

SURAH AS A STORY



Surah Al-Ghashiyah

The Overwhelming Event

The complete journey — two faces, and four signs —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 88 • 26 Ayahs • Meccan

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The Surah at a Glance

Hal ataaka hadeesul-ghaashiyah

1. Has there reached you the report of the Overwhelming Event?

Wujoohuny-yawma'izin khaashi'ah. 'Aamilatun naasibah

- 2-3. Faces, that Day, will be humbled — labouring, exhausted.

Wujoohuny-yawma'izin naa'imah. Li-sa'yihaa raadiyah

- 8-9. Faces, that Day, will be pleased — with their effort, satisfied.

Afalaa yanzuroona ilal-ibili kayfa khuliqat

17. Then do they not look at the camels — how they are created?

Fazakkir innamaaa anta muzakkir. Lasta 'alayhim bimusaytir

- 21-22. So remind — you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.

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Has the Report Reached You?

Beta, this surah opens with a question asked so gently that it feels like a hand on your shoulder: 'HAL ATAKA HADEETHUL-GHASHIYAH — has there REACHED you the REPORT of AL-GHASHIYAH?'

'Ghashiyah', beta, means that which covers, envelops, overwhelms — the way a cloth is thrown over something completely, or a wave covers a swimmer. It is one of the names of the Day of Judgement: the Event that will cover everyone and everything, leaving nothing outside it.

And notice the style of the question. Allah does not begin with 'know that' or 'beware of'. He asks: has this news reached you? The scholars say questions like this are meant to make the listener lean forward — to prepare the heart before the information arrives. Beta, when someone says to you 'have you heard what happened?' — you stop what you are doing and listen. Allah is using that very human instinct to open our ears.



And then, without further introduction, He shows us the two kinds of faces that will exist that Day.

Faces That Laboured for Nothing

'WUJOOHUN YAWMA'IZIN KHASHI'AH — FACES, that Day, will be HUMBLLED, downcast — 'AMILATUN NASIBAH — LABOURING, EXHAUSTED.'

Beta, sit with those two words: 'amilatun nasibah' — working hard, and worn out by the work. And here is the point that should shake us: these people WORKED. They were not lazy. They toiled, they exerted themselves, they were tired.

The scholars mention two explanations, and both are worth carrying. One: they are labouring and exhausted on that Day itself — dragging chains, driven along, worn out by punishment. Two — and this is the one that speaks to us: they laboured hard in the WORLD, and all that labour brought them nothing at all here.



Beta, imagine a man who worked eighteen hours a day his whole life; a woman who exhausted herself in service; a person who fasted, wandered, deprived himself in a false religion or for a false cause. Effort, sincerity of a kind, real tiredness — and then the file is opened and the total is zero. Because the effort was either for the wrong destination, or in a way Allah never asked for.

That is why our scholars said: two things must be right for any deed to be accepted — that it be for Allah alone, and that it be according to what He legislated. Beta, effort alone is not enough. A man rowing hard in the wrong direction only arrives at the wrong place sooner.

'TASLA NARAN HAMIYAH — they will burn in an intensely hot Fire — TUSQA MIN 'AYNIN ANIYAH — given drink from a boiling spring — LAYSA LAHUM TA'AMUN ILLA MIN DAREE' — for them there is no food except from DARI'.'



Beta, 'dari' is a dry, thorny desert plant that even starving camels refuse. And Allah adds: 'LA YUSMINU WA LA YUGHNEE MIN JOO' — it neither NOURISHES nor AVAILS against HUNGER.' Food that does not feed. Beta, that is a description of every false pursuit in this world too: things people consume endlessly and remain empty.

Faces Pleased With Their Effort

And then the surah turns, and the light changes completely: 'WUJOOHUN YAWMA'IZIN NA'IMAH — FACES, that Day, will be in BLISS — LI-SA'YIHA RADIYAH — with their EFFORT, WELL-PLEASED.'

Beta, look at the beautiful symmetry the Quran has built. The first group also had 'effort' — and it exhausted them for nothing. This group has 'sa'y' — effort — and they are RADIYAH, pleased with it, satisfied when they see what it produced.

Both groups worked, beta. The difference was direction, and sincerity, and following what Allah actually asked



for.

And what a phrase to aim for: to look back at your own effort and be pleased with it. Every night prayer you dragged yourself up for, every rupee given when you wanted to keep it, every anger swallowed, every sin refused when it was easy and available — that Day you will look at the whole record and think: it was worth it, every bit of it.

'FEE JANNATIN 'ALIYAH — in an ELEVATED garden — LA TASMA'U FEEHA LAGHIYAH — wherein you will hear NO IDLE SPEECH.' Beta, again Allah highlights this: a place with no useless talk. No gossip, no bickering, no noise that leaves you emptier than before.

'FEEHA 'AYNUN JARIYAH — within it is a FLOWING SPRING — FEEHA SURURUN MARFOO'AH — within it are couches RAISED HIGH — WA AKWABUN MAWDOO'AH — and cups PLACED READY — WA NAMARIQU MASFOOFAH — and cushions LINED UP — WA ZARABIYYU MABTHOOTHAAH — and carpets



SPREAD AROUND.'

