

The Prophet & The Qur'an #23:

سورة التين والزيتون

**THE FIG, THE OLIVE,
MOUNT SINA'I & MECCA**

Surat al-Tin (The Fig, 95)
aka *Surat al-Tin wal-Zaytun*
(The Fig & The Olive, 95)

Surat al-Tin wal-Zaytun (The Fig & The Olive, 95)

سُورَةُ التِّينِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَالتِّينِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ ۝١ وَطُورِ سِينِينَ ۝٢ وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ ۝٣
لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ۝٤ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ ۝٥
إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ۝٦
فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدُ بِالذِّينِ ۝٧ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمَ الْحَاكِمِينَ ۝٨

Surat al-Tin (The Fig, 95)

In the Name of God, All-Merciful, Most Merciful

- 1. By The Fig, and (By) The Olive;*
 - 2. And (By) Mount Sinai;*
 - 3. And (By) This Safe City:*

 - 4. Truly, We have created the Human
in the Best Structure.*
 - 5. Next, We returned him to the Lowest of the
Low ...*
-

Surat al-Tin (The Fig, 95)

6. *... Except for those who achieve safety through faith and work the righteous deeds: for them is a reward without end.*
 7. *Then what makes you belie, after this, the Religion & Judgment?*
 8. *Is not God the Wisest & Justest of Judges?*
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The Prophet's Recitation of *The Fig*

“The Prophet ﷺ used to recite

The Fig and The Olive

in one of the two *rak'ahs* (cycles) of prayer
when travelling.

I never heard anyone with
a better voice or recitation than him.”

Malik & Shu'bah – ‘Adi bin Thabit – Al-Bara’ bin
‘Azib RAA. *Sunans* [Ibn Kathir]

Ahmad & Tayalisi – 2nd *rak'ah*,

Maghrib / Sunset Prayer [Albani: *sahih*]

Caliph Umar's Recitation of *The Fig*

“I prayed the Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer behind ‘Umar bin al-Khattab RAA.

**In the first *rak’ah* (cycle), he recited:
*By The Fig, and (By) The Olive
And (By) Mount Sinai.***

He said: *Tūr* means ‘mountain’.”

‘Umar bin Maymūn – *Tafsir Tabari*: #37,585

Q: is *Tur* related to the English *Tor*, eg Glastonbury?

وَالَّتَيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُونَ ۱

1. *By The Fig, and (By) The Olive;*

1. **The well-known fruits** [Hasan, 'Ikrimah, Mujahid, Ibrahim al-Nakh'i, Kalbi]
2. **The Fig: The Mosque of Damascus**
The Olive: The Holy House of Jerusalem
(*Bayt al-Maqdis*) [Ka'b, Ibn Zayd]
3. **The Fig: the Mount of Damascus**
The Olive: the Mount of Jerusalem (*Bayt al-Maqdis*) [Qatadah, 'Ikrimah]
- ~~4. **The Fig: The Mosque of Noah on Mt. Judi**
The Olive: Jerusalem Mosque [Ibn 'Abbas]~~

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The Fig: 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.

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The Olive:

For the sacred symbolism of the Olive, see [*The Believers*] xxiii. 20 and [*Light*] xxiv. 35, where the parable of God's Light includes a reference to the Olive [Tree]. But it is possible that the Olive here refers to the Mount of Olives, just outside the walls of the City of Jerusalem, for this is the scene in the Gospel story (Matt. xxiv. 3-4) of Christ's description of the Judgment to come.

Fig is sweet: Olive needs preparation

- Olives, fresh off the tree, can be very bitter.
[Shaykh Suhaib Hasan]
 - They need preparation before eating, eg brine
[Shaykh 'Ikrimah Sabri, Imam of al-Aqsa]
 - Cf. Figs for eating; Olives are for pressing (for oil) [The Salaf - Tabari]
 - Similarly, people & nations need fixing & healing
 - The Fig/Olive contrast (Sweet/Bitter) is related to the Best of Forms / Lowest of the Low contrast, applied to people & nations
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وَأُورِ سِينِينَ ٢

2. *And (By) Mount Sinai (Tūri Sīnīn)*

1. **The Fig, Olive & Mount Sinai:
3 Mosques in Syria [Ibn ‘Abbas]**
2. **The Mount of Moses [Ibn ‘Abbas, Hasan,
Ka’b] &**
3. **The Mosque of Moses [Qatadah]**
4. **Tūr: every mountain [‘Umar, Mujahid]**
5. **Tūr: every mountain with vegetation
[‘Ikrimah, Kalbi]**
6. **Sīnīn means ‘good’ or ‘blessed’ (with
growth) in Abyssinian [‘Ikrimah, Qatadah]**

