

Sura 82: Al-Infitar (The Cleaving Asunder)

In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy

Verses 1 to 19:

1. *When the sky is cleft asunder;*
2. *And when the planets are scattered;*
3. *And when the seas are exploded;*
4. *And when the graves are overturned;*
5. *Each soul will know what it has sent before (it) and what it has left behind.*
6. *Humankind, what has lured you away from your Lord, the Generous?*
7. *Who created you, then fashioned you, then proportioned you?*
8. *He puts you together in whatever form He wills.*
9. *But you do deny the religion.*
10. *And, indeed, there are guardians over you;*
11. *Noble recorders.*
12. *They know all that you do.*
13. *Indeed, the righteous will be in bliss;*
14. *And the wicked - they will be in the Hell,*
15. *They will burn therein on the Day of Judgment,*
16. *And they will not be able to keep away from it.*
17. *And what will explain to you what the Day of Judgment is?*
18. *Again, what will explain to you what the Day of Judgment is?*
19. *A day on which no soul has power at all for any (other) soul. The (absolute) command on that day is God's.*

This short Sura describes the cosmic cataclysm which was described in Surat Al-Takweer (Chapter 81). But this Sura uses a different style and a different approach. Its verses have a quiet rhythm that touches the human heart in a special way, a way of mild reprimand that embodies a threat. It describes the cataclysm scenes briefly without going into details. It can be divided into four parts. The first part deals with the sky being cleft asunder, the scattering of the planets, the explosion of the seas, and the overturning of the graves. All of these scenes accompany the realization of each soul of what it did. The second part introduces a touch of reprimand that embodies a threat. The third part explains the reason behind humankind's ingratitude. The last part warns of the enormity of the Day of Judgment.

"When the sky is cleft asunder; when the planets are scattered; when the seas are exploded; and when the graves are overturned; each soul will know what it has sent before (it) and what it has left behind." The cleaving asunder of the sky has been mentioned in several places in the Qur'an. It is one of the facts of the Day of Judgment; however, we do not know how it will happen. It is part of the cosmic cataclysm that will happen on the Day of Judgment. The verses then refer to the scattering of the planets, the explosion of the seas, and the overturning of the graves. As these scenes are happening, each soul will realize the truth about what it did during its life on earth and what it missed. It could be understood that the verse may be referring to the things that each soul enjoyed during its lifetime and the things that each soul prepared for the Hereafter.

“Humankind, what has lured you away from your Lord, the Generous? Who created you, then fashioned you, then proportioned you? He puts you together in whatever form He wills.” A mild reprimand is then issued to humankind. God blessed you with the human nature. He looked after you and educated you. Why have you been lured away from His path and did not fulfill your duties to Him? He is your Generous Lord who bestowed on you all these blessings. The verses then detail some of God’s blessings. He created humankind in a perfect form. Only God is able to perfect the form of humankind. However, humankind’s response to the kindness and grace of God is ingratitude. Humankind is addressed directly by God to evoke in him the feelings of recognition of God’s blessings and to direct him to reflect on these bounties that God bestowed on him.

The verses uncover the reason behind humankind’s ingratitude and shortcomings, *“But you do deny the religion. Indeed, there are guardians over you; noble recorders. They know all that you do. The righteous will be in bliss. And the wicked - they will be in the Hell, they will burn therein on the Day of Judgment, and they will not be able to keep away from it.”* You reject the concepts of accountability and judgment. This is the reason behind humankind’s arrogance and shortcomings. The heart that rejects the concepts of accountability and judgment cannot seek God’s guidance. The spirituality of the heart may attain high levels of transparency so that the heart becomes full of the love of God; for these hearts, obedience becomes a natural reaction. These hearts obey God because they love Him not because they fear His torment or they hope for His reward. However, you should remember that there are angels who have been assigned to each human being. These angels will observe and record the deeds of each and every human being. These angels are noble. One should be ashamed of doing something wrong knowing that he is being observed by these noble angels. The reward for the righteous and the punishment for wicked are then outlined. The righteous will be destined to the Garden while the wicked will be destined to Hell. They cannot escape it.

The nature of the Day of Judgment is then reiterated, *“And what will explain to you what the Day of Judgment is? Again, what will explain to you what the Day of Judgment is? a day on which no soul has power at all for any (other) soul. The (absolute) command on that day is God’s.”* Repeating the rhetorical question amplifies its psychological effect. On that Day, no one will have any power, everyone will be completely helpless. God will have the absolute power. God has the absolute power in this life as well as in the Hereafter. On the Day of Judgment, this fact will become glaringly known to the heedless who did not realize it in their worldly life.