

E X P L A I N I N G S Ū R A H
a l - I n f i ṭ ā r

BY:

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T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

| | |
|--|----|
| S Ū R A H A L - I N F I Ṭ Ā R : Verses 1-5 | 2 |
| The Explanation of Verses 1-5 | 3 |
| S Ū R A H A L - I N F I Ṭ Ā R : Verses 6-9 | 6 |
| The Explanation of Verses 6-9 | 7 |
| S Ū R A H A L - I N F I Ṭ Ā R : Verses 10-12 | 11 |
| The Explanation of Verses 10-12 | 12 |
| S Ū R A H A L - I N F I Ṭ Ā R : Verses 13-19 | 14 |
| The Explanation of Verses 13-19 | 15 |

SŪRAH AL-İNFİTĀR

Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of all mercy.

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|---|--|--|
| 1 | When the sky breaks apart | ﴿ إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْفَطَرَتْ ﴾ |
| 2 | And when the stars fall, scattering | ﴿ وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انْتَثَرَتْ ﴾ |
| 3 | And when the seas erupt | ﴿ وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِّرَتْ ﴾ |
| 4 | And when the graves are laid open | ﴿ وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ ﴾ |
| 5 | A soul will (then) know what it has put forth and kept back¹ | ﴿ عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ ﴾ |

¹ The Quran, Sūrah al-İnfītār, 82:1-5.

SŪRAH AL-İNFITĀR

The Explanation of Verses 1-5

Verse 1: ﴿إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْفَطَرَتْ﴾

﴿When the sky breaks apart﴾ It will be split open just like Allah (تبارك وتعالى) says in another Sūrah:

﴿إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انشَقَّتْ ۖ وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ﴾

When the sky has split open and it responds to its Lord as it must do.²

Verse 2: ﴿وَإِذَا الْكَوَاكِبُ انتَثَرَتْ﴾

﴿And when the stars fall, scattering﴾ The stars, the smaller and the enormous ones, will scatter and fall from their places because the world will have ended at that time.

Verse 3: ﴿وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِرَتْ﴾

﴿And when the seas erupt﴾ The waters will burst forth upon each other and fill the earth.

Verse 4: ﴿وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ﴾

﴿And when the graves are laid open﴾ They will expel their contents—the dead will come back to life—so that people rise to stand before Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ).

² Sūrah al-Inshiqāq, 84:1-2.

When these four disastrous events occur...

Verse 5: ﴿عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ﴾

﴿A soul will (then) know what it has put forth and kept back﴾ The word ﴿soul﴾ is mentioned here in its singular form but (as is common in Arabic) it means “all souls.” So every soul will know what (deeds) it has done and those it has neglected. People will know that because their books of deeds will have been presented to them. About every individual, Allah says:

﴿وَكُلَّ إِنسَانٍ أَلزَمْنَاهُ طَائِرَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ ۖ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنشُورًا ﴿٣٠﴾ اقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا﴾

For every person, We have imposed his fate (deeds) upon his neck, and We will produce for him, on the Day of Resurrection, a record which he will find spread open. (It will be said to him): “Read your book. You yourself are sufficient as a reckoner against you today.” ³

On that day, the criminals will proclaim:

﴿يَا وَيْلَتَنَا مَا لِي هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا﴾

“Woe to us. What sort of book is this? It leaves out nothing small or great except that it has enumerated it.” ⁴

³ Sūrah al-Isrā, 17:13-14.

⁴ Sūrah al-Kahf, 18:49.

So everyone will know what deeds they did and those they neglected to do. Although in this life these deeds had been forgotten, on the Day of Resurrection they will be presented so that every soul will know ﴿**what it has put forth and kept back**﴾

The purpose of this verse ﴿**A soul will (then) know what it has put forth and kept back**﴾ is that it represents a warning against doing anything that opposes Allah or His messenger (ﺻﻠﯽ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻋﻠﻴﻪ ﻭﺳﻠﻢ) because every individual will one day know fully those things he did and should have done, and he will be judged accordingly.



