

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT *Al-Inshiqāq*, 84.

Chronologically this Sūra is closely connected with the last one. In subject-matter it resembles more to S. lxxxii. and lxxxi., with which it may be compared.

The Sūra, which opens with a mention of some cataclysmic events, shows that the present phenomenal order will not last, and Allah's full Judgment will certainly be established: man should therefore strive for that World of Eternity and True Values.

Al-Inshiqāq, or The Rending Asunder

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

1. When the Sky is
Rent asunder,⁶⁰³¹
2. And hearkens to⁶⁰³²
(The Command of) its Lord,—
And it must needs
(Do so);—
3. And when the Earth
Is flattened out,⁶⁰³³
4. And casts forth
What is within it
And becomes (clean) empty,
5. And hearkens to⁶⁰³⁴
(The Command of) its Lord,—

سُورَةُ الْإِنْشِقَاقِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انشَقَّتْ ①

وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ ②

وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ ③

وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ ④

وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ ⑤

6031. The passing away of this world of sense to make way for a new World of Reality is here indicated by two Facts, which are themselves signs for a complete revolution in our whole knowledge and experience. At the beginning of S. lxxxii. and S. lxxxii, other Signs were used, to lead up to the arguments there advanced. Here the two Signs are: (1) the Sky being rent asunder and giving up its secrets, and (2) the Earth being flattened out from the globe it is, and giving up its secrets. See the following notes.

6032. We may think that the heavens we see above us,—high and sacred, seemingly vast and limitless, eternal and timeless—are not created matter. But they are. And they remain just so long as Allah wills it so, and not a moment longer. As soon as His Command issues for their dissolution, they will obey and vanish, and all their mystery will be emptied out. And it must necessarily be so; their very nature as created beings requires that they must hearken to the voice of their Creator, even to the extent of their own extinction.

6033. The Earth is a globe, enclosing within it many secrets and mysteries—gold and diamonds in its mines, heat and magnetic forces in its entrails, and the bodies of countless generations of men buried within its soil. At its dissolution all these contents will be disgorged: it will lose its shape as a globe, and cease to exist.

6034. See n. 6032. We think the earth so solid and real. All our perishable things dissolve into the earth. But the earth itself will dissolve into a truer Reality.

And it must needs
(Do so);-(then will come
Home the full Reality).⁶⁰³⁵

6. O thou man!
Verily thou art ever
Toiling on towards thy Lord-⁶⁰³⁶
Painfully toiling,-but thou
Shalt meet Him.

يَتَأْتِيهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَى
رَبِّكَ كَدًا حَافِئًا قَبِيهٍ ﴿٦﴾

7. Then he who is given
His Record in his
Right hand,⁶⁰³⁷

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ ﴿٧﴾

8. Soon will his account
Be taken by an easy reckoning,

فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾

9. And he will turn
To his people,⁶⁰³⁸ rejoicing!

وَيَنْقَلِبُ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا ﴿٩﴾

10. But he who is given
His Record behind his back,-⁶⁰³⁹

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ ﴿١٠﴾

6035. The substantive clause, to follow the two conditional clauses preceding, may be filled up from the suggestion contained in lxxxii. 5.

6036. This life is ever full of toil and misery, if looked at as empty of the Eternal Hope which Revelation gives us. Hence the literature of pessimism in poetry and philosophy, which thinking minds have poured forth in all ages, when that Hope was obscured to them. "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought." "To each his suffering; all are men condemned alike a groan!" It is the noblest men that have to "scorn delights and live laborious days" in this life. The good suffer on account of their very goodness: the evil on account of their Evil. But the balance will be set right in the end. Those that wept shall be made to rejoice, and those that went about thoughtlessly rejoicing, shall be made to weep for their folly. They will all go to their account with Allah and meet Him before His Throne of Judgment.

6037. *Right Hand:* Cf. xvii 71. These will be the fortunate ones, who spent their lives in goodness and truth: for them the account will be made easy; for even after the balancing, they will receive more than their merits deserve, on account of the infinite grace and mercy of Allah.

6038. *His people:* should be understood in a large sense, including of course all those nearest and dearest to him.

6039. In lxxxix. 24, the wicked are given the Record in their left hand. But their hands will not be free. Sin will tie their hands behind their back: and thus they can only receive their Records in their left hand, behind their back.

