



## CHAPTER 91

### *Al-Shams: The Sun*

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 15 verses)

The Prophet is the *Sun* of righteousness (the word giving its title to this chapter), with whose rising the way to perfection is pointed out to man, but only those who purify themselves are really successful, while those who give themselves over to corruption fail to attain the object. The case of *Thamūd* is given as an illustration. Like the last chapter, it is one of the earliest revelations.

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent,  
the Merciful.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ○

1 By the sun and his brightness!<sup>a</sup>

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا ۞

2 And the moon when she borrows  
light from him!<sup>a</sup>

وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا ۞

3 And the day when it exposes it to  
view!<sup>a</sup>

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّهَا ۞

1a. *Al-shams*, or *the sun*, is feminine, and *al-qamar*, or *the moon*, masculine, in the Arabic language, as opposed to English. *Duḥā* is the *early part of the forenoon after sunrise*, or the *advanced state of the day*, or *when the sun shines brightly* (LL). This is to show that the spiritual light of the Prophet will brighten as time passes on.

2a. *Talā-hā* literally signifies *it followed him*, but this is sometimes in *one thing following another in body*, and sometimes in *imitating in respect of predicament* (R); here it is explained as meaning *following it in the way of imitation and in respect of rank, because it borrows light from the sun* (R). Farrā' takes this to be the real meaning, for he says, such a one follows such a one in respect of such a thing, meaning he takes from him (Rz).

3a. The commentators take the personal pronoun in *jallā-hā* ("exposes it") as referring to *the world*, though it is not mentioned here, because, as Kf says, in such cases the meaning is clear, as they say, *it was cold*, meaning *the morning*, though they do not mention it in words (Rz).

- 4 And the night when it draws a veil over it!<sup>a</sup> وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا ۞
- 5 And the heaven and its make! وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَدَّهَا ۞
- 6 And the earth and its extension! وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَّهَا ۞
- 7 And the soul and its perfection!<sup>a</sup> — وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ۞
- 8 So He reveals to it its way of evil and its way of good;<sup>a</sup> فَالْهِمَّتْهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ۞
- 9 He is indeed successful who causes it to grow, قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ رَكَّاهَا ۞

4a. The personal pronoun in *yaghshā-hā* (“draws a veil over it”) also refers to *the world*.

7a. The *mā* in vv. 5–7 is either *maṣdariyyah*, as in the translation (“its”), or *mauṣūlah*, as referring to the Divine Being, for *mā* is often used to indicate the majesty of the person spoken of; the meaning in this case would be: And the heaven and Him Who built it, and the earth and Him Who spread it. The mention of the perfection of the soul of man in this verse is a sequel to what is stated in the first six verses. Man is here spoken of as possessing the highest of qualities which are met with in nature. The sun is a source of light, even so is the perfect man a source of spiritual light. The moon borrows the light of the sun, even so is the perfect man, whose light is really borrowed from the Divine source, which is the real source of all light. The day makes things manifest and thus enables man to carry on his struggle, while the night casts a veil over light and brings rest; the perfect man possesses both these qualities, as he carries on a very hard struggle for the attainment of great ends, and at the same time his mind is at rest and he possesses the quality of contentment. The heaven is raised high, and the earth is spread out for men to walk over, being thus a manifestation of humility; the perfect man possesses both these qualities, having the highest of aspirations and being at the same time humble and lowly. The perfect man thus possesses the opposite qualities of giving light and receiving light, severe exertion and complete rest, greatness and humility. These qualities were possessed by the Prophet, who invited others to make the same the goal of their lives.