**SOURCE:
Ancient
Hebrew
Research
Centre**

**Arabic:
harb (war)**

***harf*
(sword /
sharp)**

Mount Sinai (*sinai* - see Exodus 19:20) is the mountain that Israel met with God upon leaving Egypt. The Hebrew word Sinai (Strong's #5514) means "thorn". This word comes from the parent root *SN* (sin-nun), also meaning thorn. Another word derived from this parent root is *seneh* (#5572) meaning "thorn bush". The bush that Moses saw burning in Exodus 3:2 is a *seneh*. It was not just a burning bush, but a burning thorn bush.

Mount Sinai is also called Mount Horeb (*hhorev* - see Exodus 3:1). The Hebrew word *hhorev* (#2722) comes from the root *hharav* (#2717) meaning "to lay waste", "be dried up" as well as "to fight". By definition the words *sinai* and *hhorev* are synonymous as a dry wasteland is often filled with thorn bushes. But there is also an interesting connection between the Garden of Eden and Mount Sinai.

When Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden, God placed a "flaming sword" at its entrance. The Hebrew word for "sword" is *hherev* (#2719). *Hherev* (sword/sharp) comes from the same root, *hharav* (fight/make waste), as the word *hhorev* (wasteland) which is also called Sinai (thorn/sharp). The burning thorn bush of Exodus is a picture of the flaming sword of Genesis.

Is it possible that the burning bush and the flaming sword are one and the same thing? Was Mount Sinai the entrance into the Garden of Eden?

وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ ۝

3. *And (By) This Safe City:*

1. Mecca (Makkah) [Ibn ‘Abbas, Mujahid, ‘Ikrimah, Qatadah, Ibrahim, Tabari]
2. The Sacred City (*al-Balad al-Haram*) [Ka’b, Hasan, ‘Ikrimah]
3. The Sacred Mosque (*al-Masjid al-Haram*) [Ibn Zayd]
4. *Amīn* (safeguarding or safeguarded) here means *Āmin* (safeguarding = safe) [Tabari, cf. *al-‘Ankabut, The Spider, 29:67 haram āmin*]

**BY WHICH SACRED SYMBOLS
IS GOD SWEARING OATHS?**

BY WHICH SACRED SYMBOLS IS GOD SWEARING OATHS?



BY WHICH SACRED SYMBOLS IS GOD SWEARING OATHS?

- 1. The Fruits & Trees (Fig & Olive),
Mount Sinai & Mecca**
 - 2. The Mosques & Mountains of:
Judi, Damascus, Jerusalem, Sinai & Mecca**
 - 3. The Mosques of The Prophets:
Adam, Noah, Abraham (& Ishmael),
Moses (& David, Solomon, etc.),
Mary, Jesus & Muhammad**
-

Ibn 'Umar forbade climbing Mount Sinai

Quza'ah said to Ibn 'Umar:

I wish to visit Jerusalem & Mount Sinai.

Ibn 'Umar replied:

Don't visit Mount Sinai: you all will not leave any trace of a Prophet without treading on it!

Tafsir Tabari: #37,578

Ibn Kathir quotes Deutoronomy 33:2

**Ibn Kathir: “*The authorities said:
It appears at the end of the Torah ...*”**

**[Moses said:] The LORD came from Sinai,
And rose up from Seir [Jerusalem] unto them;
He shined forth from mount Paran *,
And he came with ten thousands of saints. ****

Deutoronomy 33:2, King James Version

* Paran is disputed: Sinai or Mecca?

** 10,000 Companions at the Conquest of Mecca

Abdullah Yusuf Ali

The Law was given to Moses [**on Mount Sinai**]. See [*Mary*] xix 52. The Law was given, and the glory of God was made visible. But did Israel faithfully obey the Law thereafter?

“This City of security” is undoubtedly Mecca. 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.

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Having discussed the four symbols in detail, let us consider them together. It is clear that they refer to God's Light or Revelation, which offers man the highest destiny if he will follow the Way. Mecca stands for **Islam**, Sinai for **Israel**, and the Mount of Olives for **Christ's** original and pure Message. It has been suggested that the Fig stands for the *Ficus Indica*, the Bo-tree, under which **Gautama Buddha** obtained Nirvana. I hesitate to adopt the suggestion, but if accepted it would cover pristine **Buddhism** and the ancient **Vedic religions** from which it was an offshoot. In this way **all the great religions of the world would be indicated**. But even if we refer the Fig and the Olive to the symbolism in their fruit, and not to any particular religion, the contrast of Best and Worst in man's destiny remains, and that is the main thing.

