

SURAH AS A STORY



Surah At-Teen

The Fig

The complete journey — the best of moulds, the lowest of low —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 95 • 8 Ayahs • Meccan

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The Surah at a Glance

Wat-teeni waz-zaytoon

1. By the fig and the olive,

Wa Toori seeneen. Wa haazal-baladil-ameen

2-3. and by Mount Sinai, and by this secure city —

Laqad khalaqnal-insaana fee ahsani taqweem

4. We have certainly created man in the best of moulds,

Summa radadnaahu asfala saafileen

5. Then We returned him to the lowest of the low —

*Illal-lazeena amanoo wa 'amilus-saalihaati
falahum ajrun ghayru mamnoon*

6. except those who believe and do righteous deeds —
for them is a reward uninterrupted.

Alaysal-laahu bi-ahkamil-haakimeen

8. Is not Allah the most just of judges?

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Four Oaths, Four Places



Beta, this short surah begins with an oath by two fruits and two places — and the scholars have found in it a beautiful arrangement worth knowing.

'WAT-TEENI WAZ-ZAYTOON — by the FIG and the OLIVE — WA TOORI SEENEEN — and by MOUNT SINAI — WA HAZAL-BALADIL-AMEEN — and by this SECURE CITY.'

The fig and the olive, beta, are two of the most blessed foods on earth. The fig: sweet, soft, with no waste — no peel to discard, no stone to spit out; the whole fruit is nourishment. The olive: from which comes the oil the Quran describes elsewhere as coming from a blessed tree, used for food, for light, for healing.

But many of the scholars of tafseer say there is more here than fruit. The fig and the olive are said to indicate the LAND where they grow abundantly — the land of Palestine and Syria, the land of Isa (alaihis salam) and many prophets. Mount Sinai (Tur Seeneen) is where Musa (alaihis salam) spoke with his Lord. And 'this



secure city' is Makkah, the home of Muhammad ﷺ.

Beta, do you see the pattern? Three sacred lands, marking three great points of revelation — as though Allah is swearing by the whole history of guidance sent down to mankind: from Isa, from Musa, and now from Muhammad ﷺ. And notice Makkah is called 'al-balad al-ameen' — the SECURE city, the one place on earth where safety itself was legislated.

And what is all this sworn upon? The nature of the human being.

The Best of Moulds

'LAQAD KHALAQNAL-INSANA FEE AHSANI TAQWEEM — WE HAVE CERTAINLY CREATED MAN IN THE BEST OF MOULDS, the finest stature and proportion.'

Beta, 'taqweem' means to shape, to set upright, to give proper form and balance. And Allah says: the very best of it — 'ahsani taqweem'.



Think of the physical part first. Among all creatures, you stand UPRIGHT — you do not crawl or drag your body along the ground; your face is raised toward the sky. Your hand can lift a heavy stone and also thread a needle. Your eyes see colour, your ears distinguish a thousand voices, your tongue produces language, your face carries expression so subtle that a slight change tells another person what you feel.

And beyond the body, beta: intellect that can plan for a future it has not seen, a conscience that stings, a memory that carries a lifetime, and — the greatest gift — a soul capable of knowing and loving its Creator. No angel was given free choice; no animal was given accountability. You were given both.

Beta, this ayah should do two things to you. It should raise your head — never despise the creation Allah called 'best'. Whatever your face, your height, your circumstances, He chose your mould and He called the human form His best work.



And it should raise your expectations of yourself: something built to this standard was not made to live like an animal, chasing food, comfort and mating and nothing more.

The Lowest of the Low

And then comes the fall: 'THUMMA RADADNAHU ASFALA SAFILEEN — THEN WE RETURNED HIM TO THE LOWEST OF THE LOW.'

Beta, the scholars offer two main explanations, and both are worth carrying. One: old age and frailty — the strong body returns to weakness, the sharp mind to forgetfulness; the one who was 'ahsani taqweem' at twenty-five cannot lift a cup at ninety. The second, and the one the surah's next ayah supports: the lowest depths of the Fire, for those who wasted the mould they were given.

