INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT At-Tātīf or Al-Muṭaffifeen 83

This Sūra is close in time to the last one and the next one.

It condemns all fraud—in daily dealings, as well as and especially in matters of Religion and daily Life.
At-Tatff, or Dealing in Fraud.

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. Woe to those
That deal in fraud, — 6011

2. Those who, when they
Have to receive by measure
From men, exact full measure,

3. But when they have
To give by measure
Or weight to men,
Give less than due.

4. Do they not think
That they will be raised up? — 6012

5. On a Mighty Day,

6011. "Fraud" must here be taken in a widely general sense. It covers giving short measure or short weight, but it covers much more than that. The next two verses make it clear that it is the spirit of injustice that is condemned — giving too little and asking too much. This may be shown in commercial dealings, where a man exacts a higher standard in his own favour than he is willing to concede as against him. In domestic or social matters an individual or group may ask for honour, or respect, or services which he or they are not willing to give on their side in similar circumstances. It is worse than one-sided selfishness: for it is double injustice. But it is worst of all in religion or spiritual life: with what face can a man ask for Mercy or Love from Allah when he is unwilling to give it to his fellow-men? In one aspect this is a statement of the Golden Rule. 'Do as you would be done by'. But it is more completely expressed. You must give in full what it due from you, whether you expect or wish to receive full consideration from the other side or not.

6012. Legal and social sanctions against Fraud depend for their efficacy on whether there is a chance of being found out. Moral and religious sanctions are of a different kind. 'Do you wish to degrade your own nature?' 'Do you not consider that there is a Day of Account before a Judge Who knows all, and Who safeguards all interests, for He is the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds? Whether other people know anything about your wrong or not, you are guilty before Allah'.
6. A Day when (all) mankind
Will stand before
The Lord of the Worlds?

7. Nay! Surely the Record
Of the Wicked is
(Preserved) in Sijjin.\(^{6013}\)

8. And what will explain
To thee what Sijjin is?

9. (There is) a Register
(Fully) inscribed.\(^{6014}\)

10. Woe, that Day, to those
That deny--

11. Those that deny
The Day of Judgment.\(^{6015}\)

12. And none can deny it
But the Transgressor
Beyond bounds,
The Sinner!

13. When Our Signs are rehearsed
To him, he says,
"Tales of the Ancients!"\(^{6016}\)

---

\(^{6013}\) This is a word from the same root as Sijn, a Prison. It rhymes with and is contrasted with 'Illyin in verse 18 below. It is therefore understood by many Commentators to be a place, a Prison or a Dungeon in which the Wicked are confined pending their appearance before the Judgment-Seat. The mention of the Iscribed Register in verse 9 below may imply that Sijjin is the name of the Register of Black Deeds, though verse 9 may be elliptical and may only describe the place by the significance of its contents.

\(^{6014}\) If we take Sijjin to be the Register itself, and not the place where it is kept, the Register itself is a sort of Prison for those who do wrong. It is inscribed fully: \textit{i.e.}, no one is omitted who ought to be there, and for every entry there is a complete record, so that there is no escape for the sinner.

\(^{6015}\) The fact of Personal Responsibility for each soul is so undoubted that people who deny it are to be pitied, and will indeed be in a most pitiable condition on the Day of Reckoning, and none but the most abandoned sinner can deny it, and he only denies it by playing with Falsehoods.

\(^{6016}\) Cf. vi. 25; lxviii. 15; etc. They scorn Truth and pretend that it is Falsehood.
14. By no means!  
But on their hearts  
Is the stain of the (ill)  
Which they do?  

15. Verily, from (the Light  
Of) their Lord, that Day,  
Will they be veiled.  

16. Further, they will enter  
The Fire of Hell.  

17. Further, it will be said  
To them: "This is  
The (reality) which ye  
Rejected as false!  

18. Nay, verily the Record  
Of the Righteous is  
(Preserved) in ‘Ilīyīn.  

19. And what will explain  
To thee what ‘Ilīyīn is?  

20. (There is) a Register  
(Fully) inscribed,  

6017. The heart of man, as created by Allah, is pure and unsullied. Every time that a man does an ill deed, it marks a stain or rust on his heart. But on repentance and forgiveness, such stain is washed off. If there is no repentance and forgiveness, the stains deepen and spread more and more, until the heart is sealed (ii. 7), and eventually the man dies a spiritual death. It is such stains that stand in the way of his perceiving Truths which are obvious to others. That is why he mocks at Truth and hugs Falsehood to his bosom.  

