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Surah Al-Infitar

The Cleaving · Makki · 19 ayat — reflections on surah
82 of the Qur'an

QURAN

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Surah Al-Infitar

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الانفطار — Al-Infitar, “The Cleaving”. Surah 82 of 114, revealed in Makkah, 19 ayat. The full text and a recitation are on the web edition at deen2u.com/quran/82/.

ONE

The surah in brief

When the sky is cleft and the graves overturned, every soul will know what it sent ahead; the surah warns the heedless human against being deceived about his generous Lord, for honoured recorders write all and the reckoning is real.

Al-Infitar pictures the Day the sky is cleft, the stars scattered, the seas burst open, and the graves overturned, so that each soul finally sees all it sent ahead and left behind. Its central question is disarmingly gentle: what has deceived you about your Lord, the Generous, who created you, shaped you, and balanced your form? The surah reminds us that noble recorders are always writing, that the righteous will be in bliss and the wicked in the Fire, and that on that Day no soul can do a thing for another. It leaves us weighing our forgetfulness against the sheer kindness of the One we forgot.

TWO

Its themes

- The sky torn open
- Allah's generosity in creating us
- The two honorable recorders
- The two final destinations
- Powerlessness on that Day
- Ingratitude toward the Generous

THREE

Key verses

O man! What has seduced thee from thy Lord Most Beneficent?–

Qur'an 82:6

The question is not angry but wounded: what deceived you concerning your Lord, the Generous? Sin is framed as ingratitude toward endless kindness.

Him Who created thee. Fashioned thee in due proportion, and gave thee a just bias;

Qur'an 82:7

He reminds you that He created, proportioned, and balanced your very body; the frame you take for granted is itself an argument for gratitude.

Kind and honourable,– Writing down (your deeds):

Qur'an 82:11

Honorable scribes are recording without pause, so no word or deed slips into oblivion; life is being written even when we forget.

As for the Righteous, they will be in bliss;

Qur'an 82:13

The righteous are simply said to be in bliss, a calm counterweight to the terror of the opening scenes.

(It will be) the Day when no soul shall have power (to do) aught for another: For the command, that Day, will be (wholly) with Allah.

Qur'an 82:19

On that Day no soul avails another and command belongs wholly to Allah; every alliance we bank on now falls silent then.

FOUR

Reading it closely

Context & character

Al-Infitar ("The Cleaving") is a short Makkan surah, closely paired in theme and cadence with its neighbours at-Takwir and al-Inshiqaq. It opens, like them, with a sequence of cosmic ruptures that announce the Day of Judgement, and then moves swiftly to its distinctive heart: a direct, almost wounded question put to the human being — "O man, what has deceived you concerning your generous Lord?" (82:6).

Its character is intimate and reproachful, more personal address than sweeping panorama. Where at-Takwir overwhelms with the scale of the collapse, al-Infitar quickly narrows to the individual conscience, the recording angels who never miss a deed, and the clean division of humanity into the righteous and the wicked. It is brief, pointed, and searching.

How the surah unfolds

The opening (82:1–5) sets four signs of the Day, each in a single clause: when the sky is cleft open; when the stars are scattered; when the seas are burst forth and made to overflow; and when the graves are overturned and their contents flung out. Then the result: "a soul will know what it sent ahead and what it left behind" (82:5) — everything one dispatched by good or evil deeds, and every legacy and consequence one left in the world.

The surah then turns to its central address (82:6–8): "O man, what has deluded you concerning your generous Lord — the One who created you, then fashioned you, then balanced you, and assembled you in whatever form He willed?" The question is not cold but grieved: how could a creature so lovingly made, so precisely proportioned, be lulled into heedlessness of the very Lord whose generosity (karam) shaped every part of him?

It then diagnoses the root of the delusion (82:9): "No! Rather, you deny the Recompense." Beneath the heedlessness lies a denial of the Day of Judgement. Yet the surah insists that the record is being kept regardless (82:10–12): "And indeed, over you are keepers — noble, recording — who know whatever you do" (kiraman katibin). The two angels miss nothing, whether the denier believes in them or not.

The surah closes with the two destinies and a solemn refrain (82:13–19): "Indeed, the righteous (al-abrar) will be in bliss, and indeed the wicked (al-fujjar) will be in a blazing Fire, which they will enter on the Day of Recompense, and from which they will never be absent." Then the twice-asked question, heightening the dread: "And what will make you know what the Day of Recompense is? Again, what will make you know what the Day of Recompense is?" And the final answer that silences every worldly power: "It is the Day when no soul will have any power to help another, and the command that Day will belong wholly to God" (82:19).

The major themes, in depth

The central theme is the reproach of human heedlessness in the face of divine generosity. The surah's key verse — "what has deceived you concerning your generous Lord?" (82:6) — deliberately names God as al-Karim, the Generous, at the very moment of confronting human ingratitude. The classical commentators note the poignancy: the human being presumes upon God's very generosity, taking His forbearance and gifts as licence to forget Him. The surah answers by rehearsing that generosity in intimate terms — He created you, fashioned you, balanced your proportions, and composed you in whatever form He chose (82:7-8). Every limb and faculty is a gift from the One being neglected. The delusion is thus exposed as both irrational and ungrateful: to be lulled by kindness into ignoring the Kind.

A second theme is the constant, inescapable recording of deeds. Whatever a person's private denial of the Reckoning, "over you are keepers, noble and recording, who know whatever you do" (82:10-12). The kiraman katibin — the honourable scribe-angels — form a permanent audit that runs beneath every waking moment. The surah places this immediately after naming the denial of Recompense (82:9), as if to say: your disbelief does not stop the pens. The ledger is being written now, and "a soul will know what it sent ahead and left behind" (82:5) precisely because nothing was ever unwitnessed.

A third theme is the sole sovereignty of God on the Day of Recompense (82:17-19). The surah builds suspense by asking twice, "what will make you know what the Day of Recompense is?" — and then delivers an answer defined entirely by the

powerlessness of everyone but God: "a Day when no soul will avail another in anything, and the command that Day is God's alone." Every worldly source of security — wealth, lineage, alliances, intercessors imagined without God's leave — is stripped away, leaving the naked truth that authority belongs wholly and only to God. It is the same levelling the surah's opening implied, now stated as pure theology.

Points of reflection

Al-Infitar puts a single, disarming question to each reader: what has deceived you about your generous Lord? It is worth sitting with. Often it is His very generosity — the delay of consequence, the steady flow of blessings — that we misread as permission to be heedless. The surah asks us to let gratitude, rather than presumption, be our response to a Lord who created, fashioned, and balanced us with such care.

The reminder of the recording angels reframes the ordinary hour: nothing we do is unwitnessed, and the record we are handed on the Day of Recompense is one we are writing now, deed by deed. And the surah's closing line — that on that Day no soul can help another and the command belongs to God alone — quietly redirects all our hope and fear to their only true object. Everything we might lean on will fail us there; God alone will not. To live for that reality now is the surah's essential call.

FIVE

Carrying it

1. Answer the surah's question honestly: what exactly lets you presume upon a Lord so generous? Let the answer shame the presumption.
2. Live conscious that honorable recorders never stop writing, so that awareness reshapes even your private moments.
3. Do not rely on people to save you on that Day; build the deeds that belong to you alone.

Where this reading draws from. Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, al-Tabari, Jami' al-Bayan, al-Sa'di, Taysir al-Karim al-Rahman. A summary is not a tafsir: for the verse-by-verse treatment go to the works themselves, or to the close studies at deen2u.com/tadabbur/.