

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT *Al-Infīṭār*, 82.

In subject-matter this Sūra is cognate to the last, though the best authorities consider it a good deal later in chronology in the early Makkan Period.

Its argument is subject to the threefold interpretation mentioned in n. 5982 to lxxxi. 13, viz., as referring (1) to the final Day of Judgment, (2) to the Lesser Judgment, on an individual's death, and (3) to the awakening of the Inner Light in the soul at any time, that being considered as Death to the Falsities of this life and a Re-birth to the true spiritual Reality.

Al-Infītār, or The Cleaving Asunder.

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

1. When⁵⁹⁹⁷ the Sky
Is cleft asunder;⁵⁹⁹⁸
2. When the Stars
Are scattered;⁵⁹⁹⁹
3. When the Oceans
Are suffered to burst forth;⁶⁰⁰⁰

سُورَةُ الْإِنْفِطَارِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْفَطَرَتْ ۝١

وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انْتَرَتْ ۝٢

وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِّرَتْ ۝٣

5997. Cf. the passage lxxxi. 1-14 and notes. For the three parallel interpretations, see the Introduction to this Sūra. There are four conditional clauses here, and the substantive clause is in verse 5. In S. lxxxi, there were 12 conditional clauses, and the conclusion was, similar, but not expressed in precisely the same terms. See lxxii. 5. n. 6002 below. The physical world as we see it now will be destroyed before the final Day of Judgment, establishing the true Reality. In the following four clauses we have a reference to the Lesser Judgment, the individual dawn of the true Reality at Death.

5998. Cf. lxxiii. 18, n. 5769. The beautiful blue sky overhead, which we take for granted in sunshine and storm, will be shattered to pieces before the New World is established. The partition which seems at present to divide things divine from this phenomenal world has to be shattered before each soul knows the reality about itself.

5999. Cf. lxxxi. 2, where the word for "stars" (*Nujūm*) is different, and the verb is different. *Najm* has reference to brightness, and the verb "losing their lustre" was appropriate there, to show the opposite, *Kaukab* (used here) has more the meaning of a star as fixed in a constellation; and the opposite of a fixed and definite order is "scattered", the verb used here. In fact, throughout this passage, the dominating idea is the disturbance of order and symmetry. The metaphor behind the scattering of the constellations is that in the present order of things we see many things associated together, e.g., rank with honour, wealth with comfort, etc. In the New World this will be seen to have merely fortuitous.

6000. Cf. lxxxi. 6, "when the oceans boil over with a swell". Here, "are suffered to burst forth" expresses the end of the present order of things. This may be in two ways, (1) The barrier which keeps within their respective bounds the various streams of salt and fresh water (lv. 20, n. 5185) will be removed; (2) the Ocean will overwhelm the whole Globe.

4. And when the Graves
Are turned upside down;—⁶⁰⁰¹
5. (Then) shall each soul know
What it hath sent forward⁶⁰⁰²
And (what it hath) kept back.
6. O man! what has
Seduced thee from
Thy Lord Most Beneficent?—
7. Him Who created thee,
Fashioned thee in due proportion,⁶⁰⁰³
And gave thee a just bias,⁶⁰⁰⁴
8. In whatever Form⁶⁰⁰⁵ He wills,
Does He put thee together.

وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعِثَتْ

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ

الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَلَكَ

فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ

6001. This item is not mentioned in lxxx. 1-14. Here it is introduced to show that the whole order of things will be so reversed that even Death will not be Death. We think there is tranquillity in Death: but there will be no tranquillity. Literally, and figuratively, Death will be the beginning of a new Life. What we think to be Death will bring forth Life.

6002. *Sent Forward* and *kept back*: may mean: the deeds of commission and omission in this life. Or the Arabic words may also be translated: *sent forward and left behind*: i.e., the spiritual possibilities which it sent forward for its other life, and the physical things on which it prided itself in this life, but which it had to leave behind in this life. Or else, the things it put first and the things it put last in importance may change places in the new world of Reality. "The first shall be last and the last shall be first".

