

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT *At-Taṭfīf* or *Al-Muṭaffifeen* 83

This Sūra is close in time to the last one and the next one.

It condemns all fraud—in daily dealings, as well as and especially in matters of Religion and daily Life.

At-Tatfif, or Dealing in Fraud.

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

1. Woe to those
That deal in fraud,—⁶⁰¹¹
2. Those who, when they
Have to receive by measure
From men, exact full measure,
3. But when they have
To give by measure
Or weight to men,
Give less than due.
4. Do they not think
That they will be raised up?—⁶⁰¹²
5. On a Mighty Day,

سُورَةُ الْمُطَفِّفِينَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ ﴿١﴾

الَّذِينَ إِذَا كَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ ﴿٢﴾

وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ ﴿٣﴾

أَلَا يَظُنُّ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنَّهُمْ مَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤﴾

يَوْمَ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٥﴾

6011. "Fraud" must here be taken in a widely general sense. It covers giving short measure or short weight, but it covers much more than that. The next two verses make it clear that it is the spirit of injustice that is condemned,—giving too little and asking too much. This may be shown in commercial dealings, where a man exacts a higher standard in his own favour than he is willing to concede as against him. In domestic or social matters an individual or group may ask for honour, or respect, or services which he or they are not willing to give on their side in similar circumstances. It is worse than one-sided selfishness: for it is double injustice. But it is worst of all in religion or spiritual life: with what face can a man ask for Mercy or Love from Allah when he is unwilling to give it to his fellow-men? In one aspect this is a statement of the Golden Rule. 'Do as you would be done by'. But it is more completely expressed. You must give in full what it due from you, whether you expect or wish to receive full consideration from the other side or not.

6012. Legal and social sanctions against Fraud depend for their efficacy on whether there is a chance of being found out. Moral and religious sanctions are of a different kind. 'Do you wish to degrade your own nature?' 'Do you not consider that there is a Day of Account before a Judge Who knows all, and Who safeguards all interests, for He is the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds? Whether other people know anything about your wrong or not, you are guilty before Allah'.

6. A Day when (all) mankind
Will stand before
The Lord of the Worlds?

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

7. Nay! Surely the Record
Of the Wicked is
(Preserved) in *Sijjin*.⁶⁰¹³

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْفُجَّارِ لَفِي سِجِّينٍ ﴿٧﴾

8. And what will explain
To thee what *Sijjin* is?

وَمَا آذْرَكَ مَا سَجَّينٍ ﴿٨﴾

9. (There is) a Register
(Fully) inscribed.⁶⁰¹⁴

كِتَابٌ مَرْقُومٌ ﴿٩﴾

10. Woe, that Day, to those
That deny—

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. Those that deny
The Day of Judgment.⁶⁰¹⁵

الَّذِينَ يَكْذِبُونَ يَوْمَ الَّذِينَ ﴿١١﴾

12. And none can deny it
But the Transgressor
Beyond bounds,
The Sinner!

وَمَا يَكْذِبُ بِهِ إِلَّا كُلُّ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿١٢﴾

13. When Our Signs are rehearsed
To him, he says,
"Tales of the Ancients!"⁶⁰¹⁶

إِذَا نُنْثَرُ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا قَالُوا أَأَسْطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

6013. This is a word from the same root as *Sijn*, a Prison. It rhymes with and is contrasted with *'Illiyin* in verse 18 below. It is therefore understood by many Commentators to be a place, a Prison or a Dungeon in which the Wicked are confined pending their appearance before the Judgment-Seat. The mention of the Iscribed Register in verse 9 below may imply that *Sijjin* is the name of the Register of Black Deeds, though verse 9 may be elliptical and may only describe the place by the significance of its contents.

6014. If we take *Sijjin* to be the Register itself, and not the place where it is kept, the Register itself is a sort of Prison for those who do wrong. It is inscribed fully: i.e., no one is omitted who ought to be there, and for every entry there is a complete record, so that there is no escape for the sinner.

6015. The fact of Personal Responsibility for each soul is so undoubted that people who deny it are to be pitied, and will indeed be in a most pitiable condition on the Day of Reckoning, and none but the most abandoned sinner can deny it, and he only denies it by playing with Falsehoods.

6016. Cf. vi. 25; lxviii. 15; etc. They scorn Truth and pretend that it is Falsehood.

14. By no means!

But on their hearts

Is the stain of the (ill)

Which they do!⁶⁰¹⁷

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

15. Verily, from (the Light

Of) their Lord, that Day,

Will they be veiled.⁶⁰¹⁸

كَلَّا إِنَّهُمْ عَنْ رَبِّهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّحَجُوبُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

16. Further, they will enter

The Fire of Hell.

ثُمَّ إِنَّهُمْ لَصَالُوا الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٦﴾

17. Further, it will be said

To them: "This is

The (reality) which ye

Rejected as false!

ثُمَّ يُقَالُ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

18. Nay, verily the Record

Of the Righteous is

(Preserved) in 'Illiyin.⁶⁰¹⁹

كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَفِي عِلِّيِّينَ ﴿١٨﴾

19. And what will explain

To thee what 'Illiyin is?

