

# **Al-Inshiqaq** [The Rending Asunder] **Makkan Period**

*In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate*

[1] When the sky is rent asunder

[2] and hearkens to the command of its Lord, doing what it should;

[3] and when the earth is stretched out<sup>1</sup>

[4] and casts out what is within it and is emptied,<sup>2</sup>

[5] and hearkens to the command of its Lord, doing what it should.

[6] O man, you are striving unto your Lord and you will meet Him.

[7] Whoever is given the Record in his right hand

[8] shall be called to an easy accounting,<sup>3</sup>

[9] and shall return to his people joyfully.<sup>4</sup>

1. *"When the earth is stretched out" refers to the time when the seas and rivers will be filled up, the mountains will be reduced to particles of dust that will be made to dissipate, and the earth will be levelled and turned into a flat plain.*

2. *This refers to the fact that the earth will throw up the dead that had lain buried within it. This will bring to the surface all evidence pertaining to their deeds that had thus far remained hidden from sight. Nothing regarding them will then remain unknown.*

3. *That someone should be given the Record in his right hand is indicative of his being a righteous person. As a result, he will be subjected to a relatively light reckoning. In other words, such people will not be subjected to strict interrogation as to why they committed certain deeds; nor will they be asked to produce extenuating explanations for their misdeeds. Likewise, even though there will be evil along with good deeds in their Record, forbearance will be shown to them because their good deeds will outweigh their evil deeds, and they will be forgiven.*

4. *"His people" denotes those members of a person's family and those relatives and companions who will be forgiven in the same manner that he himself was forgiven.*

[10] But he who is given the Record behind his back,<sup>5</sup>

[11] shall cry for "perdition,"

[12] and will enter the Blazing Fire.

[13] He used to live joyfully among his people,

[14] thinking he would never revert (to Us).

[15] But no; (how would he not revert)? His Lord was ever watching him.

[16] Nay; I swear by the twilight;

[17] and by the night and what it enfolds,

[18] and by the moon, when it reaches its fullness:

[19] you shall proceed onwards from stage to stage.<sup>6</sup>

[20] So, what is the matter with them that they do not believe,

*5. It is stated in **al-Haqqah** 69: 25 that the Record of an unrighteous person will be handed over to him in his left hand. Here, however, it is stated that such people will be given the Book behind their backs. What will probably happen is that when a person's Record will be given to people to hold it in their left hand, they will be greatly embarrassed. They will, therefore, put their hand behind their back so as to receive their Record. But this effort to hide will not be of much avail, for in any case they will still be handed their Record. What difference will it then make whether they receive their Record with their hand outstretched, and hence in the full sight of others, or behind their backs?*

*6. Man's life does not remain in one state; instead, it goes through various stages: from youth to old age, from old age to death, from death to **barzakh** (the transitory stage between death and Resurrection), from **barzakh** to resurrection, from resurrection to the Plain of Gathering, then to Reckoning and then to the meting out of reward and punishment. It is emphasised here that all this is bound to happen, This is reinforced by a sworn statement mentioning (1) the twilight, (2) the darkness of the night and the gathering together in it of those humans and animals that remain scattered during the day, and (3) the moon's passing through different phases from being a mere crescent until becoming full. These are among the phenomena that testify to the fact that the Universe in which man lives is not static. On the contrary, incessant changes occur all over it. Thus, there is no basis to support the view that everything ends with a person's breathing his last.*

[21] and when the Qur'an is recited to them, they do not prostrate themselves?

[22] Instead, the unbelievers reject it, calling it a lie.

[23] Allah knows best what they are accumulating (in their Record).<sup>7</sup>

[24] So give them the good news of a painful chastisement,

[25] except for those who believe and do good deeds. Theirs shall be an unending reward.

*7. This could also mean that God knows well the unbelief, the hostility to and the rancour against the Truth, and the evil intentions with which some people have filled their hearts.*