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THE
HOLY QURAN

ENGLISH TAFSEER

CHAPTER 84

SURAH AL-INSHIQAQ

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By

ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI

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HOLY QURAN

CHAPTER

084

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Introduction and Summary

Chronologically this Surah is closely connected with the last one. In subject matter it resembles more S. 82 and S. 81, with which it may be compared.

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

C.264 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

*All mysteries, fair or shrouded in gloom,
Will vanish when the full Reality
Stands revealed. If the life is but Painful
Toil, there's the Hope of Meeting with the Lord!
That will be Bliss indeed for the Righteous,
But woe to the arrogant dealers in sin!
Like the sunset Glow or the shades of Night,
Or the Moon's ever-changing light, man's life
Never rests here below, but travels ever onwards
Stage by stage. Grasp then Allah's Message
And reach the Heights, to reap a Reward
That will never fail through all eternity!*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انشَقَّتْ (١)

1. When the Sky is rent asunder,

C6031. 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. 82 and S. 81, 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.

وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ (٢)

2. **And hearkens to** (the Command of) its Lord -- and it must needs (do so) --

C6032. 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.

وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ (٣)

3. **And when the Earth is flattened out,**

C6033. 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.

وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ (٤)

4. **And casts forth what is within it and becomes** (clean) empty,

وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا...

5. **And hearkens to** (the Command of) its Lord --

C6034. 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.

... وَحُقَّتْ (٥)

and it must needs (do so) -- (then will come Home the full Reality).

C6035. The substantive clause, to follow the two conditional clauses preceding, may be filled up from the suggestion contained in 82. 5.

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ (٦)

6. O thou man! verily thou art ever toiling on towards the Lord -- painfully toiling -- but thou shalt meet Him.

C6036. 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 to 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.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ (٧)

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

C6037. Right Hand. Cf. 17:71.

Then 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.

فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا (٨)

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

وَيَنْقَلِبُ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا (٩)

9. And he will turn to **his people**, rejoicing!

C6038. **His people**, should be understood in a large sense, including all righteous persons of his category, including of course all those nearest and dearest to him), who are spiritually of his family, whether before him or after him in time.

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ (١٠)

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

C6039. In 69:25, 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.

فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُو ثُبُورًا (١١)

11. Soon will he cry for Perdition,

C6040. The wicked will cry for death and annihilation: but they will neither live nor die: 20:74.

وَيَصَلَّىٰ سَعِيرًا (١٢)

12. And he will enter a Blazing Fire.

إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا (١٣)

13. Truly, did he go about among his people, rejoicing!

C6041. The tables are now turned. His self-complacency and self-conceit in his lower life will now give place to weeping and gnashing of teeth!

Cf. [n. 6036](#) above.

إِنَّهُ ظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ يَحُورَ (١٤)

14. Truly, did he think that he would not have to return (to Us)!

C6042. 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 the Fire of self-deception and misery.

بَلَىٰ إِنَّ رَبَّهُ كَانَ بِهِ بَصِيرًا (١٥)

15. Nay, nay! for his Lord was (ever) watchful of him!

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ (١٦)

16. So I do call to witness the ruddy glow of Sunset;

C6043. The same form of adjuration as in 69:37.

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.

C6044.

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.

وَاللَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ (١٧)

17. The Night and its Homing;

C6045.

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 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.

وَالْقَمَرَ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ (١٨)

18. And the Moon in her Fullness;

C6046.

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.

لَتُرَكَّبَنَّ طَبَقًا عَنْ طَبَقٍ (١٩)

19. Ye shall surely travel from stage to stage.

C6047. Man travels and ascends stage by stage.

In 67:3 the same word in the form *tibaqan* 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.

فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (٢٠)

20. What then is the matter with them, that they believe not? --

C6048. 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.

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْآنُ لَا يَسْجُدُونَ (٢١)

21. And when the Quran is read to them, they fall not prostrate.

C6049. Prostrate. out of respect and humble gratitude to Allah.

بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُكَذِّبُونَ (٢٢)

22. But on the contrary the Unbelievers reject (it).

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُوعُونَ (٢٣)

23. But Allah has full Knowledge of what they secrete (in their breasts).

فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ (٢٤)

24. So announce to them a Penalty Grievous,

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ (٢٥)

25. Except to those who believe and work righteous deeds: for them is a Reward that will never fail.

C6050. Cf. 41:8.