8a. The verse is a fitting sequel to the statement made in the previous verse as regards the perfection of the soul, as it points out the way to perfection. It is through *ilhām*, Divine inspiration, or revelation, that the soul is made perfect, because Divine revelation makes clear, the two ways, *fujūr*, or *the way of deviation from the Truth*, i.e., *the way of evil*, and *taqwā*, or *the way of observance of duty*, or *the way of good*. It is by avoiding the former and walking in the latter that perfection can be attained. Both Rodwell and Palmer are wrong here in translating the verse as meaning, “And breathed into it its wickedness and its piety” (Rodwell), “taught it its sin and its piety” (Palmer), for the statement in this form is not only contradicted by the whole of the Qur’ān, but is also self-contradictory and meaningless. *Ilhām* always signifies *an intimation by inspiration from the Divine Being*, or *Divine revelation*. “And this is peculiar to that which is intimated by Allāh” (R). RZ says *the intimation by inspiration of good and evil means the making a man to understand and know them both*, and he adds that this explanation is accepted by I’Ab and all trustworthy commentators.

10 And he indeed fails who buries it.<sup>a</sup>

وَقَدْ حَابَ مَنْ دَسَّهَا ۝

11 Thamūd rejected (the truth) in their inordinacy,<sup>a</sup>

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَاهَا ۝

12 When the basest of them broke forth with mischief —

إِذْ انبَعَثَ أَشْقَاهَا ۝

13 So Allāh's messenger said to them: (Leave alone) Allāh's she-camel, and (give) her (to) drink.

فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا ۝

14 But they called him a liar and slaughtered her. So their Lord destroyed them for their sin and levelled them (with the ground);

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ يَذِثُّهُمْ فَسَوْهَاءُ ۝

15 And He fears not its consequence.<sup>a</sup>

وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاهَا ۝

10a. *Zakkā* is from *zakā*, meaning *it increased*, and therefore primarily the word signifies *he made it to increase* or *thrive*, and *dassā-hā* means *he hid it* or *concealed it*, or *buried it* (LL). The secondary meaning of the former is *he purified it*, and that of the latter *he corrupted it*. The adoption of these two words really indicates that the faculties necessary for perfection are given to every man, but there are some who make them thrive by their development and others who corrupt them by allowing them to remain concealed, not displaying them to their advantage.

11a. The verse gives an instance of those whose end is failure on account of the corrupt manner of their lives, giving at the same time a warning to men that, if they continued in their evil course and did not turn to righteousness, following the call of the Prophet, their end would be the same. If they followed the Prophet, they would attain to perfection, but, if they went against him, they would be given over to destruction as were the former people.

15a. Allāh does not care for the consequences of the punishment to a people when they are found deserving of such punishment, for through their destruction comes life to humanity.



## CHAPTER 92

### *Al-Lail: The Night*

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 21 verses)

The object of this chapter is to show that *The Night* of disbelief and ignorance — hence the title — will give place to the light of the day, for inasmuch as men strive after different objects, those who strive to establish good will have facility, while those who go after evil shall find themselves in difficulties. It is one of the earliest revelations.

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent,  
the Merciful.

- 1 By the night when it draws a veil!
- 2 And the day when it shines!
- 3 And the creating of the male and  
the female! —
- 4 Your striving is surely (for)  
diverse (ends).<sup>a</sup>
- 5 Then as for him who gives and  
keeps his duty,
- 6 And accepts what is good —
- 7 We facilitate for him (the way to)  
ease.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَى ۝  
 وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّى ۝  
 وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَى ۝  
 إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّى ۝  
 فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى ۝  
 وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى ۝  
 فَسَنِيسِرُّهُ لِلْيُسْرَى ۝

4a. Evil is here compared with the darkness of the night and good with the light of day. The creation of the male and the female, which stands for the creation of the whole of animate nature, because all living beings are created either male or female, is also a witness to the same truth, for there we find everyone striving for an end, and everyone reaping according to the manner of his striving.

