

SPREAD KNOWLEDGE

THE  
HOLY QURAN

ENGLISH TAFSEER

CHAPTER 88

SURAH AL-GHASHIYAH

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By

ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI

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**HOLY QURAN**

**CHAPTER**

**088**

**SURAH AL-GHASHIYAH**

*ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI*

**Introduction and Summary**

This is a late Surah of early Makkan period, perhaps close in date to S.53. Its subject matter is the contrast between the destinies of the Good and the Evil in the Hereafter---On the Day when the true balance will be restored: the Signs of Allah even in this life should remind us of the Day of Account, for Allah is good and just, and His creation is for a just Purpose.

## C.268 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

*Have you heard of that tremendous Day  
When the Good from the Evil will be separated?*

*There will be souls that day will burn  
And grovel in the blazing Fire of Wrath!  
No Food can fill their Hunger: no Drink,  
Alas, can slake their fierce Thirst!*

*There will be Souls that Day will shout  
With joy to the glory of their Lord!  
Their past Endeavour will now be Achievement.  
Raised high on Thrones of Dignity they  
Will be Guests at the sumptuous Feast of Bliss.*

*Let man but look at his dominion o'er  
The beasts of the field, or his glorious canopy  
Of stars, or the Eternal Hills that feed  
His streams, or the wide expanse of Mother  
Earth that nurtures him, and he  
Will see the ordered Plan of Allah.  
To Him must he return and give account!  
Let him, then, learn his Lesson and live!*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْعَاشِيَةِ (١)

1. Has the story reached thee, of the Overwhelming (Event)?

**C6096. Gashiyah:** the thing or event that overshadows or overwhelms, that covers over or makes people lose their senses.

In 12:107, it is described as the "covering veil of the Wrath of Allah": where see n. 1790.

The Day of Judgment is indicated, as the Event of overwhelming importance in which all our petty differences of this imperfect world are covered over and overwhelmed in a new world of perfect justice and truth. (R).

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ (٢)

2. Some faces, **that Day**, will be humiliated,

**C6097**. Cf. 75:22, 24.

عَامِلَةٌ تَأْسِيَةٌ (٣)

3. Laboring (hard), weary --

**C6098**. On the faces of the wicked will appear the hard labour and consequent fatigue of the task they will have in battling against the fierce Fire which their own Deeds will have kindled.

تُصَلَّى نَارًا حَامِيَةً (٤)

4. The while they enter the Blazing Fire --

تُسْقَى مِنْ عَيْنٍ آنِيَةٍ (٥)

5. The while they are given, to drink, of a boiling hot spring.

لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيعٍ (٦)

6. No food will there be for them but a bitter **Dhari**,

**C6099**. The root-meaning implies again the idea of humiliation.

It is a plant, bitter and thorny, loathsome in smell and appearance, which will neither give fattening nourishment to the body nor in any way satisfy the burning pangs of hunger, -a fit plant for Hell, like **Zaqqum** (56:52; or 17:60, n. 2250).

لَا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنْ جُوعٍ (٧)

7. Which will neither nourish nor satisfy hunger.

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَّاعِمَةٌ (٨)

8. (Other) faces that Day will be joyful.

لِسَعْيِهَا رَاضِيَةٌ (٩)

9. Pleased with their Striving --

**C6100.** Notice the parallelism in contrast, between the fate of the Wicked and that of the Righteous.

In the one case there was humiliation in their faces; in the other, there is joy; where there was labour and weariness in warding off the Fire, there is instead a healthy Striving, which is itself pleasurable-a Striving which is a pleasant consequence of the spiritual Endeavour in the earthly life, which may have brought trouble or persecution from without, but which brought inward peace and satisfaction.

فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ (١٠)

10. In a Garden on high,

**C6101.** The most important point is their inward state of joy and satisfaction, mentioned in [verses 8-9](#).

Now are mentioned the outer things of bliss, the chief of which is the Garden. The Garden is in contrast to the Fire. Its chief beauty will be that they will hear there nothing unbecoming, or foolish, or vain. It will be a Garden on high, in all senses,-fit for the best, highest, and noblest.

لَا تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا لَافِيَةً (١١)

11. Where they shall hear no (word) of vanity:

فِيهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ (١٢)

12. Therein will be a bubbling spring:

**C6102.** Instead of the boiling hot spring (verse 5) there will be a bubbling spring of sparkling water.

Instead of the grovelling and grumbling in the place of Wrath, there Will be couches, with all the accompaniments of a brilliant assembly.

فِيهَا سُرُرٌ مَّرْفُوعَةٌ (١٣)

13. Therein will be Thrones (of dignity), raised on high.

وَأَكْوَابٌ مَّوْضُوعَةٌ (١٤)

14. Goblets placed (ready).

وَتَمَارِقُ مَصْفُوفَةٌ (١٥)

15. And Cushions set in rows,

وَزَّرَابِيُّ مَبْتُوثَةٌ (١٦)

16. And rich carpets (All) spread out.

أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ ...

17. Do they not look at the Camels,

**C6103.** In case men neglect the Hereafter as of no account, they are asked to contemplate four things, which they can see in every-day life, and which are full of meaning, high design, and the goodness of Allah to man. The first mentioned is the domesticated animal, which for Arab countries is par excellence the Camel.

What a wonderful structure has this Ship of the Desert? He can store water in his stomach for days. He can live on dry and thorny desert shrubs. His limbs are adapted to his life. He can carry men and goods. His flesh can be eaten. Camel's hair can be used in weaving. And withal, he is so gentle! Who can sing his praises enough?

... كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ (١٧)

how they are made? --

وَالِى السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ (١٨)

18. And at the Sky, how it is raised high? --

**C6104.** The second thing they should consider is the noble blue vault high above them,-with the sun and moon, the stars and planets, and other heavenly bodies. This scene is full of beauty and magnificence, design and order, plainness and mystery. And yet we receive our light and warmth from the sun, and what would our physical lives be without these influences that come from such enormous distances?

... وَالِى الْجِبَالِ ...

19. And at the Mountains,

**C6105.** From every-day utility and affection in the Camel, to the utility in grandeur in the heavens above us, we had two instances touching our individual as well as our social lives. In the third instance, in the Mountains we come to the utility to human kind generally in the services the Mountains perform in storing water, in moderating climate, and in various other ways which it is the business of Physical Geography to investigate and describe.

... كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ (١٩)

How they are fixed firm? --

وَالِى الْأَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ (٢٠)

20. And at the Earth, how it is spread out?

**C6106.** The fourth and last instance given is that of the Earth as a whole, the habitation of mankind in our present phase of life. The Earth is a globe, and yet how marvelously it seems to be spread out before us in plains, valleys, hills, deserts, seas, etc! Can man, seeing these things, fail to see a Plan and Purpose in his life, or fail to turn to the great Creator before Whom he win have to give an account after this life is done?

فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ (٢١)

21. Therefore do thou give admonition,  
for thou art one to admonish.

لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ (٢٢)

22. Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs.

**C6107.** The Prophet of Allah is sent to teach and direct people on the way. He is not sent to force their will, or to punish them, except in so far as he may receive authority to do so. Punishment belongs to Allah alone. And Punishment is certain in the Hereafter, when true values will be restored.

إِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلَّى وَكَفَرَ (٢٣)

23. But if any turn away and reject Allah --

فَيُعَذِّبُهُ اللَّهُ الْعَذَابَ الْأَكْبَرَ (٢٤)

24. Allah will punish him with a mighty Punishment.

إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ (٢٥)

25. For to Us will be their Return;

ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ (٢٦)

26. Then it will be for Us to call them to account.