299690 - The Meaning of Taghabun: Insights from the Quran

the question

What does Taghabun mean in Islam?

Summary of answer

The Arabic word Taghabun (great loss or deprivation) comes from the word Ghabn, which means loss when buying or selling, or selling someone short. The Day of Resurrection is called Yawm At-Taghabun because of what will become apparent on that day of the loss of those who followed disbelief and misguidance, for they have sold their Hereafter for the sake of worldly gain. So their loss will become apparent and whatever profit they made will perish.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The Linguistic Roots of Taghabun in Arabic

The Arabic word Taghabun (great loss or deprivation) comes from the word Ghabn, which means loss when buying or selling, or selling someone short.

Imam Al-Fayyumi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: This word is used with regard to buying or selling, and refers to giving someone less than the correct price, and the like. (End quote from Al-Misbah Al-Munir, 42) (Mukhtar As-Sihah, entry on Ghayn ba’ nun, p. 224; Al-Qamus Al-Muhit and Fasl Al-Ghayn, 1/1219)

Ash-Shinqiti (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Ghabn is the feeling of imperfection; a similar word is Khabn. These words share two out of three letters, according to the rules of language, as they are close in meaning, and the letters that differ are very close, namely Ghayn and Kha’, as

the Ghayn comes from further back in the throat, whilst the Kha’ comes from a place closer to the front. Therefore Ghabn refers to that which is hidden, and Khabn refers to that which is more apparent. (End quote from Adwa’ Al-Bayan, 8/201)

How Taghabun Relates to the Day of Resurrection

Therefore, the Day of Resurrection is called Yawm At-Taghabun (the day of great loss or deprivation), because of what will become apparent on that day of the loss of those who followed disbelief and misguidance, for they have sold their hereafter for the sake of worldly gain. So their loss will become apparent and whatever profit they made will perish.

Quranic References to Taghabun

Ar-Raghib Al-Asfahani (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Ghabn refers to when you undercut your opposite number and undervalue his product in a subtle manner. This word is used in the context of a trade or transaction, and also may be used to describe when one fails to pay attention.

Yawm At-Taghabun (the Day of Deprivation) is the Day of Resurrection, because of the losses that will become very evident in the trade referred to in the verses (interpretation of the meaning):

{And of the people is he who sells himself, seeking means to the approval of Allah. And Allah is kind to [His] servants.} [Al-Baqarah 2:207]

{Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great attainment.} [At-Tawbah 9:111]

{Indeed, those who exchange the covenant of Allah and their [own] oaths for a small price will have no share in the Hereafter, and Allah will not speak to them or look at them on the Day of

Resurrection, nor will He purify them; and they will have a painful punishment.} [Al `Imran 3:77]

They will realize that they have become losers because of not getting involved in this transaction with Allah, and because of their reaction to all these offers.

Scholarly Interpretations of Taghabun

One of the scholars was asked about Yawm At-Taghabun and he said: Things will appear to have different values to what they estimated in this world.

One of the commentators on the Quran said: The original meaning of Ghubn is to hide something; Ghabn refers to the place where something is hidden. (End quote from Al-Mufradat fi Gharib Al-Quran, 602)

At-Tabari (23/419) narrated with a good chain of narration from `Ali ibn Abu Talhah, that Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased him) said concerning the words “that is the Day of Deprivation [Yawm At-Taghabun]” [At-Taghabun 64:9]: This is one of the names of the Day of Resurrection; here Allah is alerting us to its momentous nature and warning His slaves of it.

He also narrated with a good chain of narration from Mujahid that he said concerning the words “that is the Day of Deprivation” [At-Taghabun 64:9]: It is the day when the people of Paradise will have got the best deal, to the exclusion of the people of Hell.

He narrated from Qatadah that he said concerning the words “that is the Day of Deprivation” [At-Taghabun 64:9]: That is the Day of Resurrection, which is Yawm At-Taghabun (The Day of Deprivation), the day when the people of Paradise will have got the best deal, to the exclusion of the people of Hell.

Ibn Jarir (may Allah have mercy on him) said concerning the words “that is the Day of Deprivation” [At-Taghabun 64:9]: It is the day when the people of Paradise will have got the best deal, to the exclusion of the people of Hell. The Quran commentators said something similar to what we have said concerning that. (End quote)

Al-Baghawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “The Day He will assemble you for the Day of Assembly” [At-Taghabun 64:9], meaning the Day of Resurrection, on which the people of heaven and earth will be brought together, is Yawm At-Taghabun (the Day of Deprivation). This word comes from the root Ghabn, which refers to missing out on one’s fortune. What is meant by Mabghun is the one who is deprived of his family and places in Paradise. Hence on that day the loss of every disbeliever will become apparent, because of his refusing to believe, as will the loss of every believer because of his falling short in doing righteous deeds. (End quote from Tafsir Al-Baghawi, 5/104)

Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The Day of Resurrection is called Yawm At-Taghabun, because on it the people of Paradise will have got the best deal, to the exclusion of the people of Hell. In other words, the people of Paradise will have gained Paradise, and the people of Hell will have gained Hell, by way of exchange (an unfair deal). This Ghabn took place because the latter gave up something good in exchange for something bad, and they gave up bliss for punishment. (End quote from Tafsir Al-Qurtubi, 18/136)

Ash-Shinqiti (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The scholars explained what is meant by Ghabn in this context, by noting that each individual has a place in Paradise and a place in Hell. When the people of Hell enter Hell, their places in Paradise will remain, and when the people of Paradise enter Paradise, their places in Hell will remain. So the places in Hell that had been allocated to the people of Paradise will be given to the people of Hell, and the places in Paradise that had been allocated to the people of Hell will be inherited from them by the people of Paradise. So it will be a painful loss for the people of Hell, because the people of Paradise will have traded a place in Hell for a place in Paradise, and they will inherit the places of others who went to the Fire. (End quote from Adwa’ Al-Bayan, 8/201)

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: One of the Surahs of the Holy Quran is Surat At-Taghabun. What does Taghabun mean?

He (may Allah have mercy on him) replied: Taghabun means having a better deal by means of Ghabn. In this Surah, Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, states that Yawm At-Taghabun is in

fact the Day of Resurrection. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “The Day He will assemble you for the Day of Assembly - that is the Day of Deprivation [Yawm At-Taghabun]” [At-Taghabun 64:9]. The real Taghabun (deprivation, disparity) is Taghabun in the hereafter, when one group will be in Paradise and the other group will be in Hell. As for Taghabun (deprivation, disparity) in this world, it is nothing in comparison to the Taghabun of the hereafter. Hence Allah, may He be Exalted, Says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Look how We have favored [in provision] some of them over others. But the Hereafter is greater in degrees [of difference] and greater in distinction.} [Al-Isra’ 17:21] (End quote from Fatawa Nur `ala Ad-Darb, 5/2)

For more details, please see the following answers: 220511, 182318, 22203, 8398, 78329.

And Allah knows best.