8 And as for him who is niggardly and considers himself self-sufficient,

وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَى ۖ

9 And rejects what is good —

وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَى ۖ

10 We facilitate for him (the way to) distress.

فَسَيَسِّرُهَا لِلْعُسْرَى ۖ

11 And his wealth will not avail him when he perishes.<sup>a</sup>

وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّى ۖ

12 Surely Ours is it to show the way,

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَى ۖ

13 And surely Ours is the Hereafter and the former.<sup>a</sup>

وَأَنَّ لَنَا لَلْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى ۖ

14 So I warn you of the Fire that flames.

فَأَنْذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظَّى ۖ

15 None will enter it but the most unfortunate,

لَا يَصِلُهَا إِلَّا الْاِسْتَفَى ۖ

16 Who rejects (the truth) and turns (his) back.

الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى ۖ

17 And away from it shall be kept the most faithful to duty,

وَسَيَجَنَّبُهَا الْاِتْقَى ۖ

18 Who gives his wealth, purifying himself,

الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى ۖ

19 And none has with him any boon for a reward,

وَمَا لِاحِدٍ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى ۖ

20 Except the seeking of the pleasure of his Lord,<sup>a</sup> the Most High.

إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْاَعْلَى ۖ

21 And he will soon be well-pleased.

وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَى ۖ

11a. The two examples given in these verses represent those who accept and those who reject the Truth, respectively; the one goes on doing good deeds, finding his way quite easy, until he finds himself in ease, and the other goes on doing evil, the doing of which seems easy to him, until he finds himself in distress.

13a. The wicked one is here told that he will find himself in distress not only in the Hereafter but also in this life, as God has control of both. Or the *ākhirah* here is what is coming later — what is promised — and the *ūlā* the present state.

20a. The pleasure of the Lord is the only boon for which a man should hope, and hence this is the goal of a Muslim's life — his paradise in this as well as the next life. This is in accordance with what is said in 9:72, one of the latest revelations: "And greatest of all is Allāh's goodly pleasure. That is the grand achievement".



## CHAPTER 93

### *Al-Duḥā*: The Brightness of the Day

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 11 verses)

This chapter draws attention to the gradual spreading of the light of the sun of Islām, and is therefore given the title of *Al-Duḥā* or *The Brightness of the Day*. The last two chapters metaphorically speak of the advent of the Holy Prophet as the rising of the sun, and the metaphor is continued here. As the sunshine is not fully resplendent immediately after the rising of the sun, so Truth would shine in its full brightness gradually. It is one of the earliest revelations.

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent,  
the Merciful.

- 1 By the brightness of the day!
- 2 And the night when it is still! —
- 3 Thy Lord has not forsaken thee,  
nor is He displeased.<sup>a</sup>
- 4 And surely the latter state is bet-  
ter for thee than the former.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 وَالضُّحَىٰ  
 وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ  
 مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ  
 وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ

3a. The commentators narrate varying reports to the effect that the verse was revealed on the occasion of a long pause in the coming of revelation to the Holy Prophet. According to *Bukhārī*, it was only a pause of two or three days (B. 65:xciii, 2). That revelation was sent down to the Holy Prophet at intervals is a fact, and a pause of two or three days could not have given rise to such allegations. The words may be taken as words of solace in general sense, the significance being that God would never forsake him. But in the light of what follows, the words are prophetic, the indication being that in its later history Islām would have to face set-backs which might give rise to such doubts. The Prophet and his followers are therefore given an assurance that God will never forsake the cause of Islām. Force is lent to this interpretation by the fact that here it is not the night that is followed by the brightness of the day, which was the case at the appearance of the Prophet, but the brightness of the day is followed by the stillness of the night, which seems to be a reference to the inactivity of the Muslim people after the

- 5 And soon will thy Lord give thee  
so that thou wilt be well pleased.<sup>a</sup>      **وَأَسْوَفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ ۗ**
- 6 Did He not find thee an orphan<sup>a</sup>  
and give (thee) shelter?      **أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ ۖ**
- 7 And find thee groping, so He  
showed the way?<sup>a</sup>      **وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ ۖ**

sun had shone, i.e., after the Prophet had made his appearance. The next verse makes it clearer.

