

Surah at-Taubah (continued)

This juzz continues to mention the munaafiqoon who did not go to Tabuk. In contrast, there is mention of the believers who confessed their mistake and admitted that it was their own weakness and procrastination that led them to this.

There is mention of the munaafiqoon who built the 'Masjid Dhiraar' with the intention to harm the believers. They invited the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam to inaugurate the masjid, however, Allah forbade him to even stand in it. However, there is mention of 'Masjid Quba' and the true believers, who spent their energies and wealth for the pleasure of Allah:

"Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great attainment." (Ayat 111)

The characteristics of these believers are also listed:

1. Oft-repenting
2. Worshippers
3. Who Praise Allah
4. Who travel
5. Who fast
6. Who bow down
7. Who prostrate
8. Who command good
9. Who forbid evil
10. Who observe the limits set by Allah

The 3 companions, namely, Ka'ab ibn Maalik, Hilal bin Umayyah and Marara bin Rabee' radhi Allahu anhum, who did not go to Tabuk are mentioned. They had openly accepted their shortcomings, unlike the munaafiqoon. However, they went through a social boycott for 50 days, after which Allah announced that their repentance had been accepted as they had spoken the truth. This was such a grand occasion for them, that even the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam said to Ka'ab ibn Maalik that : "Since the day your mother gave you birth, this is the most blessed day."

The next ayaat outline 4 further pieces of advice for the believers:

- a. To fear Allah openly and in secret.
- b. To stay away from the munaafiqoon and to keep the company of true believers.
- c. To give preference to the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam, over their own selves, in times of poverty and hardship.
- d. This is a promise from Allah, that, every act of obedience and worship will be rewarded by Allah, and they will be recompensed for the amount of hard work that they do for the deen.

The believers are then being advised with regards to their collective matters. They are to leave a group of people behind in their dwellings, when they go on an expedition, so that this group can understand the deen in order to educate the rest on their return.

“And it is not for the believers to go forth [to battle] all at once. For there should separate from every division of them a group [remaining] to obtain understanding in the religion and warn their people when they return to them that they might be cautious.” (Ayat 122).

This highlights the importance of specialization in the affairs of the community. A group has to strive to learn the deen so that they can guide the community in matters of everyday life, and extract the rulings when unprecedented situations arise. It also shows us how the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam, strategically prepared people for different roles e.g. teacher, scholars, judges, commanders, administrators and organisers etc. Hence we should encourage people to pursue varied roles so they can excel in their respective fields, for the benefit of the community.

The Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam said: “Whomsoever, Allah intends to favour, He gives him the understanding of the deen”.

He also said: “A faqeeh (someone who understands the deen) proves better than a thousand worshippers.” (Allahumma rabbana zidnaa ilman naafa’y – aameen)

The surah ends by stating the phenomenon that these munaafiqoon do not benefit from, even this Quran, but instead they increase in their wretchedness. The believers on the other hand find that their emaan increases due to this Quran.

The surah concludes with a beautiful and heartfelt description of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam. (May we be sacrificed for him!)

“There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful.” (Ayat 129).

This is the only instance where Allah has used His two names i.e. Ra’ouf and Raheem together for any of His creation.

Ibn Abbas radhi Allahu anhu states that: “Allah has not mentioned these two names, together, for anyone except for the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam”.

Surah Yunus

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 119 ayaat. The basic pillars of emaan, aqeedah and especially the Quran, have been discussed.

The surah begins by mentioning the book i.e. Qur’an and the fact that the coming of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa salaam is not a new phenomenon. In fact, through out history, nations were sent prophets and messengers.

This is followed by an explanation of the oneness of Allah in terms of Him being the Lord, worthy of Worship and Obedience. It also discusses the basis of the relationship between the Creator and His creation, and the fact that the Creator and Sustainer, alone, is worthy of being worshipped and obeyed, and that the whole of creation is a witness to His Power. (Ayat 6).

