

Surah 84. Al-Inshiqaq

84.1 WHEN THE SKY is split asunder,¹

84.2 obeying its Sustainer, as in truth it must;

84.3 and when the earth is levelled,²

84.4 and casts forth whatever is in it, and becomes utterly void,³

84.5 obeying its Sustainer, as in truth it must -:

84.6 [then,] O man - thou [that] hast, verily, been toiling towards thy Sustainer in painful toil⁴ - then shalt thou meet Him!

84.7 And as for him whose record shall be placed in his right hand,⁵

84.8 he will in time be called to account with an easy accounting,

84.9 and will [be able to] turn joyfully to those of his own kind.⁶

84.10 But as for him whose record shall be given to him behind his back,⁷

84.11 he will in time pray for utter destruction:

84.12 but he will enter the blazing flame.

84.13 Behold, [in his earthly life] he lived joyfully among people of his own kind⁸ -

84.14 for, behold, he never thought that he would have to return [to God].

84.15 Yea indeed! His Sustainer did see all that was in him!

84.16 BUT NAY! I call to witness the sunset's [fleeting] afterglow,

84.17 and the night, and what it [step by step] unfolds,

84.18 and the moon, as it grows to its fullness:⁹

84.19 [even thus, O men,] are you bound to move onward from stage to stage.¹⁰

84.20 What, then, is amiss with them that they will not believe [in a life to come]?¹¹ -

84.21 and [that], when the Qur'an is read unto them, they do not fall down in prostration?¹²

84.22 Nay, but they who are bent on denying the truth give the lie [to this divine writ]!

84.23 Yet God has full knowledge of what they conceal [in their hearts].¹³

84.24 Hence, give them the tiding of grievous suffering [in the life to come] -

84.25 unless it be such [of them] as [repent, and] attain to faith, and do good works: for theirs shall be a reward unending!

Author Comments

1 - I.e., at the coming of the Last Hour and the beginning of a new reality, both in fact and in man's perception.

2 - See {20:105-107}.

3 - I.e., loses all its reality.

4 - An allusion to the fact that in man's earthly life - irrespective of whether one is consciously aware of it or not - sorrow, pain, drudgery and worry by far outweigh the rare moments of true happiness and satisfaction. Thus, the human condition is described as "painful toiling towards the Sustainer" - i.e., towards the moment when one meets Him on resurrection.

5 - I.e., whose behaviour in life characterises him as "righteous": see note [12] on [69:19](#).

6 - Lit., "his people" - i.e., those who, like him, were righteous in life.

7 - At first glance, this seems to contrast with [69:25](#) where it is stated that the record of the unrighteous "shall be placed in his left hand". In reality, however, the present formulation alludes to the sinner's horror at his record, and his wish that he had never been shown it ({69:25-26}): in other words, his not wanting to see it is symbolized by its appearance "behind his back".

8 - Lit., "his people" - i.e., people of the same sinful inclinations. (Cf. note [14] on [75:33](#).)

9 - Thus God "calls to witness" the fact that nothing in His creation is ever at a standstill, since everything moves unceasingly from one state of being into another, at every moment changing its aspect and its condition: a phenomenon aptly described by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus by the phrase *panta rhei* ("everything is in flux").

10 - Or: "from one state to another state" (Zamakhshari): i.e., in an unceasing progression - conception, birth, growth, decline, death and, finally, resurrection.

11 - Since the inexorable movement of all that exists from stage to stage or from one condition into another corresponds to a fundamental law evident in all creation, it is unreasonable to assume that man alone should be an exception, and that his onward movement should cease at the moment of his bodily death, not to be followed by a change-over into another state of being.

12 - I.e., seeing how consistently it stresses the divine law of unceasing change and progression in all that exists.

13 - Namely, their unwillingness to admit their responsibility to a Supreme Being.