5a. Ibn ‘Aṭṭīyah and others commenting on v. 4 say that by *ākhirah* is here meant the latter state of the Prophet’s cause and by the *ūlā*, the beginning of it (RM). The lexicologists also explain the word *ākhir* as the last, hindmost, or what is after the first or former. And *ākhirā marratain* is explained as meaning the latter of the two times (LL). The words may therefore mean that as time passes, the Prophet’s cause would go on gaining strength, and the latter state would always be better for him than the former. Such indeed is Truth that, although it may gain ground inch by inch after severe struggle with falsehood, it does continue to advance. Or, the reference here is to the second rising of Islām, *nash’at thāniyah*, after what is called the stillness of the night in the 2nd verse, a long pause of inactivity of the Muslims. References to a set-back to the cause of Islām for a long period are very frequent in the Holy Qur’ān; see 32:5a. As a matter of fact, it is true that notwithstanding various set-backs at different periods of its history, the cause of Islām has gone on gaining ground. When the existing Muslim civilization was destroyed by the Mongols, a greater Muslim nation rose up by their joining the ranks of Islām; and when Islām was extirpated in Spain in the West, it gained ground in the Far East in Indonesia, winning over fifty million people. There is clear and repeated mention of its final triumph in the whole world, 9:33; 48:28; and 61:9; see 9:33a. Perhaps it is to this that v. 5 refers — thy Lord will give thee so that thou wilt be well pleased.

6a. ‘Abd Allāh, the Holy Prophet’s father, died about three months before the Prophet was born; his mother, Āminah, died when he was six years old. His grandfather, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, who took care of him after his mother, died two years later, and from that time he remained in charge of Abū Tālib, his uncle, who was alive when the Holy Prophet received the Divine message for the regeneration of mankind.

7a. That *erring* is not the significance of *ḍāll* (“groping”) here is shown conclusively by 53:2, which says: “Your companion *errs not*”. Vv. 6, 7, 8 stand in close relation respectively to vv. 9, 10 and 11; v. 6 tells the Prophet that he was himself an orphan, and the conclusion that he should therefore not oppress the orphan is drawn in v. 9; similarly, v. 8 speaks of the Divine favour to him in making him free from want, and the conclusion is drawn in v. 11 that he should therefore proclaim the Divine favour to him. Thus it is clear that v. 6 stands in close relation to v. 9; and v. 8 to v. 11, and the conclusion is evident that v. 7 stands in close relation to v. 10. Now, v. 10 plainly speaks of one who asks to be guided to the Truth, or a petitioner generally who needs the help of another, being unable himself to do a thing or undertake a task; see 10a. The Holy Prophet was no doubt a *sā’il* (one who asks) in this sense. He did not worship idols, but neither could he, without the help of Allāh, find out the way for the regeneration of his people, for which his soul yearned so eagerly. Hence *he was unable to see the way by himself*, and the word *ḍāll* signifies one who is *perplexed and unable to see the way for himself*, from *ḍalla*, *he was perplexed and unable to see his right course* (LL). The true significance of the word is thus that Allāh found the Prophet in quest of the way, but unable to find the way himself. Therefore He *guided* him by Divine light. In this manner was the Prophet told not to chide any petitioner, but to render help to him as Allāh had

8 And find thee in want, so He enriched thee?<sup>a</sup>

وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَى ۝٨

9 Therefore the orphan, oppress not.<sup>a</sup>

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ۝٩

10 And him who asks, chide not.<sup>a</sup>

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ۝١٠

11 And the favour of thy Lord, proclaim.<sup>a</sup>

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ۝١١

helped him. Or *dāl* signifies *one who becomes lost* (T, LL) in the pursuit of some object, as Jacob's sons speak of their father as being in *dalāl* (R), i.e., lost in the love of Joseph (12:95), and thus the meaning may be that the Holy Prophet had so devoted himself to the quest of the right way for the world that he had lost himself in that quest; see introductory note, chapter 94.

