

Surah al-Mo'minoon

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 118 ayaat. This surah discusses the principles of the deen i.e. 'usool of deen'.

The surah starts by identifying 7 characteristics of a true mo'min, who will enter jannah:

- Sincere emaan, without showing off.
- Have khushoo (humility and concentration) in their salah (prayer).
- Stay away from any laghw; laghw refers to something which is without any benefit.
- Always try to purify their selves by fulfilling Allah's rights and the rights of creation.
- Save themselves from indecency especially 'zina'.
- Fulfil their trusts and promises.
- Guard their prayers i.e. pray on time etc.

Allah then describes the embryonic stages of man's development. This is an amazing section of the Quran as it gives such precise detail of this process that even experts in this field such as Professor Keith L. Moore have been amazed by it.

Three other proofs are then presented:

- The creation of everything in the 7 heavens.
- The rainfall causing a variety of crops and fruits to grow.
- The benefits derived from cattle such as milk, meat, wool, transport and haulage.

The surah then turns to the stories of some prophets, namely; Nuh, Hud, Saleh, Musa, Haroon and Eesa alaihim us salaam. All of these prophets had the same mission, same call and same objective. However, it is unfortunate that their followers have forgotten about the unity of this message and are so easily divided.

There is then mention of two types of people. The first, are those who are divided and in opposition. Their hearts are ignorant and heedless of Allah. The other group consists of those righteous people who have mutual affinity and their hearts are alive and shining with the light of guidance. These people have four qualities:

- They fear Allah's punishment.
- The belief in Allah's ayaat whether they are the ayaat of the Qur'an or the signs in His creation.
- They try to stay away from showing off and try to do everything for the pleasure of Allah alone.
- They are concerned that Allah may not accept their actions, even though they do righteous deeds.

The rejecters are also mentioned and the main reason for their rejection is pride, arrogance and the fact that they want to follow their desires above and beyond everything else.

The surah ends by telling us that on the day of qiyamah there will be two groups of people:

Those whom will be happy and others whom would be sad. The sad people will wish to return to earth in order to do good deeds, but they will not be given that second chance:

"That I might do righteousness in that which I left behind." No! It is only a word he is saying; and behind them is a barrier until the Day they are resurrected." (Ayat 100).

The last ayat teaches us how to supplicate to Allah:

And, [O Muhammad], say, "My Lord, forgive and have mercy, and You are the best of the merciful." (Ayat 118).

Surah an-Noor

This is Madinan surah consisting of 67 ayaat. This surah is known as 'an-Noor' due to the enlightening guidance it provides for the collective lives of humans. This surah mainly contains commandments which deal with chastity and decency. Our pious predecessors placed a lot of emphasis on teaching this surah to our daughters and sisters.

The main topics in this surah are as follows:

The first and second commandments are related to 'zina'. The punishment for 'zina' for the non-married man or woman is 100 lashes according to this surah. However the punishment for a married man or woman committing 'zina' is 'rajm', according to mutawaatir ahaadeeth. A general principle regarding the person committing 'zina' is that only those people like to take them as life partners who also indulge in this sin.

The third commandment is regarding false allegations and accusation, i.e. if someone alleges that someone has committed 'zina'. Then the punishment for such baseless slander is 80 lashes.

The fourth commandment is regarding 'le'aan' i.e. if a husband alleges that his wife has committed 'zina', without having four witnesses, then, they mutually invoke the curse of Allah upon the liar and then part from each other.

As part of the fifth commandment, the incident of 'ifk' has been mentioned. 'Ifk' refers to lying and falsely accusing chaste women of indecency. This was revealed when some munaafiqoon tried to slander the Prophet's wife and the mother of the believers Aisha radhi Allahu anha. Allah has mentioned this great incident and adversity in 10 ayaat, in which the munaafiqoon have been reprimanded, the believers have been warned not to have any part in such an act in future, and the fact that Aisha radhi Allahu anha was totally innocent and free from all such accusations.

The sixth commandment is regarding the etiquettes of seeking permission when entering someone's home. It teaches us that we should not enter peoples' homes before being granted permission and that it is better to give salaam before seeking permission.

The seventh commandment addresses the believing men and women as follows:

"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what they do."

"And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their

adornment. And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed." (Ayat 30-31).