SŪRAH AL-INFITĀR

Verses 6-9

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 6 | Oh mankind, what has deceived you regarding your Lord, the Most Generous? | ﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ ﴾ |
| 7 | He who created you, proportioned you, and balanced you | ﴿ الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَلَكَ ﴾ |
| 8 | In whatever form He willed He has assembled you | ﴿ فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ ﴾ |
| 9 | No, but you deny the judgment | ﴿ كَلَّا بَلْ تُكْذِبُونَ بِالَّذِينَ ﴾ |

The Explanation of Verses 6-9

Verse 6: ﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ ﴾

﴿Oh mankind, what has deceived you regarding your Lord, the Most Generous?﴾ As for who exactly ﴿mankind﴾ here refers to, it has been explained to mean disbelievers in particular. Other opinions explain that it means all of mankind just as the word suggests. In the latter case, such a question could apply because most people are generally oppressive and ungrateful:

﴿ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَظَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ ﴾

Indeed, mankind is (generally) most unjust, ungrateful.⁵

Therefore, Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ) says ﴿mankind﴾ addressing all human beings regardless of their varying religions.

﴿What has deceived you regarding your Lord, the Most Generous?﴾ Meaning: What is it that has deceived you about Allah so much that you do not believe Him about the resurrection? You disobey Him in what He commands and what He forbids. You even find some people who outright deny that Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ) exists. So what is it that has deceived you about Him?

⁵ Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 14:34.

Some scholars said that Allah’s question ﴿ **What has deceived you regarding your Lord, the Most Generous?** ﴾ itself points to the answer – His generosity. In other words, that which deceives people is in fact the generosity of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), His forbearance, and His allowing people to continuously sin without immediately punishing them for it. However, people should never be deceived by that because, as the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

« إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيَمْلِكُ لِلظَّالِمِ حَتَّى إِذَا أَخَذَهُ لَمْ يُفْلِتْهُ »

Allah gives respite, postpones punishment for an oppressor. But when He seizes him, He never lets him go.⁶

To conclude, the answer to ﴿ **What has deceived you regarding your Lord, the Most Generous?** ﴾ is Allah’s generosity and His forbearance. This is what has deceived people so that they allow themselves to indulge in sin, in disbelief, indulging in anything that violates Allah’s rules.

Verse 7: ﴿ الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَلَكَ ﴾

﴿ **He who created you, proportioned you, and balanced you** ﴾ He ﴿ **created you** ﴾ from nothing, brought you into existence when before you did not exist. Allah has also ﴿ **proportioned you** ﴾ by making your features symmetrical. For example, a person’s hand is typically not longer than the other; his leg or finger is not longer than the other. You find most people, regarding their hands or feet, if they are tall, his hands are likewise big; one is not bigger than the other. Similarly, other people may be short but their features are usually proportional to their bodies. So

⁶ Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ) has ﴿ **proportioned** ﴾ mankind in terms of their bodies and features.

Allah has also ﴿ **balanced you** ﴾ making you stand upright, balanced in shape. You are not like most animals that walk on all four limbs. Rather, Allah has specifically singled out humans with the characteristic of constantly walking upright and balanced.

Verse 8: ﴿ فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ ﴾

﴿ **In whatever form He willed He has assembled you** ﴾ Allah is the One who formed you as He saw fit. Some people are beautiful or handsome while others may not be. Some people have medium complexions, some are white, and others are reddish or black and all shades in between. In whatever form you are, it was Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ) who made you that way according to His will. But whatever forms people may have, they are the best of forms according to His (عزَّ وجلَّ) decision.