6018. The stain of evil deeds on their hearts sullies the mirror of their hearts, so that it does not receive the light. At Judgment the true Light, the Glory of the Lord, the joy of the Righteous, will be hidden by veils from the eyes of the Sinful. Instead; the Fire of Punishment will be to them the only reality which they will perceive.  

6019. ‘Ilīyīn: the oblique form of the nominative ‘Ilīyūn, which occurs in the next verse. It is in contrast to the Sijjin which occurs in verse 7 above, where see n. 6213. Literally, it means the ‘High Places’. Applying the reasoning parallel to that which we applied to Sijjin, we may interpret it as the Place where is kept the Register of the Righteous.  

6020. This repeats verse 9 above, where see n. 6014. But the Register is of the opposite kind, that of the Righteous. It contains every detail of the Righteous.
21. To which bear witness
Those Nearest (to Allah). 6021

22. Truly the Righteous
Will be in Bliss:

23. On raised couches 6022
Will they command a sight
(Of all things):

24. Thou wilt recognise
In their Faces 6023
The beaming brightness of Bliss.

25. Their thirst will be slaked
With Pure Wine sealed; 6024

26. The seal thereof will be
Musk: and for this
Let those aspire,
Who have aspirations: 6025

27. With it will be (given)
A mixture of Tasnim: 6026

6021. See lvii. 11, n. 5227; also n. 5223. Those Nearest to Allah will be witnesses
to this Righteous Record; or as it may also be rendered, they will be present at the
Record, and watch this Record.

6022. Cf. xxxvi. 56.

6023. Cf. lxvi. 22, and lxvi. 11.

6024. The Wine will be of the utmost purity and flavour, so precious that it will be
protected with a seal, and the seal itself will be of the costly material of musk, which
is most highly esteemed in the East for its perfume. Perhaps a better interpretation of
the “seal” is to take it as implying the final effect of the drink: just as a seal close a
document, so the seal of the drink will be the final effect of the delicious perfume and
flavour of musk, heightening the enjoyment and helping in the digestion.

6025. If you understand true and lasting values, this is the kind of pure Bliss to
aspire, for, and not the fleeting enjoyments of this world, which always leave a sting
behind.

6026. *Tasnim* literally indicates height, fulness, opulence. Here it is the name of a
heavenly Fountain, whose drink is superior to that of the Purest Wine. It is the nectar
drunk by Those Nearest to Allah (n. 5227 to lvii. 11), but a flavour of it will be given
to all. See n. 5835 to lxvi. 5 (*Kāfūr* fountain), and n. 5849 to lxvi. 17-18 (*Sa/sabīl*).
28. A spring, from (the waters)
   Whereof drink
   Those Nearest to Allah.

29. Those in sin used
   To laugh at those
   Who believed,

30. And whenever they passed
   By them, used to wink
   At each other (in mockery);

31. And when they returned
   To their own people,
   They would return jesting;

32. And whenever they saw them,
   They would say, "Behold!
   These are the people
   Truly astray!"^{6027}

33. But they had not been
   Sent as Keepers over them:^{6028}

34. But on this Day
   The Believers will laugh
   At the Unbelievers:^{6029}

---

6027. The wicked laugh at the righteous in this world in many ways: (1) They inwardly laugh at their Faith, because they feel themselves so superior. (2) In public places, when the righteous pass, they wink at each other and insult them. (3) In their own houses they run them down. (4) Whenever and wherever they see them, they reproach them with being fools who have lost their way, when the boot is really on the other leg. In the Hereafter all these tricks and falsehoods will be shown for what they are, and the tables will be reversed.

6028. But the wicked critics of the Righteous have no call in any case to sit in judgment over them. Who set them as Keepers or guardians over the Righteous? Let them look to their own condition and future first.

6029. The tables will then be reversed, and he laughs best who laughs last.
35. On raised couches
They will command (a sight)
(Of all things). 6030

36. Will not the Unbelievers
Have been paid back
For what they did?

6030. A repetition of verse 23 above, but with a different shade of meaning. The Righteous on their raised couches will be able to see all the true values restored in their own favour: but they will also see something else: they will also see the arrogant braggarts brought low, who brought about their own downfall by their own actions.