

Sūrah 95: at-Teen

Period of Revelation

According to Qatadah, this Sūrah is Madani. Two different views have been reported from Ibn Abbas: first that it is a Makki Sūrah, and second that it is Madani. But the majority of scholars regard it as a Makki revelation, a manifest symbol of which is the use of the words ha-dhal-balad-il-amin (this city of peace) for Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

Its theme is the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter. For this purpose first swearing an oath by the habitats of some illustrious Prophets, it has been stated that God has created man in the most excellent of molds. Although at other places in the Qur'ān, this truth has been expressed in different ways, for example, at some places it has been said: **“God appointed man His vicegerent on the earth and commanded the angels to bow down to him”** (al-Baqarah: 30,34, al-An'ām: 165, al-A'rāf: 11, al-Hijr 28,29, an-Naml: 62) at others that: **“Man has become bearer of the Divine trust, which the earth and the heavens and the mountains did not have the power to bear”** (al-Ahzāb 72); and at still others that: **“And We have certainly honoured the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference.”** (al-Isrā': 70), yet here the statement made an oath in particular by the habitats of the Prophets that man has been created in the finest of molds, signifies that mankind has been blessed with such an excellent mould and nature that it gave birth to men capable of attaining to the highest position of Prophethood, a higher position than which has not been attained by any other creature of God.

Then, it has been stated that there are two kinds of men; those who in spite of having been created in the finest of mould, become inclined to evil and their moral degeneration causes them to be reduced to the lowest of the low, and those who by adopting the way of faith and righteousness remain secure from the degeneration and consistent with the noble position, which is the necessary demand of their having been created in the best of molds. The existence among mankind of both these kinds of men is such a factual thing which no one can deny, for it is being observed and experienced in society everywhere at all times.

In conclusion, this factual reality has been used as an argument to prove that when among the people there are these two separate and quite distinct kinds, how can one deny the judgment and retribution for deeds? If the morally degraded are not punished and the morally pure and exalted are not rewarded and both end in the dust alike, it would mean that there is no justice in the Kingdom of God; whereas human nature and common sense demand that a judge should do justice. How then can one conceive that God, Who is the most just of all judges, would not do justice?

Sūrah 95: at-Teen¹⁸¹⁵

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate,
the Most Merciful

1. By the fig and the olive¹⁸¹⁶
2. And [by] Mount Sinai
3. And [by] this secure city [i.e., Makkah],
4. We have certainly created man in the best of stature;¹⁸¹⁷
5. Then We return him to the lowest of the low,¹⁸¹⁸
6. Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for they will have a reward uninterrupted.
7. So what yet causes you to deny the Re-compense?¹⁸¹⁹
8. Is not God the most just of judges?

¹⁸¹⁵ *At-Teen*: The Fig.

¹⁸¹⁶ Referring to the places known for their production, i.e., Damascus and Jerusalem, respectively. It could also refer to the fig and olive trees or to the fruits themselves.

¹⁸¹⁷ i.e., upright, symmetrical, and balanced in form and nature.

¹⁸¹⁸ This can refer to the depths of Hell, to decrepit old age or to immorality.

¹⁸¹⁹ More literally, "What makes you lie concerning it?"