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ٤

**4. Truly, We have created the Human
in the Best Structure.**

- This is the answer to the oath. (Tabari)
- 1. The most moderate creation & most beautiful form. (Ibn 'Abbas, Ibrahim, Abul-'Aliyah, Mujahid, Qatadah, Kalbi, Tabari)
- 2. The height of his youth & strength. (Ibn 'Abbas, 'Ikrimah)
- 3. The only animal that stands upright. (Ibn 'Abbas)

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ ۝

**5. Next, We returned him to
the Lowest of the Low ...**

- 1. The most contemptible old age of infirmity.**
(Ibn 'Abbas, Ibrahim, Qatadah, 'Ikrimah, Tabari)
Revealed about those with dementia in old age:
they will have reward for previous, best works.
(Ibn 'Abbas, 'Ikrimah)
Whoever collects the Qur'an is not affected.
('Ikrimah)
- 2. To The Fire in the Most Ugly Form.** (Abul-
'Aliyah, Mujahid, Hasan, Ibn Zayd, Ibn Kathir)
- 3. From a high spiritual form to a debased one.**

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ ۝

**5. Next, We returned him to
the Lowest of the Low ...**

Tabari: [1] is more correct than [2] because Allah mentions this as an argument against those who deny the Resurrection in *ayah* #7, so mention of the Hereafter is not an argument against those who deny the Hereafter.

Ibn Kathir: [2] is more correct than [1], otherwise believers would not be affected by dementia, but some of them are. Cf. *Surah al-'Asr* (*Time*, 103)

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ۖ

6. ... Except for those who achieve safety through faith and work the righteous deeds: for them is a reward without end.

1. Whoever recites the Qur'an is not affected by contemptible old age. (Ikrimah)
2. Believers may be affected by dementia, but they will be rewarded for their previous faith & good works. (Ibn 'Abbas, Ikrimah)
3. They will be rewarded throughout infirmity on the basis of their previous good works. (Ibn 'Abbas, Ibrahim, Qatadah, Tabari)
4. Good deeds only, sins forgiven. (Ibn 'Abbas)

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ۖ

6. ... Except for those who achieve safety through faith and work the righteous deeds: for them is a reward without end.

4. They will be saved from the Fire.
(Mujahid, Hasan)

أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ

1. Reward without reduction. (Ibn 'Abbas, Tabari)
2. Reward without reckoning. (Mujahid, Ibrahim)
3. Reward that is not cut off.

فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدُ بِالذِّينِ ۚ

7. Then what makes you belie, after this, the Religion & Judgment?

1. *What means Who, i.e. who will make you belie?*
 2. Addressed to the Human (Mujahid, Kalbi)
 3. Addressed to the Prophet (*God forbid!* – Mujahid)
 4. It means: O Prophet, have certainty!
(Qatadah, Tabari)
 5. It means: Who could possibly make you belie?
(Unnamed Arabic expert quoted by Tabari)
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أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمِ الْحَاكِمِينَ ۝

8. *Is not God the Wisest of Judges?*

حدثنا ابن عبد الأعلى، قال: ثنا ابن ثور، عن معمر، قال: كان قتادة إذا تلا: { أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمِ الْحَاكِمِينَ؟ } قال: بلى، وأنا على ذلك من الشاهدين، أحسبه كان يرفع ذلك وإذا قرأ: { أَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَى أَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَى } قال: بلى، وإذا تلا: { فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ } قال: آمنت بالله، وبما أنزل.

The Prophet would reply:

Yes, of course, (He is)! (balā),

& I am amongst the witnesses for that.

A Link between the Symbols & Judgment

- **Judi, Jerusalem, Sinai & Mecca** were all associated with the **Rise & Fall of Nations**
- **Judi**: drowning of infidels; believers saved
- **Sinai**: whilst Moses received the Ten Commandments, Israel worshipped the golden calf
- **Mecca** fell into polytheism & idolatry before being restored to monotheism by Muhammad
- The **Wise** & Justest of **Judges** decides all!

[*Tafsir* Hamiduddin Farahi – Amin Ahsan Islahi]