

Surah Hud (continued)

The 12th juzz consists of Surah Hud and a part of Surah Yusuf. Surah Hud is a Makkan surah which consists of 123 ayaat. The surah starts with mentioning the Magnificence of the Qur'an:

"Alif, Lam, Ra. [This is] a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from [one who is] Wise and Acquainted." (Ayat 1)

The book is perfect in the sense that its detail and explanation is from Allah the All Wise the All Knowing. Its commandments are based on wisdom, and it is well acquainted with the past, present and future, as well as human psychology, limitations and needs.

After this, there is an invitation to believe in 'tawheed' i.e. the Oneness of Allah. There is then mention of the proofs of 'tawheed', which are scattered throughout the creation. We are told that Allah is the One who sustains and gives provision to all the creation, be it humans, jinns, cattle, birds, fish, or insects. The people who do not reflect on these signs, and who have not taken off the blinds of arrogance and pride, then they refuse to accept the Oneness of Allah and furthermore, they refuse to accept the Qur'an to be revelation from Allah. Allah challenges such people:

"Or do they say, "He invented it"? Say, "Then bring ten surahs like it that have been invented and call upon [for assistance] whomever you can besides Allah, if you should be truthful." (Ayat 13).

The rejecters of the Qur'an have been challenged on three occasions:

- a. Bring a book like the Qur'an.
- b. Bring 10 surahs like the Qur'an.
- c. Bring a single sura like the Qur'an.

The other main topics discussed in this surah are as follows:

1. There are 2 types of people. The first type is always focused on the 'duniya' i.e. worldly life and their energies are entirely devoted towards making this life more comfortable and enjoyable. They do not, ever, think about the hereafter. The other type, are those who do strive for this world, but their objective is the hereafter. They always keep the hereafter in mind, in all their pursuits. The first type, is like the deaf and blind, while the second, have sight and understanding. (Ayat 15-17).

2. One of the ways in which the Qur'an keeps its reader engaged is by first refuting some ideas and then relating them to the past nations. Just like there is diversity and variety in the world around us in the form of flowers, fruits, mountains, plains, rivers and deserts. The world of the Qur'an is full of variety with its changing subjects and themes. So its topics keep changing between commandments and historic events, proofs and previous nations, advice with scenes from jannah and jahannum, and glad tidings with warnings. This ensures that the reader does not feel any monotony.

Surah Hud, brings forth proofs for the authenticity of the Qur'an followed by evidences for the Oneness of Allah and the Messengerhood. This is then followed by the stories of Nooh, Hud, Saaleh, Luth, Shuaib, Musa, and Haroon alai him us salaam. These have been related as evidence for the Qur'an being revelation, and the Messengerhood of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam.

The mushrikeen were fully aware of the fact that the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam was unlettered and had never received any form of instruction, hence the fact that he brought

forward a book such as the Qur'an which had such accurate accounts of the past nations, could only have been revelation.

"That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, [O Muhammad]. You knew it not, neither you nor your people, before this. So be patient; indeed, the [best] outcome is for the righteous." (Ayat 49).

On the one hand, these ayaat provide the disbelievers with ample evidence, to persuade them to accept the truth. While, providing a source of support and reassurance, and steadfastness for the Prophet and his followers.

These ayaat are commanding the believers to remain steadfast. This commandment is related to belief, speech, actions and character. Steadfastness (istiqaamah) refers to leading a life which is solely in line with Allah's commandments and wishes.

Abdullah ibn Abbas radhi Allahu anhu said that, no other ayat was more burdensome on the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam, than this.

On one occasion the companions inquired regarding the white streaks in the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam's hair, to which he replied: "Surah Hud and it's like, have made me grow old." The scholars say that this refers to this ayat.

It is worth noting that istiqamah is one of the greatest qualities that one should strive for. It is also worthwhile contemplating on the ayat in which Prophet Nooh alaihis salaam made dua:

"And thus is the seizure of your Lord when He seizes the cities while they are committing wrong. Indeed, His seizure is painful and severe."

"Indeed in that is a sign for those who fear the punishment of the Hereafter. That is a Day for which the people will be collected, and that is a Day [which will be] witnessed." (Ayat 103-104).

This is telling us that Allah's punishment can seize those who are disobedient today, just as it did in the past. Ayat 116 also highlights the fact that this punishment arrives when there are two faults in a group of people: firstly, there not being a number of mindful people who forbid others from mischief, and secondly, the people go too far in their indulgence in material luxuries and sin.

The end of the surah addresses the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam and his followers again, to help them to be steadfast:

"And each [story] We relate to you from the news of the messengers is that by which We make firm your heart. And there has come to you, in this, the truth and an instruction and a reminder for the believers." (Ayat 120).

Surah Yusuf

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 111 ayaat. Unlike the stories of the other prophets, which can be found in numerous surahs, the story of Yusuf alaihis salaam has been given in detail in this surah alone. Although his name has been mentioned in other surahs, there is no mention of his story in any other surah. The people of Knowledge say that this is another challenge to the rejecters of the Qur'an ; to bring forth surahs which have mention of a prophet in more than one surah, and a surah which is dedicated to only the life of one prophet, alone.

This story of Yusuf alaihis salaam has also been termed as the 'ahsan ul qasas' i.e. the best of stories. This surah delivers numerous lessons and advices. It contains tawheed, fiqh, seerah, interpretation of dreams, government and political affairs, human psychology, as well as the humble and pious character of the prophets. The surah also mentions the saliheen (doers of good), angels, devils, jinns, humans, cattle, birds, kings, traders, scholars, the ignorant, and the plotting of misleading women.

Another fascinating aspect of this surah is that it clearly maps out the struggle between the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam and his enemies; just like with the prophet Yusuf, the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam also faced the jealousy of his (Quraish) tribal brothers, as they also plotted to kill him, he had to leave Makkah, he stayed in the cave of Thawr for 3 days, he eventually became a strong leader, and when Makkah was conquered, his tribal brothers were embarrassed and ashamed. The amazing fact is that on this occasion, the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam said to them: " I say the same thing to you, as my brother Yusuf said to his brothers: You are free, there is no blame on you!"