8a. Finding the Holy Prophet in want, and enriching him, do not refer to his temporal or pecuniary circumstances only, if they refer to them at all, but rather to his spiritual needs and the spiritual wealth with which he was enriched.

9a. Not taking care of the orphans is really their oppression. In one of the many of his sayings the Prophet says: *He who takes care of the orphan and I are like these two* (showing his two fingers close to each other) (B. 70:24).

10a. The word *sā'il* occurring in this verse is interpreted generally as meaning *a beggar*. But *petitioner*, or one who asks, is a much better rendering, for it retains the breadth of the original. Ḥasan interpreted the word as meaning *he who asks about knowledge*, and this interpretation is corroborated by what is related in the opening verses of ch. 80. It is, moreover, in consonance with the chief object of a prophet's mission, which aims at spreading true knowledge.

11a. The *ni'mat*, or *the favour*, is no other than *revelation*, the greatest of all Divine favours, as it is recognized to be throughout the Holy Qur'an. This was the favour which the Holy Prophet continued to announce throughout his life. Mujāhid says: *The favour referred to here is the Qur'an* (Rz).





## CHAPTER 94

### *Al-Inshirāḥ: The Expansion*

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 8 verses)

This chapter, like its predecessors, comforts the Prophet. His difficulties were not to continue, but would soon be followed by ease, and it was a sufficient indication of this that his breast was *opened* or *expanded* for the Truth, whence the title of this chapter. The great burden which almost broke his back, his deep anxiety for humanity, had been removed by Divine revelation. This chapter is closely connected with the preceding one, to which it forms, as it were, a supplement. It is one of the earliest revelations.

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent,  
the Merciful.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

1 Have We not expanded for thee  
thy breast,<sup>a</sup>

اَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ ۙ

2 And removed from thee thy bur-  
den,

وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ ۙ

3 Which weighed down thy back,<sup>a</sup>

الَّذِي اَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ ۙ

1a. The *expanding of the breast* is also mentioned in Moses' prayer in 20:25: "My Lord, expand my breast for me". The same words occur also in 6:125: "So whomsoever Allāh intends to guide, He expands his breast for Islām". As opposed to this, it is added: "And whomsoever He intends to leave in error, He makes his breast strait and narrow". There is a report according to which Gabriel opened the breast of the Holy Prophet while he was yet a boy in charge of his nurse, and washed his heart; the authenticity of this has been questioned on critical grounds (Rz). But even that criticism is due to a misconception, for the same incident is related to have taken place again, when the Holy Prophet was entrusted with his Divine mission. The incident was therefore evidently a *kashf*, or a *clear vision*. AH says: "The expanding of the breast signifies its illumination with wisdom and its vastness for the reception of what was to be revealed to him". Rāghib gives a similar explanation, viz., its expansion with Divine light and tranquillity. The expansion of the breast stands, in one word, for the greatness of the heart of the Prophet.

3a. The burden which weighed down his back signifies anxiety for raising humanity from the ignorance and superstition in which it was involved. Compare 26:3: "Perhaps

4 And exalted for thee thy mention?<sup>a</sup>

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ ۞

5 Surely with difficulty is ease,

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ۞

6 With difficulty is surely ease.<sup>a</sup>

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ۞

7 So when thou art free (from anxiety), work hard,<sup>a</sup>

فَإِذَا قَرَعْتَ فَانصَبْ ۞

8 And make thy Lord thy exclusive object.

وَالِى رَّبِّكَ فَارْعَبْ ۞

thou wilt kill thyself with grief because they believe not". The *removal* of the burden signifies giving relief from anxiety.

4a. This is a clear prophecy of the glorious eminence to which the Holy Prophet was to be raised, uttered at a time when he was alone and unknown.

6a. In consonance with what it said in v. 4, the *ease* refers to the *ultimate triumph*, and the *difficulty* to the *trials* which the Prophet was then undergoing. But the passage as well reveals a general law of nature that difficulty is followed by ease. The statement is repeated, showing that Islām would twice be in great difficulties and face hard trials, and that on both occasions it would come out with ultimate triumph. There are clear indications in the Holy Qur'ān and in the sayings of the Holy Prophet of the trials and difficulties of Islām in the latter days, as great as those at the time of its birth, and of its ultimate triumph on both occasions.