Beta, feel the hospitality in that description. It is the picture of a host who has prepared a room for a guest before he arrives: the cups already filled and set out, the cushions arranged in a row, the carpets spread. Nothing left to be done, nothing to ask for. Allah is describing a place that has been PREPARED for you — and He describes it in this detail so that you will want it enough to work for it.

Four Signs You Can See

And now, beta, comes one of the most famous passages of the Quran — and its beauty is that it points at four ordinary things, arranged in a perfect sequence.

'A FA-LA YANZUROONA ILAL-IBILI KAYFA KHULIQAT — then do they NOT LOOK at the CAMELS — HOW THEY ARE CREATED? WA ILAS-SAMA'I KAYFA RUFI'AT — and at the SKY — how it is RAISED? WA ILAL-JIBALI KAYFA NUSIBAT — and at the MOUNTAINS — how they are FIXED? WA ILAL-ARDI



KAYFA SUTIHAT — and at the EARTH — how it is SPREAD OUT?'

Beta, notice first WHO is being addressed: desert Arabs. And notice the order in which Allah directs their gaze. First, the CAMEL — the thing right beside them, the animal their entire life depended on. Then, up to the SKY — the vast ceiling above. Then, across to the MOUNTAINS on the horizon. Then, down to the EARTH beneath their feet. Near, up, across, down — a complete turn of the head, and every direction is filled with evidence.

And why the camel first? Beta, think about that animal. It kneels down so a child can load it. It carries enormous weight across burning sand. It stores water and can go days without drinking. Its eyelashes and nostrils are designed to shut against sandstorms. Its feet are wide pads that do not sink in sand. Its stomach digests thorny plants no other animal can eat. And it produces milk, wool, transport — an entire economy in one creature. For a Bedouin, the camel was the difference between life



and death — and it had been engineered, feature by feature, for exactly the world he lived in.

Beta, the lesson for us is the method: Allah did not send them to a laboratory or a philosophy lecture. He said: LOOK at what is already in front of you. Your own everyday life is full of evidence you have stopped noticing. Look at your food, your body, your children, the rain, the seasons — reflection does not require travel.

You Are Not Their Controller

And then comes the instruction that every teacher, parent, preacher and concerned believer needs: 'FA-ZAKKIR INNAMA ANTA MUZAKKIR — SO REMIND — you are ONLY A REMINDER — LASTA 'ALAYHIM BI-MUSAYTIR — YOU ARE NOT OVER THEM A CONTROLLER.'

Beta, this is one of the most freeing pairs of ayahs in the Quran. Your job is REMINDING. Guidance is not your department. 'Musaytir' means one who has power over



another, who dominates, who forces an outcome.

Think how much anguish comes from forgetting this: the father who cannot sleep because his son does not pray, the wife who nags her husband into resentment, the daawah worker who burns out because people did not change. Beta, do your work — sincerely, warmly, consistently — and then hand the result to Allah. The Prophet ﷺ himself was told this. He was told elsewhere: 'you do not guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom He wills.' If the best of creation was not made responsible for outcomes, neither are you.

'ILLA MAN TAWALLA WA KAFAR — except for the one who TURNS AWAY and DISBELIEVES —

FA-YU'AZZIBUHULLAHUL-'AZABAL-AKBAR — then Allah will punish him with the GREATEST punishment.'

And the surah's final ayahs, beta, are the calm foundation under everything: 'INNA ILAYNA IYABAHUM — indeed, to US is their RETURN — THUMMA INNA 'ALAYNA HISABAHUM — then



indeed, upon US is their ACCOUNT.'

Beta, read that again, because it takes a weight off your chest. Their return is to Us — not to you. Their reckoning is upon Us — not upon you. You are not the judge, not the enforcer, not the one who decides who ends up where.

So the surah that began by asking 'has the report reached you?' ends by telling you exactly what to do with that report: let it change YOU, remind others gently, and leave the accounting to the One who owns it.

What This Surah Teaches Us

1. Effort alone guarantees nothing: 'labouring, exhausted' can end in the Fire if the direction or the method was wrong.
2. Two conditions for every deed — sincerely for Allah, and according to what He legislated.
3. Aim to be 'pleased with your effort' on that Day: every hard salah and swallowed anger will look worth



it.

4. Jannah is described as already prepared — cups set out, cushions lined up: work like someone expected.

5. Reflection needs no travel — look near, up, across, and down; the camel and the sky are both arguments.

6. You are a reminder, not a controller — do your part warmly, and stop carrying the burden of other people's outcomes.

7. 'To Us is their return, and upon Us is their account' — release what was never yours to settle.

Ya Allah, make our effort count, make our faces among the pleased ones, and teach us to remind without trying to control. Ameen.

— This is a simplified, faithful retelling for understanding, based on the Quran's translation and established tafseer (Ibn Kathir and others). For deeper study, always read with a qualified teacher. —

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