As a result of reflecting on this system of creation, people end up in one of two groups i.e. the ones who accept the signs or those who reject these signs. One of the main reasons for rejecting the signs is the ‘haste’ found in mankind. This haste can sometimes lead one to even ask for ones own destruction. (Ayat 11).

The rejecters go as far as ridiculing the Qur'an and the Prophet, by asking him to bring another Qur'an or to amend it. The Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam is told to respond by saying:

"It is not for me to change it on my own accord; I only follow that which is revealed unto me. Verily, I fear if I were to disobey my Lord, the torment of the Great Day." (Ayat 15).

The rejecters are then asked to think about the fact that they have known the noble character of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam for all these years, and that they are themselves a witness to his honesty, trustworthiness and highly esteemed character. In addition, they know that he is unlettered and that he has never engaged in learning from a teacher, so then, how can he bring such a book, which is so profound and true?

Even the enemies of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam would bear witness to his highly esteemed and noble character. When Abu Sufyan was asked about the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam's character by King Heracles of Rome, when he enquired: "Have you ever seen him lie before his claim to prophethood?", Abu Sufyan replied "No!". Heracles then went on to say: "How can it then be that he could lie about Allah, when he does not lie about people."

Imam Razi states that the mushrikeen had witnessed the life of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam since childhood to the beginning of his prophethood, and they knew that he had neither studied any books, nor been under the guidance or instruction of any teachers. Then all of a sudden he brought to his people a magnificent book with the foundations of knowledge, the intricacies of law, the subtleties of morality, and the knowledge of many hidden secrets. Its eloquence and literary style was unparalleled and undisputed by even the giant linguists and poets of the time. Hence, every individual who possesses 'sound logic', recognises that such a book must be revelation.

The next few ayaat shed light on the attitude of the mushrikeen, who, at the time of need, call upon one single God, instead of their idol partners. (Ayat 22).

The Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam is then instructed to ask them:

"Who provides for you from the sky and from the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who disposes the affairs?" They will say: "Allah." Say: "Will you not then be afraid of Allah's Punishment (for setting up rivals in worship with Allah)?" (Ayat:32)

The mushrikeen are then being challenged to bring forth a surah from themselves, by aiding each other in whatever way they want.

Allah then informs us of the real reason behind them rejecting the message:

"Nay, they deny that; the knowledge whereof they could not encompass and whereof the interpretation has not yet come unto them. Thus those before them did deny." (Ayat 39)

Then three stories are related, for the mushrikeen to learn a lesson, and to take heed:

- a. The first story is that of Prophet Nooh alaihis salaam, who had the lengthiest term of prophethood, but the least number of followers.
- b. The second story is of Prophets Musa and Haroon alaihimas salaam, whom faced the tyranny of the likes of Firaun.

- c. The third story is of Yunus alaihis salaam. He is explicitly mentioned 4 times in the Qur'an, and twice referred to as 'dhun noon' i.e. 'of the fish'. He left his nation after losing hope for them, ended up in the belly of the whale, which later on delivered him to the shore. After he left his nation, they all came out in to the desert and asked Allah for forgiveness and accepted his message. As a result the torment of Allah was evaded and Allah accepted their sincere repentance.

After relating these 3 stories, the mushrikeen are being warned that if they do not mend their ways, then the punishment of Allah will seize them before the day of qiyamah.

The Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam and his companions radhi Allahu anhum ajma'een are being giving the glad tidings that the help of Allah is near and that it is the sunnah of Allah, that eventually the true believers are victorious.

Just as the surah started with mention of the book i.e. Qur'an, it also ends by commanding us to obey and follow it:

"Say, "O mankind, the truth has come to you from your Lord, so whoever is guided is only guided for [the benefit of] his soul, and whoever goes astray only goes astray [in violation] against it. And I am not over you a manager."

"And follow what is revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and be patient until Allah will judge. And He is the best of judges." (Ayat 108 -109)