

Surah al-Ankabuth (continued)

The main points discussed in this section are as follows:

1. There is a commandment to recite the Quran and pray. The desired results from prayer are: staying away from indecency and evil. When prayer is established keeping in mind all its conditions and *adaab* (manners) then it is bound to have the desired effect on one's personality. Imam Abu alAaliya says that a person who prays has 3 qualities:

- a. *Ikhlaas* (sincerity): Encourages one to do good deeds.
- b. *Khashiyyah* (fear): Stops one from evil.
- c. *Dhikr* of Allah i.e. Quran (remembrance of Allah): Commands good and forbids evil.

Anyone who prays but does not develop these qualities is not achieving the desired outcomes of prayer, and thus should reflect on the prayer and make the necessary amendments.

2. One of the signs of the Prophethood of the Prophet *sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam*, mentioned here is the fact that he was 'unlettered' i.e. he had not been taught how to read and write. Despite this, he was able to bring a book which was at the pinnacle of eloquence and literary expression. The *mushrikeen* would ask for a miracle, and in reply they are being told that this Quran is the miracle. They are then challenged to bring a chapter like it if they claim that it is from other than Allah. In today's day and age as well as the future, the Quran will continue to provide evidence which will show that it is an everlasting miracle.

3. The surah then proceeds to mention the *muttaqoon* (pious) and they are advised to remain steadfast and exercise patience, during their emigration for the cause of the *deen*. There is emphasis on those people who emigrate for the sake of Allah; they are reassured that Allah will make arrangement for their provision in the foreign land when they decide to emigrate.

4. It may be said that the last ayat of this surah summarises the message of this surah:

"And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good." (Ayat 69).

Hence whoever, strive and struggle to please Allah, whether it be against *shaithan* or the enemies of Allah, Allah promises to most definitely guide them to success in this life and in the hereafter.

Surah ar-Rum

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 60 ayaat. One of the miracles of the Quran are the predictions it has made. The start of the surah mentions one such prediction which came true i.e. the victory of the Romans over the Persians, within a space of nine years. At the time of revelation, this was an unimaginable state of affairs, as the Romans were completely subdued by the Persians, and they were conquering the Romans, at an alarming rate. The Roman Empire seemed to be breathing its last breaths, with its internal affairs in disarray, the whole of Europe was in chaos, and the Roman emperor *Heracilius* having lost all hope.

The Persians were fire worshipping idolaters, a religious practice very similar to the *mushrikeen* of Makkah. Whereas, the Romans were monotheists. Hence, the *mushrikeen* were overjoyed by the victory of the Persians. In such circumstances, the Quran predicted the unimaginable victory of the Romans and the defeat of the Persians. It goes without saying that the *mushrikeen* would

have mocked such a prediction; however, it came true exactly within 9 years, as predicted, proving that this Quran must be from Allah.

The other main topics in this surah are as follows:

The surah highlights the battle between good and evil, emaan and kufr, and, truth and falsehood. This has been a struggle since the beginning of time, and will continue until the last day, where each group will reach its final destination:

"And the Day the Hour appears - that Day they will become separated."

"And as for those who had believed and done righteous deeds, they will be in a garden [of Paradise], delighted."

"But as for those who disbelieved and denied Our verses and the meeting of the Hereafter, those will be brought into the punishment [to remain]." (Ayat 15-17).

The surah mentions 7 proofs of Allah's Oneness and Greatness:

- Allah creates a thing from its opposite; He creates a living thing from a dead object e.g. a human from a drop of fluid, a chick from an egg, a tree from a seed etc.
- He created man from lifeless soil.
- He has put affinity between the husband and wife; it is amazing that two people who may not have known each other, all of a sudden, become so attached, as if they were one soul.
- He has created the heavens and the earth and whatsoever is in them, and he has created a variety of people of different colours and languages.
- He created the night so that the human body can rest and recuperate; an essential feature for maintaining the human body.
- The thunder causes some people to be fearful, while others become hopeful for rain. When the rain falls, it brings the dead earth back to life.
- He created a robust universe that works according to a precise system. He created the heavens without any pillars, in which the planets and stars are all swimming in an orchestrated fashion, never swaying from their path. Similarly, the earth is in constant motion as it rotates about its axis and orbits the sun, while we go about our daily business, totally unaware of its constant movement and this non stop journey.

This surah reminds us that throughout time, Allah has given the 'truth' victory over 'falsehood'. If the bearers of truth are not victorious, then they should examine their selves to see if they have adopted any aspects of falsehood, or it may be that the bearers of falsehood have adopted some aspects of the truth, and hence they are apparently successful.

The surah ends with the mention of the mushrikeen who were like the 'dead' as they would not listen to the ayaat of Allah, neither would they observe the creation, nor would they reflect in its orderly fashion, and hence would not be affected by the truth:

"And We have certainly presented to the people in this Quran from every [kind of] example. But, [O Muhammad], if you should bring them a sign, the disbelievers will surely say, "You are but falsifiers." (Ayat 58).

Surah Luqman

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 34 ayaat. It starts by mentioning the everlasting miracle given to the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam. It then mentions two types of people who emerge as a result of receiving the message of the Quran; the believers who bear witness to the truth of this guidance, and the disbelievers, who turn away with pride and arrogance, as if they do not hear it.