Verse 9: ﴿ كَلَّا بَلْ تُكَذِّبُونَ بِالذِّينِ ﴾

﴿ **No, but you deny the judgment** ﴾ Despite this creation and everything provided for it, and despite the way it is all put together, you still ﴿ **deny the judgment** ﴾ The Arabic word here الذِّين (*al-dīn*) means the recompense, time when you will be rewarded or punished for what you did. Yet some people say:

﴿ إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ ﴾

“There is nothing but our life of this world—we die and we live—and we are not going to be resurrected.”⁷

So the word الدِّين (*al-dīn*) means the recompense. Perhaps we could also say that the word means the religion in that “you deny the religion itself.” You do not accept the very religion the messengers came with. The verse could carry both meanings because there is a rule in the science of *Tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* that if a particular text could possibly have two meanings and neither one contradicts the other, the text is understood to carry both meanings.



⁷ Sūrah al-Muminūn, 23:37.

SŪRAH AL-İNFIṬĀR

Verses 10-12

| | | |
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| 10 | And surely there are keepers over you | ﴿وَأِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ﴾ |
| 11 | Honorable recorders | ﴿كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ﴾ |
| 12 | They know everything you do | ﴿يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾ |

The Explanation of Verses 10-12

Verse 10: ﴿وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ﴾

﴿**And surely there are keepers over you**﴾ This verse contains two forms of literary emphasis according to Arabic grammar: the first إِنَّ (*Inna*), “surely,” and the لَ which precedes the word ﴿**keepers**﴾ Every individual has with him an observing angel who writes down everything he does. Allah (تعالی) says:

﴿مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ﴾

Not a word does he (or she) utter except that there is a watcher by him ready (to record it).⁸

So everyone has guardians over him recording every word he says and every action he does.

Verse 11: ﴿كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ﴾

﴿**Honorable recorders**﴾ These recording angels are ﴿**honorable**﴾ and they are not simply there to blame the individual. Rather, they have a sense of honor preventing them from ever unjustly mistreating anyone by writing down something (bad) he did not actually do or by failing to record something (good) he did. This is because they are described as ﴿**honorable**﴾

⁸ Sūrah Qāf, 50:18.

Verse 12: ﴿يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾

﴿They know everything you do﴾ They either actually witness a deed if it is an action, or they hear it if it is a statement. Even the deeds of one's heart (i.e., his beliefs and thoughts), Allah has allowed them to perceive them so they can record those as well. The proof of this is the statement of the prophet (صلى الله عليه) when he said:

« فَمَنْ هَمَّ بِحَسَنَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً... وَإِنْ هَمَّ بِسَيِّئَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً »

Whoever intends to do a good deed but did not actually do it, Allah writes it down with Him as a full good deed... And if he intends to do a bad deed but did not actually do it, Allah writes it down with Him (also) as a full good deed.⁹

A good deed is the reward for whoever decides not to do the bad deed, leaving it for the sake of Allah (عز وجل), and in the first instance, he is rewarded with a good deed just for his good intention.



⁹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

SŪRAH AL-INFITĀR

Verses 13-19

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| 13 | Indeed, the righteous will be in pleasure | ﴿ إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴾ |
| 14 | And indeed, the wicked will be in a blazing fire | ﴿ وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ ﴾ |
| 15 | They will burn therein on the Day of Judgment | ﴿ يَصْلُونَهَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴾ |
| 16 | And they will not be absent from there | ﴿ وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ ﴾ |
| 17 | And what will make you realize what the Day of Judgment is? | ﴿ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ﴾ |
| 18 | Again, what will make you realize what the Day of Judgment is? | ﴿ ثُمَّ مَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ﴾ |
| 19 | It is the day on which no soul will have power to do anything for another soul, and the decision that day is (entirely) with Allah | ﴿ يَوْمَ لَا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا ۖ وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ ﴾ |

The Explanation of Verses 13-19

Verse 13: ﴿ إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ لَفِي نَعِيمٍ ﴾

﴿Indeed, the righteous will be in pleasure﴾ This is their final state and the result of their judgment. The Arabic word for ﴿righteous﴾ here describes someone who does good deeds often and stays away from evil deeds.