6003. Cf. xv. 29. Allah not only created man, but fashioned him in due proportions, giving him extraordinary capacities, and the means wherewith he can fulfil his high destiny.

6004. See n. 834 to vi. 1. Having given a limited free-will, He gave us a just bias through our reason and our spiritual faculties. If we err, it is our will that is at fault.

6005. By "Form" (*Sūrat*) here I understand the general shape of things in which any given personality is placed, including his physical and social environments, his gifts of mind and spirit, and all that goes to make up his outer and inner life. The Grace of Allah is shown in all these things, for His Will is formed from perfect knowledge, wisdom, and goodness.

9. Nay! but ye do
Reject The Judgment!⁶⁰⁰⁶

كَلَّا بَلْ تُكَذِّبُونَ بِالَّذِينَ ۝٩

10. But verily over you
(Are appointed angels)⁶⁰⁰⁷
To protect you,--

وَأِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ ۝١٠

11. Kind and honourable,--
Writing down (your deeds):

كِرَامًا كَتِيبِينَ ۝١١

12. They know
All that ye do.

يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ۝١٢

13. As for the Righteous,
They will be in Bliss;

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ۝١٣

14. And the Wicked--
They will be in the Fire,

وَأِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ ۝١٤

15. Which they will enter⁶⁰⁰⁸
On the Day of Judgment,

يَصَلُّونَهَا يَوْمَ الذِّينِ ۝١٥

16. And they will not be
Able to keep away therefrom.

وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ ۝١٦

17. And what will explain
To thee what the Day
Of Judgment is?

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الذِّينِ ۝١٧

6006. The goodness and mercies of Allah, and His constant watchful care of all His creatures should make men grateful, instead of which they turn away from the Right and deny the Day of Sorting Out, the Day when every action performed here will find its fulfilment in just reward or punishment.

6007. Besides the faculties given to man to guide him, and the Form and Personality through which he can rise by stages to the Presence of Allah, there are spiritual agencies around him to help and protect him, and to note down his Record, so that perfect justice may be done to him at the end. For these Guardian Angels, see l. 17-18, and n. 4954.

6008. I understand this relative clause to govern "the Fire", i.e., the Punishment. It will be postponed as long as possible, to give the Sinner every chance of repentance and amendment. But once the period of probation is past, it will be irrevocable. There will be no going back from it. By inference, the Righteous may individually reach some stage of Bliss at once, possibly in this life, possibly after death, though the Final Judgment will be the general and complete cessation of this fleeting world and the creation of the world of Eternity.

18. Again, what will explain
To thee what the Day
Of Judgment is?⁶⁰⁰⁹

ثُمَّ مَا آذَرْتُكَ مَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٨﴾

19. (It will be) the Day
When no soul shall have
Power (to do) aught
For another.⁶⁰¹⁰
For the Command, that Day,
Will be (wholly) with Allah.

يَوْمَ لَا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِّنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا

وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ ﴿١٩﴾

6009. We can speak of Rewards and Punishments, the Fruits of Actions, the Resurrection and the Tribunal, the Restoration of True Values, the Elimination of all Wrong, and a hundred other phrases. They might serve to introduce our minds vaguely to a new World, of which they cannot possibly form any adequate conception under present conditions. The question is repeated in verses 17-18 to emphasize this difficulty, and a simple answer is suggested, as explained in the next note.

6010. The answer is suggested by a negative proposition: 'No soul shall have power to do aught for another'. This is full of meaning. Personal responsibility will be fully enforced. In this world we all depend on one another proximately, though our ultimate dependence is always on Allah, now and for ever. But here a father helps a son forward; husband and wife influence each other's destinies; human laws and institutions may hold large masses of mankind under their grip; falsehood and evil may seem to flourish for a time, because a certain amount of limited free-will has been granted to man. This period will be all over then. The good and the pure will have been separated from the evil and the rebellious; the latter will have been rendered inert, and the former will have been so perfected that their wills will be in complete consonance with Allah's Universal Will. The Command, thenceforward, will be wholly with Allah.