeness of me and the likeness of the people is that of a man who kindled a fire. When it lit up what was around it, moths and these insects which fall into the fire began to fall into it. He began to pull them out, but they overpowered him and plunged into it. I am holding on to your waistbands to keep you away from the Fire, but you are rushing headlong into it.”

Verse 2

“فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ”

“So remind; you are only a reminder-giver. You are not a controller over them.”
