

**INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT *Al-Gāshiyā*, 88.**

This is a late Sūra of the early Makkan period, perhaps close in date to S. liii. 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.

*Al-Gāshiya*, or The Overwhelming  
Event.

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,  
Most Merciful.*

1. Has the story  
Reached thee, of  
The Overwhelming (Event)?<sup>6096</sup>
2. Some faces, that Day,<sup>6097</sup>  
Will be humiliated,
3. Labouring (hard), weary,<sup>6098</sup>
4. The while they enter  
The Blazing Fire,–
5. The while they are given,  
To drink, of a boiling hot spring,
6. No food will there be  
For them but a bitter *Dhari*<sup>6099</sup>
7. Which will neither nourish  
Nor satisfy hunger.
8. (Other) faces that Day  
Will be joyful,



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْغَاشِيَةِ ﴿١﴾

وُجُوهُ يُومِذُ خَشِيعَةً ﴿٢﴾

عَامِلَةً نَّاصِبَةً ﴿٣﴾

تَصَلَّى نَارًا حَامِيَةً ﴿٤﴾

تُسْقَى مِنْ عَيْنٍ آيَةٍ ﴿٥﴾

لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيعٍ ﴿٦﴾

لَا يَسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِي مِنْ جُوعٍ ﴿٧﴾

وُجُوهُ يُومِذُ نَاعِمَةً ﴿٨﴾

6096. *Gāshiya*: the thing or event that overshadows or overwhelms, that covers over or makes people lose their senses. In xii. 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.

6097. Cf. lxxv. 22, 24.

6098. 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.

6099. 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 *Zaqqūm* (lvi. 52; or xvii. 60, n. 2250).

9. Pleased with their Striving,<sup>6100</sup>

لَسَعِيَهَا رَاضِيَةٌ ﴿٩﴾

10. In a Garden on high,<sup>6101</sup>

فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ﴿١٠﴾

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

لَا تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا لَغِيَةً ﴿١١﴾

12. Therein will be  
A bubbling spring:<sup>6102</sup>

فِيهَا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾

13. Therein will be couches  
(Of dignity), raised on high,

فِيهَا سُرُرٌ مَّرْفُوعَةٌ ﴿١٣﴾

14. Goblets placed (ready),

وَأَكْوَابٌ مَوْضُوعَةٌ ﴿١٤﴾

15. And Cushions set in rows,

وَنَمَارِقُ مَصْفُوفَةٌ ﴿١٥﴾

16. And rich carpets  
(All) spread out.

وَزُرَارِيُّ مَبْثُوثَةٌ ﴿١٦﴾

6100. 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.

6101. 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.

6102. 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.

17. Do they not look  
At the Camels,<sup>6103</sup>  
How they are made?—
18. And at the Sky,<sup>6104</sup>  
How it is raised high?—
19. And at the Mountains,<sup>6105</sup>  
How they are fixed firm?—
20. And at the Earth,<sup>6106</sup>  
How it is spread out?
21. Therefore do thou remind  
For thou art  
One to remind.

أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ ﴿١٧﴾

وَالِى السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ ﴿١٨﴾

وَالِى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ ﴿١٩﴾

وَالِى الْأَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ ﴿٢٠﴾

فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ ﴿٢١﴾

6103. 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?

6104. 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?

6105. 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.

6106. 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 marvellously 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 will have to give an account after this life is done?

22. Thou art not one  
To manage (their) affairs.<sup>6107</sup>
23. But if any turn away  
And disbelieve,-
24. Allah will chastise him  
With a mighty Chastisement.
25. For to Us will be  
Their Return;
26. Then it will be for Us  
To call them to account.

لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيْطِرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

إِلَّا مَنْ تَوَلَّى وَكَفَرَ ﴿٢٣﴾

فَيُعَذِّبُهُ اللَّهُ الْعَذَابَ الْأَكْبَرَ ﴿٢٤﴾

إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ ﴿٢٥﴾

ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ ﴿٢٦﴾

6107. 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.