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا عِلِّيُّونَ ﴿١٩﴾

20. (There is) a Register

(Fully) inscribed,⁶⁰²⁰

كِتَابٌ مُرْقُومٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

6017. The heart of man, as created by Allah, is pure and unsullied. Every time that a man does an ill deed, it marks a stain or rust on his heart. But on repentance and forgiveness, such stain is washed off. If there is no repentance and forgiveness, the stains deepen and spread more and more, until the heart is sealed (ii. 7), and eventually the man dies a spiritual death. It is such stains that stand in the way of his perceiving Truths which are obvious to others. That is why he mocks at Truth and hugs Falsehood to his bosom.

6018. The stain of evil deeds on their hearts sullies the mirror of their hearts, so that it does not receive the light. At Judgment the true Light, the Glory of the Lord, the joy of the Righteous, will be hidden by veils from the eyes of the Sinful. Instead; the Fire of Punishment will be to them the only reality which they will perceive.

6019. 'Illiyin: the oblique form of the nominative 'Illiyun, which occurs in the next verse. It is in contrast to the Sijjin which occurs in verse 7 above, where see n. 6213. Literally, it means the 'High Places'. Applying the reasoning parallel to that which we applied to Sijjin, we may interpret it as the Place where is kept the Register of the Righteous.

6020. This repeats verse 9 above, where see n. 6014. But the Register is of the opposite kind, that of the Righteous. It contains every detail of the Righteous.

21. To which bear witness
Those Nearest (to Allah).⁶⁰²¹

يَشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

22. Truly the Righteous
Will be in Bliss:

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

23. On raised couches⁶⁰²²
Will they command a sight
(Of all things):

عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. Thou wilt recognise
In their Faces⁶⁰²³
The beaming brightness of Bliss.

تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ نَضْرَةَ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. Their thirst will be slaked
With Pure Wine sealed;⁶⁰²⁴

يُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ رَحِيقٍ مَخْمُومٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. The seal thereof will be
Musk: and for this
Let those aspire,
Who have aspirations.⁶⁰²⁵

خِتَمُهُ مِسْكٌ وَفِي ذَلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

27. With it will be (given)
A mixture of *Tasnīm*.⁶⁰²⁶

وَمِنْ رَاحَتِهِ مِنْ تَسْنِيمٍ ﴿٢٧﴾

6021. See lvi. 11, n. 5227; also n. 5223. Those Nearest to Allah will be witnesses to this Righteous Record; or as it may also be rendered, they will be present at the Record, and watch this Record.

6022. Cf. xxxvi. 56.

6023. Cf. lxxv. 22, and lxxvi. 11.

6024. The Wine will be of the utmost purity and flavour, so precious that it will be protected with a seal, and the seal itself will be of the costly material of musk, which is most highly esteemed in the East for its perfume. Perhaps a better interpretation of the "seal" is to take it as implying the final effect of the drink: just as a seal close a document, so the seal of the drink will be the final effect of the delicious perfume and flavour of musk, heightening the enjoyment and helping in the digestion.

6025. If you understand true and lasting values, this is the kind of pure Bliss to aspire, for, and not the fleeting enjoyments of this world, which always leave a sting behind.

6026. *Tasnīm* literally indicates height, fulness, opulence. Here it is the name of a heavenly Fountain, whose drink is superior to that of the Purest Wine. It is the nectar drunk by Those Nearest to Allah (n. 5227 to lvi. 11), but a flavour of it will be given to all. See n. 5835 to lxxvi. 5 (*Kāfir* fountain), and n. 5849 to lxxvi. 17-18 (*Salsabil*).

28. A spring, from (the waters)
Whereof drink
Those Nearest to Allah.
29. Those in sin used
To laugh at those
Who believed,
30. And whenever they passed
By them, used to wink
At each other (in mockery);
31. And when they returned
To their own people,
They would return jesting;
32. And whenever they saw them,
They would say, "Behold!
These are the people
Truly astray!"⁶⁰²⁷
33. But they had not been
Sent as Keepers over them!⁶⁰²⁸
34. But on this Day
The Believers will laugh
At the Unbelievers.⁶⁰²⁹

عَيْنَا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامَزُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

وَإِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ انْقَلَبُوا فَكِهِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

وَإِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ لَضَالُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِظِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

6027. The wicked laugh at the righteous in this world in many ways: (1) They inwardly laugh at their Faith, because they feel themselves so superior. (2) In public places, when the righteous pass, they wink at each other and insult them. (3) In their own houses they run them down. (4) Whenever and wherever they see them, they reproach them with being fools who have lost their way, when the boot is really on the other leg. In the Hereafter all these tricks and falsehoods will be shown for what they are, and the tables will be reversed.

6028. But the wicked critics of the Righteous have no call in any case to sit in judgment over them. Who set them as Keepers or guardians over the Righteous? Let them look to their own condition and future first.

6029. The tables will then be reversed, and he laughs best who laughs last.

35. On raised couches
They will command (a sight)
(Of all things).⁶⁰³⁰

عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. Will not the Unbelievers
Have been paid back
For what they did?

هَلْ تُؤْتَى الْكُفَّارُ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

6030. A repetition of verse 23 above, but with a different shade of meaning. The Righteous on their raised couches will be able to see all the true values restored in their own favour: but they will also see something else: they will also see the arrogant braggarts brought low, who brought about their own downfall by their own actions.