

**INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT *At-Tīn*, 95.**

This is also a very early Sūra. It appeals to the most sacred symbols to show that Allah created man in the best of moulds, but that man is capable of the utmost degradation unless he has Faith and leads a good life. In subject-matter this Sūra closely resembles S. 103.

*At-Tin, or The Fig*

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

1. By the Fig<sup>6194</sup>  
And the Olive,<sup>6195</sup>
2. And the Mount  
Of Sinai,<sup>6196</sup>
3. And this City<sup>6197</sup>  
Of Security,<sup>6198</sup>



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَالَّتِينَ وَالزَّيْتُونَ ١

وَطُورِ سَيْنَاءَ ٢

وَهَذِهِ الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ ٣

6194. The substantive proposition is in verses 4-8, and it is clinched by an appeal to four sacred symbols, viz., the Fig, the Olive, Mount Sinai, and the sacred City of Makkah. About the precise interpretation of the first two symbols, and especially of the symbol of the Fig, there is much difference of opinion. If we take the Fig literally to refer to the fruit or the tree, it can stand as a symbol of man's destiny in many ways. Under cultivation it can be one of the finest, most delicious, and most wholesome fruits in existence: in its wild state, it is nothing but tiny seeds, and is insipid, and often full of worms and maggots. So man at his best has a noble destiny: at his worst, he is "the lowest of the low". Christ is said to have cursed a fig tree for having only leaves, and not producing fruit (Matt. xxi. 18-20), enforcing the same lesson. There is also a parable of the fig tree in Matt. xxiv. 32-35. See also the parable of the good and evil figs in Jeremiah, xxiv. 1-10. But see n. 6198 below.

6195. For the sacred symbolism of the Olive, see n. 2880 to xxiii. 20, and notes 3000-3002 to xxiv. 35, where the parable of Allah's Light includes a reference to the Olive. But it is possible that the Olive here refers to the Mount of Olives, just outside the walls of the City of Jerusalem (see n. 5038 to lii. 2), for this is the scene in the Gospel story (Matt. xxiv. 3-4) of Christ's description of the Judgment to come.

6196. This was the Mountain on which the Law was given to Moses. See xix. 52, and n. 2504. The Law was given, and the glory of Allah was made visible. But did Israel faithfully obey the Law thereafter?

6197. "This City of security" is undoubtedly Makkah. Even in Pagan times its sacred character was respected, and no fighting was allowed in its territory. But the same City, with all its sacred associations, persecuted the greatest of the Prophets and gave itself up for a time to idolatry and sin, thus presenting the contrast of the best and the worst.

6198. Having discussed the four symbols in detail, let us consider them together. It is clear that they refer to Allah's Light or Revelation, which offers man the highest destiny if he will follow the Way. Makkah stands for Islam, Sinai for Israel, and the Mount of Olives for Christ's original and pure Message.

4. We have indeed created man  
In the best of moulds,<sup>6199</sup>

5. Then do We abase him  
(To be) the lowest  
Of the low,-<sup>6200</sup>

6. Except such as believe  
And do righteous deeds:  
For they shall have  
A reward unfailing.

7. What then, can after this  
Make you deny the  
Last Judgment?<sup>6201</sup>

8. Is not Allah  
The wisest of Judges?<sup>6202</sup>

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ ﴿٥﴾

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ

غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ﴿٦﴾

فَمَا يَكْذِبُكَ بَعْدَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ ﴿٧﴾

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ الْخَافِينَ ﴿٨﴾

6199. *Taqwim*: mould, symmetry, form, nature, constitution. There is no fault in Allah's creation. To man Allah gave the purest and best nature, and man's duty is to preserve the pattern on which Allah has made him: xxx. 30. But by making him vicegerent, Allah exalted him *in posse* even higher than the angels, for the angels had to make obeisance to him (ii. 30-34, and n. 48). But man's position as vicegerent also gives him will and discretion, and if he uses them wrongly he falls even lower than the beasts. See next note.

6200. This verse should be read with the next. If man rebels against Allah, and follows after evil, he will be abased to the lowest possible position. For Judgment is sure. Those who use their faculties aright and follow Allah's Law will reach the high and noble destiny intended for them. That reward will not be temporary, but unfailing.

6201. *Thee*: may refer to the holy Prophet, or to man collectively. *After this*: i.e., when it is clearly shown to you that Allah created man true and pure, that He guides him, and that those who rebel and break His law will be punished and brought down in the Hereafter, who can doubt this, or contradict the Prophet when he gives warning?

6202. Allah is wise and just. Therefore the righteous have nothing to fear, but the evil ones cannot escape punishment.