They ﴿will be in pleasure﴾ in a state of delight and happiness in their hearts and bodies. You find that the most content people in their hearts and minds are the righteous ones even in this life so much so that one of the *Salaf* (righteous predecessors) is reported to have said, “If the kings and sons of kings only knew the state (of contentment) we are in, they would fight us for it with their swords.” This is the happiness and delight that can be experienced in this life as well as the hereafter. In the next life, it will be Paradise. In this life, it is the peace of mind, the contentment and satisfaction with Allah’s decisions and decree in life. This is true happiness. True bliss is not physical luxuries; it is the happiness of one’s heart and mind.

Verse 14: ﴿ وَإِنَّ الْفُجَّارَ لَفِي جَحِيمٍ ﴾

﴿And indeed, the wicked will be in a blazing fire﴾ The ﴿wicked﴾ are the disbelievers, the very opposite of the ﴿righteous﴾ in the previous verse.

Verse 15: ﴿ يَصْلَوْنَهَا يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴾

﴿They will burn therein on the Day of Judgment﴾ The ﴿wicked﴾ will burn in that fire on the Day of Recompense, the Day of Resurrection.

Verse 16: ﴿وَمَا هُمْ عَنْهَا بِغَائِبِينَ﴾

﴿And they will not be absent from there﴾ They will never be absent from that place because they will never leave it as Allah (تبارك وتعالى) says:

﴿يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُخْرَجُوا مِنَ النَّارِ وَمَا هُمْ بِخَارِجِينَ مِنْهَا﴾

They will wish to get out of the fire but never will they get out.¹⁰

They will live therein forever, and from that we seek refuge with Allah.

Verses 17, 18: ﴿وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ﴿۱۷﴾ ثُمَّ مَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الدِّينِ ﴿۱۸﴾﴾

﴿And what will make you realize what the Day of Judgment is? Again, what will make you realize what the Day of Judgment is?﴾ This repeated question is a way of emphasizing the seriousness and severity of the subject. What could make you truly know the reality of the Day of Judgment and take it as seriously as it deserves to be taken?

Verse 19: ﴿يَوْمَ لَا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا ۖ وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ﴾

﴿It is the day on which no soul will have power to do anything for another soul, and the decision that day is (entirely) with Allah﴾ On the Day of Resurrection, no one will possess power to help anyone else. Each individual will be incapable of

¹⁰ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:37.

benefiting another person or preventing harm from them except by the permission of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), and this is because He says ﴿and the decision that day is (entirely) with Allah﴾

In the life of this world, people have a sense of power of authority. Leaders, heads of states, and presidents all have influence and the power to command. Even parents have a degree of authority in this life. But in the next life, the command and decision is only with Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) and ﴿no soul will have power to do anything for another soul﴾ except by Allah's permission. This is why when people, on that day, suffer such unbearable distress and hardship, they will seek intercession from others. They will ask the prophets to request Allah to begin judgment. They will request this from Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) until finally they come to our prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) will then intercede with Allah, by His permission, asking Him to relieve all of creation from such a terrible state.¹¹ So ﴿the decision that day is (entirely) with Allah.﴾

Based on this last verse, what if someone asks: Although decision is only with Allah on that day, isn't Allah in control on every other day too?

We can answer this with the following: Of course, decision and command is with only Allah (تَعَالَى) on the Day of Judgment and on every other day before it. However, His authority and command will be much more apparent to everyone on that day than it is in this world. This is because in this worldly life, people

¹¹ The ḥadīth about this is recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

constantly violate the commands of Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ), choosing not to follow them and instead following rules and decisions of others. Regarding such individuals, Allah's authority is not recognized. Yet in the next life, there will be nothing but the command and authority of Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ), and this is just like His statement in another verse:

﴿لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ۖ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ﴾

To whom belongs the kingdom today? To Allah, the One, the Irresistible.¹²

Therefore, although Allah owns the kingdoms of this life and the next, on the Day of Judgment His sovereignty and authority will truly be apparent to everyone. It will then become clear that there is no decision or command that day except with Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ). And Allah knows best.



¹² Sūrah Ghāfir, 40:16.