Allah then presents 4 proofs for His Power and Oneness;

- a. He created the heaven without any pillars, in which there are numerous bright stars, the sun, the moon, many planets and galaxies. The universe is so enormous that we are not even a speck in comparison to it.
- b. The mountains have been created to stabilise the earth.
- c. Numerous animals, cattle, and beasts have been created. In addition, there are numerous species in the seas and in the air which are still unknown by all except Allah. Humans are so limited and weak, that they cannot even create the likes of an ant or a fly, let alone a human.
- d. He sends down the rain with which all the variety of produce grows.

The other main topics in this surah are as follows:

Luqman was not a prophet but he was given wisdom and knowledge. His sayings are a treasure for those who seek a lesson. His speech was profound, his silence was for reflection, and his sayings were an admonition. Allah has mentioned the 5 pieces of advice that he gave to his son. These are very profound teachings which encompass belief, worship, dealings and morals:

- a. He advised his son not to associate partners with Allah as this is the greatest injustice, which leads to destruction. After this Allah commands us to be good to our parents.
- b. His second advice was regarding the hereafter:
 "O my son, indeed if wrong should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be within a rock or [anywhere] in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Indeed, Allah is Subtle and Acquainted." (Ayat 16).
- c. The third advice emphasises the need to turn towards Allah; perform the prayer in the proper way, enjoin good and forbid evil, and be patient and steadfast in the face of adversity.
- d. The fourth advice is to not be proud or arrogant.
- e. The fifth advice gives comprehensive guidelines to perfect ones character by being moderate in ones pace and to lower ones voice.

The surah then talks about the mushrikeen who would still deny the truth even though they were shown all these signs. And, if they were asked regarding the creation of the heavens and the earth, they would agree that Allah is the sole Creator.

The surah ends by listing 5 things, the knowledge of which is with Allah alone (subhan Allah):

"Indeed, Allah [alone] has knowledge of the Hour and sends down the rain and knows what is in the wombs. And no soul perceives what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul perceives in what land it will die. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted." (Ayat 34).

Surah as-Sajdah

This is a Makkan surah consisting of 30 ayaat. The main topics discussed in this are as follows:

1. The surah starts by stating the truth of this book. The proofs for this book are clear, its eloquence is unmatched by any human endeavour. Despite this, the kuffar would accuse the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam of having forged it.

2. It gives proofs for the Oneness and Power of Allah: He has created the heavens and the earth, He plans everything, and He created man from a drop of fluid. One can see the evidence of Allah's Greatness if one ponders on the creation of man, who is created in stages from a drop of fluid into a fully functional, intelligent human being.

3. The surah explains the state of the criminals and the true believers:

"If you could but see when the criminals are hanging their heads before their Lord, [saying], "Our Lord, we have seen and heard, so return us [to the world]; we will work righteousness. Indeed, we are [now] certain." (Ayat 12)

"Only those believe in Our verses who, when they are reminded by them, fall down in prostration and exalt [Allah] with praise of their Lord, and they are not arrogant."

"They arise from [their] beds; they supplicate their Lord in fear and aspiration, and from what We have provided them, they spend."

"And no soul knows what has been hidden for them of comfort for eyes as reward for what they used to do." (Ayat 13-15).

The surah ends with the mention of Musa alaihis salaam being given the Torah, as a reminder that the Messengerhood of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam is similar to that of Musa alaihis salaam.

Surah al-Ahzaab

This is a Madinan surah consisting of 73 ayaat, which deals with three subject areas:

- a. Collective adaab (manners).
- b. Commandments (ahkaam).
- c. Certain battles and the character of the munaafiqoon

The main topics are as follows:

The first two ayaat give the believers 4 instructions which are the ingredients to success and dignity:

- Fearing Allah.
- Not to follow the opinions of the kuffar or munaafiqoon.
- Following the revelation.
- Having trust and reliance in Allah alone.

It refutes some of the beliefs of the jahilliyyah:

- No person has two hearts, hence you can either have belief or kufr in the heart, not both.
- Dhihaar: This was a practice where a man would make his wife haraam for himself. However, the Quran taught us that this oath could be revoked by giving the expiation.
- We are told that a 'so called' child which is not born to you cannot be the same as your own biological child with regards to various commandments. We are told that Zayd bin Haaritha radhi Allahu anhu is not the son of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam. However, in general terms the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam is the father for the whole ummah and his wives are the 'mothers of the believers'. They need to be respected and honoured, and no one else can now be married to them.

The Battle of Ahzaab/Khanduq (Confederates/Trench)

The next 19 ayaat mention the battle of Ahzaab and the battle of Banu Quraytha. In the month of Shawwal 5 Hijrah, the mushrikeen along with the Yahood and Nasaaraa launched a joint attack on Madinah with an army 10,000 – 15,000 strong. The Muslims were 3,000 in number. In order to defend the North West of Madinah the believers dug a trench (khanduq) on the suggestion of Salman al Farsi radhi Allahu anhu. The enemy laid siege to Madina for 30 days. Then Naeem bin Masud Ghathfaanee managed to cause a dispute between the different confederates. In addition, Allah sent a storm which uprooted their tents, dispersed their animals and struck fear in their hearts, and as a result the 30 day siege ended, in the confederates fleeing. After Abu Sufyan and his allies had fled, the Muslims punished the Banu Quraydha for breaching their 'joint-defence' pact with the Muslims, in which they had vowed to fight alongside the Muslims in the event of an attack on Madinah.

Allah then gives the believers the glad tidings of more victories to follow in the form of the Persian and Roman empires and beyond. No doubt Allah's promise will come true in which he says:

"It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although those who associate others with Allah dislike it." (Sura As Saff Ayat 9).

By Allah! It may be sooner than we think!