11. Soon will he cry
For Perdition,⁶⁰⁴⁰
12. And he will enter
A Blazing Fire.
13. Truly, did he go about
Among his people, rejoicing!⁶⁰⁴¹
14. Truly, did he think
That he would not
Have to return (to Us)!⁶⁰⁴²
15. Nay, nay! for his Lord
Was (ever) watchful of him!
16. So I do call⁶⁰⁴³
To witness the ruddy glow
Of Sunset;⁶⁰⁴⁴
17. The Night and its Homing;⁶⁰⁴⁵

فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُوا ثُبُورًا ﴿١١﴾

وَيَصْلَى سَعِيرًا ﴿١٢﴾

إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا ﴿١٣﴾

إِنَّهُ ظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ يَحْوَِرَ ﴿١٤﴾

بَلَى إِنْ رُبُّهُ كَانَ بِهِ بَصِيرًا ﴿١٥﴾

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ ﴿١٦﴾

وَاللَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ ﴿١٧﴾

6040. The wicked will cry for death and annihilation: but they will neither live nor die: xx. 74.

6041. The tables are now turned. His self-complacence and self-conceit in his lower life will now give place to weeping and gnashing of teeth! Cf. n. 6036 above.

6042. Most of the Evil in this world is due to the false idea that man is irresponsible, or to a mad and thoughtless indulgence of self. Man is not irresponsible. He is responsible for every deed, word, and thought of his, to his Maker, to Whom he has to return, to give an account of himself. To remember this and act accordingly is to achieve salvation; to forget or flout that responsibility is to get into Hell.

6043. The same form of adjuration as in lxix. 37. The substantive statement is in verse 19 below: "Ye shall surely travel from stage to stage". Nothing in this life is fixed, or will last. Three things are mentioned which on the one hand have remained from age to age for as far back as the memory of man can go, and yet each of them is but a short phase, gone as it were in the twinkling of an eye. See the following notes. So our life here is but a fleeting show. Its completion is to be looked for elsewhere.

6044. (1) The sun seems such a great reality that people worshipped him as a divinity. The beautiful glow it leaves when it sets is but momentary: it changes every moment and vanishes with the twilight.

6045. (2) The Night is a phenomenon you see during almost half every twenty-four hours in ordinary latitudes. At nightfall, all the wandering flocks and herds come home. The men scattered abroad for their livelihood return home to rest and sleep. The Night =

18. And the Moon

In her Fulness:⁶⁰⁴⁶

وَالْقَمَرَ إِذَا انَّسَقَ ﴿١٨﴾

19. Ye shall surely travel

From stage to stage.⁶⁰⁴⁷

لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ ﴿١٩﴾

20. What then is the matter

With them, that they

Believe not?—⁶⁰⁴⁸

فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

21. And when the Qur-ān

Is read to them, they

Fall not prostrate,⁶⁰⁴⁹

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْآنُ لَا يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

22. But on the contrary

The Unbelievers reject (it).

بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

23. But Allah has full Knowledge

Of what they secrete

(In their breasts).

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُوعُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. So announce to them

A Chastisement Grievous,

فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

= collects them in their homes, and yet this phase of Homing lasts but a little while. Presently all is silent and still. So will it be with our souls when this life is ended with our death. We shall be collected in a newer and larger Homing.

6046. (3) The astronomical Full Moon does not last a moment. The moment the moon is full, she begins to decline, and the moment she is in her "inter-lunar swoon", she begins her career anew as a growing New Moon. So is man's life here below. It is not fixed or permanent, either in its physical phases, or even more strikingly, in its finer phases, intellectual, emotional, or spiritual.

6047. Man travels and ascends stage by stage. In lxvii. 3 the same word in the form *ṭibāqan* was used of the heavens, as if they were in layers one above another. Man's spiritual life may similarly be compared to an ascent from one heaven to another.

6048. Considering man's high destiny, and the fact that this life is but a stage or a sojourn for him, it might be expected that he would eagerly embrace every opportunity of welcoming Allah's Revelation and ascending by Faith to heights of spiritual wisdom. There is something wrong with his will if he does not do so. Notice the transition from the second person in verse 19, where there is a direct appeal to Allah's votaries, to the third person in verses 20-21, where men who are rebels against Allah's Kingdom are spoken of as if they were aliens.

6049. *Prostrate*: out of respect and humble gratitude to Allah.

25. Except to those who believe
And work righteous deeds:
For them is a Reward
That will never fail.⁶⁰⁵⁰

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ﴿١٩﴾

6050. Cf. xli. 8.