The eighth commandment is that the free believers or those captives who can bear the responsibility of nikah, should get married. Actually, Islam wants to eradicate 'zina' and thus makes it very easy and simple for people to get married. It is unfortunate that we have introduced cultural practices which inhibit the marriage process. (May Allah Guide us to the light in this surah – ameen.)

The ninth commandment is related to slaves and captives. Prior to the light of Islam, there was present a culture of abusing the rights of slaves and captives. However, Islam came with guidance and rules to give this down-trodden section of society, rights, to lift them out of oppression and to give them the same human rights as everyone else. Some of these are as follows:

- They are given back their basic human rights.
- The freeing of a captive or slave is encouraged as it is regarded as a means of gaining Allah's pleasure.
- The freeing of them is regarded as expiation for certain sins or the not fulfilling of oaths.
- They are recognised as a legal entity by allowing them to agree to a contract by which they could buy their freedom. The specific term for this kind of agreement is called 'mukathabath'.

The tenth commandment refutes an immensely inhumane practice from the days of the pre-Islamic ignorance, i.e. the business based on the coercion of female slaves into prostitution. Islam came to abolish all such practices in their entirety.

The surah then presents three similitudes, in order to describe the reality of different people.

The first similitude is a beautiful one, which describes the heart of a true believer:

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills." (Ayat 35).

The state of the true believers' heart is that it is already following its natural inclination i.e. 'fitrah' even prior to receiving the light of revelation. The light of revelation simply improves the heart and makes it shine even more. Yahya bin Salaam rahimahullah says: "The heart of a believer already recognises the truth, even before it being explained, because his heart is already in synch with the truth."

The next two similitudes are regarding the people of falsehood:

The first similitude is regarding the 'actions' of these people of falsehood:

"But those who disbelieved - their deeds are like a mirage in a lowland which a thirsty one thinks is water until, when he comes to it, he finds it is nothing but finds Allah before Him, and He will pay him in full his due; and Allah is swift in account." (Ayat 39).

The second similitude is related to their 'belief' being covered under layers of darkness:

"Or [they are] like darkneses within an unfathomable sea which is covered by waves, upon which are waves, over which are clouds - darkneses, some of them upon others. When one puts out his hand [therein], he can hardly see it. And he to whom Allah has not granted light - for him there is no light." (Ayat 40).

This ayat also refers to recent scientific discoveries of waves present in the depths of the sea.

The surah then goes on to show the signs of the existence of Allah, in creation:

- The alternation of the night and day.
- The sending down of the rain.
- The creation of the heavens and the earth.
- The flight of all kinds of birds.
- The creation of a variety of cattle and animals.

A Comparison between the Munaafiqoon and the Believers

Then a comparison between the munafiqoon and believers is given:

The munafiqoon claim that they believe, but as soon as they have to obey Allah and His Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam in an affair that may lead to their personal loss, they turn away.

In comparison, the true believers are 'ever-ready', in fact even hoping for Allah and His Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam to demand something from them. It is these true believers, for whom Allah promises:

"Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them [therein] their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that - then those are the defiantly disobedient." (Ayat 55)

Guidance on Social and Communal Affairs

The surah then proceeds to provide guidance regarding 3 social and communal affairs:

Firstly, it guides us that the young children and any slaves, servants etc should seek permission prior to entering your room on three separate occasions throughout the day: before Fajar, after Dhuhr (siesta), and after Isha. This is because the husband and wife will normally be dressed in their nightwear during these hours.

Secondly, when the children reach the age of puberty, they should not enter the homes without seeking permission, and they should inform the people inside of their arrival in a suitable manner, e.g. by coughing or ringing the bell etc.

Finally, women who are of old age may remove their outer garments while in their homes.

All of the above commandments add up to 13 commandments which enlighten us on how we can live more successful and harmonious social and communal lives.

The fourteenth commandment tells us that we should ask for permission before leaving a gathering.

The fifteenth commandment is teaching us that we should not address the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam in the same manner in which we address each other.

The surah ends by reminding us:

“Unquestionably, to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and earth. Already He knows that upon which you [stand] and [knows] the Day when they will be returned to Him and He will inform them of what they have done. And Allah is Knowing of all things.” (Ayat 64).