And beta, there is a third meaning that sits between them, and it is the one you see with your own eyes: a human being can descend BELOW the animals. An



animal kills to eat; only a human kills for pleasure. An animal takes what it needs; only a human hoards while his neighbour starves. Given the highest possible design, man is also capable of the lowest possible behaviour — because the same free choice that lets him rise lets him fall.

That is the tragedy this surah is naming, beta: the higher the design, the deeper the possible fall. A stone cannot dishonour itself; a human can.

'ILLAL-LAZINA AMANOO WA 'AMILUS-SALIHATI — EXCEPT those who BELIEVE and do RIGHTEOUS DEEDS — FA-LAHUM AJRUN GHAYRU MAMNOON — for them is a reward UNINTERRUPTED, unending, with no reproach.'

Beta, notice the exception and how simple it is: iman and 'amal. Belief in the heart and action in the limbs. That is the whole rescue. And for those who came into old age still believing and still striving — the scholars say their reward continues to be written even when



their bodies can no longer perform, because the intention remained. Beautiful, beta: the deeds you did in strength keep earning when weakness comes.

What Makes You Deny?

'FA-MA YUKAZZIBUKA BA'DU BID-DEEN — SO
WHAT YET MAKES YOU DENY THE RECOMPENSE?'

Beta, feel the force of the question. After all of this — after the sacred lands, after the honour of your creation, after seeing how a human can rise and fall — what is left to make you deny that there will be a judgement?

It is the same argument the Quran makes again and again: if this magnificent creature is nothing but a temporary accident, if the just and the cruel end identically in the soil, then everything is absurd. Beta, the honour of your creation is itself an argument for the Day of Recompense. Something built with this much care will certainly be called to account.



And then the surah's final ayah, a question that closes the case: 'A LAYSALLAHU BI-AHKAMIL-HAKIMEEN — IS NOT ALLAH THE MOST JUST OF JUDGES?'

Beta, 'ahkamul-hakimeen' — the most wise, the most just, of all who judge. Think about every human court you know of: verdicts bought, evidence lost, the powerful escaping, the weak crushed, and even the honest judge working with incomplete information.

And then think of a Judge who KNOWS — not who was told, but who witnessed; who saw the intention behind the act, the pressure the person was under, the private good nobody recorded and the private evil nobody suspected. A Judge who cannot be bribed, cannot be intimidated, and needs no lawyer to explain the case.

Beta, for the oppressed of this world, this ayah is the greatest comfort in the Quran. Every unrecorded cruelty, every stolen right, every reputation destroyed by a lie — it is all filed with the most just of judges. And nothing is closed until He rules.



And the Prophet ﷺ taught us that whoever recites this surah should say, upon reaching this last ayah: 'BALA, WA ANA 'ALA ZALIKA MINASH-SHAHIDEEN' — YES, and I am among the witnesses to that. Say it, beta, every time you read it.

What This Surah Teaches Us

1. Allah swore by the lands of Isa, Musa and Muhammad ﷺ — guidance is one long chain, and you are at the end of it.
2. You were made in 'the best of moulds' — never despise the form your Creator called His finest work.
3. A high design allows a deep fall: the same free choice that lets you rise lets you sink below the animals.
4. The rescue is simple and complete: iman plus righteous action.
5. Deeds done in strength keep earning when weakness and old age arrive — build now.



6. The honour of your creation is itself proof that a Day of Recompense must come.

7. Every unheard case is filed with 'the most just of judges' — say 'Bala, wa ana 'ala zalika minash-shahideen.'

Ya Ahkamal-Hakimeen, let us not waste the mould
You honoured us with, and judge us with Your mercy.
Ameen.

— This is a simplified, faithful retelling for understanding, based on the Quran's translation and established tafseer (Ibn Kathir and others). For deeper study, always read with a qualified teacher. —

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