7a. The Prophet's being *free* signifies his *freedom from anxiety*, in reference to what is said in the previous verse. Being now free from all anxiety, he was to work hard for the regeneration of a fallen humanity, and make his Lord his exclusive object, i.e., apply himself wholly to establish the greatness of God.



## CHAPTER 95

### *Al-Tin: The Fig*

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 8 verses)

This chapter shows — by drawing a comparison between the Mosaic dispensation, of which *the fig* is a symbol and gives its name to this chapter, and the Islamic dispensation — that man is so created that he can rise to the highest degree of eminence, if he sets before himself right principles and acts on them, and that he degrades himself to the lowest position in creation, if he is not guided by right principles, or, being so guided, fails to act upon them. The chapter belongs to the same early period as the other chapters preceding it.

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
the Merciful.

1 By the fig and the olive!

وَالتِّينِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ ۝

2 And mount Sinai!

وَطُورِ سَيْنَاءَ ۝

3 And this city made secure!<sup>a</sup>—

وَهَذَا الْبَلَدِ الْأَمِينِ ۝

3a. The *fig* and the *olive* stand respectively for *the law given on Mount Sinai* and *that revealed in the sacred city of Makkah*; and the two verses that follow make this clear. It must be remembered that a comparison between Moses and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad is introduced in very early revelations, as here and in 52:1–6 and 73:15. The fig stands for the Jewish dispensation, and this is the significance underlying the cursing of the fig-tree by Jesus. It is said that coming from Bethany early in the morning and finding himself to be hungry, Jesus drew near to a fig-tree so that he might gather some figs; and seeing nothing but leaves upon it, he cursed the tree, and immediately it withered to the root (Matt. 21:19). This action of Jesus evidently signified the rejection of the Jews, who resembled the fig-tree, which had only leaves but no fruit, and even the leaves, representing as they did their outward actions of piety, should now wither away. The rejection of the Jews is still more plainly referred to in the parable of the garden (Matt. 21:33), which ends with the significant words: “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43). It may be added that the Prophet Jeremiah also compares the Jewish nation to two baskets of figs, the good figs standing for the righteous from among the Jews and the vile figs for the wicked ones (Jer. ch. 24).

4 Certainly We created man in the best make.

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ٤

5 Then We render him the lowest of the low,

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ ٥

6 Except those who believe and do good; so theirs is a reward never to be cut off.<sup>a</sup>

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ٦

7 So who can give the lie to thee after (this) about the Judgment?

فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدُ بِالذِّكْرِ ٧

8 Is not Allāh the Best of the Judges?<sup>a</sup>

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَحْكَمَ الْحَاكِمِينَ ٨

As regards the olive, some Bible references no doubt hint at that also as being a symbol of the Jewish nation, but the Holy Qur'an compares it here with the law of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad. This is explained and clarified by a later revelation: "A likeness of His light is as a pillar on which is a lamp, the lamp is in a glass, (and) the glass is as it were a brightly shining star, lit from a blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western" (24:35).

The comparison shows that, whereas the law given on Mount Sinai passed away like the fig-tree in Jesus' parable, the new light, lit from the blessed olive-tree, was never to be extinguished, because it belonged neither to the East nor to the West, but was meant for all men in all ages, and was in fact destined to unite the East and the West.

6a. By man's being created *in the best make* is meant *his enormous capability for advancement*. When he does not take advantage of the opportunity offered to him, he is reduced to the lowest of the low. With unthought of advancement in science, men are even today flying at each other's throats like the beasts of the jungle, because they are not guided by Divine revelation.

8a. Both this verse and the one preceding it refer to the Divine judgment awaiting the rejectors of Truth. The Judgment is as well a judgment of the guilty in this life as in the next.