

Surah al-Baqarah (continued)

The start of the 3rd juzz mentions the special status that Allah has given to some prophets such as being leaders, speaking to Allah, and being supported by miracles etc. In addition to all these specialities, some prophets were given a higher rank than others. Just in this way, their ummahs have a certain status over others. The last prophet Muhammad salAllahu alaihi wa sallam has a status above all other prophets. Hence his ummah also has a status above all other ummahs. In the same token this surah presents to us an ayat which has been given a great status; the greatest ayat of this book i.e. ayat ul kursi (ayat 255). This ayat consists of 10 sentences, in which Allah has been mentioned 17 times, expressively or implicitly.

Prophets Ibraheem and Uzair have also been mentioned in this juzz in relation to the resurrection of the dead.

Ibraheem's dialogue with King Nimrod has been mentioned, as well as his wish to see the dead being brought back to life.

After seeing a barren and destroyed town, Uzair wondered how this could be brought back to life. Hence he was put to death for 100 years and then brought back to life.

This surah has mentioned the resurrection after death on 5 occasions:

1. The man from Bani Israeel who was resurrected after being touched by the slaughtered calf.
2. The people who asked to see Allah face to face.
3. The people who tried to flee from the plague.
4. Prophet Uzair's incident.
5. Prophet Ibraheem's incident.

The other main topics covered in this section of Surah al-Baqarah are given below:

1. Islam is the deen of humanity, spending in the way of Allah, brotherhood, generosity and ihsaan. There is no virtue that has not been encouraged in Islam. This surah encourages us to spend in the way of Allah on numerous occasions and in different ways. It has also taught us the manner in which to carry out such tasks:

Firstly, the spending in this way, only to please Allah, has been compared to a farmer, who sows a single seed and gains 700 grains as a result. On the other hand a person who spends to show off, is like a farmer that sows his seeds on a hill with a thin layer of soil; when a little rain falls, it washes away the soil and the seeds. In the same way any deed done to show off is destroyed and holds no weight.

It is better to say a nice word or to forgive, rather than following up a sadaqah with a reminder that hurts the recipient.

The believers are being instructed to spend the best things in the way of Allah from what He has bestowed on us, and not to give things which we would not ourselves accept.

It is permissible to announce the giving of sadaqah, however it is better to keep it a secret.

2. This surah also mentions one of the biggest issues of our times i.e. the prohibition of riba (interest/usury). The person that takes interest is like a person who has been 'touched' by shaithan and as a result loses his senses. This person loses his senses in this life, and in the hereafter, he would be resurrected in a similar state. Allah also announces a declaration of war from Allah and His messenger, to those who do not refrain from interest, after this warning. A matter worth noting here, is that sadaqah and riba have been mentioned together, as they are the opposite to each other. Sadaqah encourages love, care and mutual sharing in society.

Whereas, *riba* promotes selfishness, miserliness and disunity.

After this, there is the longest ayat of the Quran (ayat 282), which deals with lending and borrowing and the rules which should govern this process:

- a. All loans should be conducted in writing.
- b. The duration should be clearly written.
- c. In the case of a traveller, something can be kept as a guarantee, in order to take a loan.
- d. It is not necessary to write face to face business transactions.

As Surah al-Baqarah also mentions the commandments regarding salah, zakat, hajj, fasting, jihad, sadaqah, interest, divorce and the iddah (waiting period), the surah ends with the principle that Allah does not burden someone more than they can bear (last ayat). Alhumdulillah.

Surah Al-e-Imran

This surah was revealed in Madinah and consists of 200 ayaat. The prophet salAllahu alaihi wa sallam said : "Read the two bright surahs" i.e. al-Baqarah and Al-e-Imran.

Approximately 80 ayaat from this surah were revealed when a Christian delegation of 60 people from Najran came to visit the prophet and enquired about his views regarding Jesus. They said that Jesus is son of God, by misunderstanding the meaning of terms such as 'the word of Allah' or 'spirit of Allah', with reference to Jesus. In reply to this, Allah told us that the Quran has two types of ayaat:

- i. muhkamaath (very clear, without any ambiguity),
- ii. mutashaabihaath (which are not entirely clear to us).

The principle concerning these is then given: the believers believe in both ayaat as being from their Lord, while those people who intend not to follow the truth, invent their own views regarding such ayaat and hence misunderstand such ayaat.

The next section mentions the crimes committed by the people of the book, such as killing the prophets, murder, and terrorising Allah's devout followers.

The believers are being instructed not to abandon the Muslims and not to take the kuffar as friends and helpers, instead of the believers.

The surah also mentions 3 stories:

The birth of Maryam alaihaa as salaam. Her father Imran was a righteous man and her mother Hanaa was also a righteous lady. They did not have any children, so they asked Allah to grant them a son who they vowed to devote to the service of Bayt al Maqdas. However, Allah gave them a daughter instead. They still fulfilled their promise by devoting her services to the masjid and chose prophet Zakariyyah as her guardian in the masjid. When Zakariyyah, saw the blessings given to Maryam, he asked Allah for a son. Allah answered his prayer in the form of granting him and his wife a son by the name of Yahya who was given 4 qualities:

- a. Will testify to the truth of Jesus and will believe in him.
- b. Will lead in knowledge, zuhd, righteousness and worship.
- c. Will be very chaste, and will not go near women.
- d. He will be among the group of prophets and righteous.

The next story is regarding, the miraculous birth of Jesus, who was born to a virgin mother, without a father. This shows the power of Allah, and that He can do what He wills. The Jews did not believe in Jesus, despite all the miracles he performed by the Will of Allah. They plotted against him and plotted to kill him. But, Allah planned against this and he saved him by raising him up to the sky.

After mentioning the people of the book and their wrong doing, distrust, lies and baseless allegations, the surah mentions that Allah took a covenant from all the prophets that if the final prophet comes in their time, then they would believe in him, and if he comes after their time, then their followers would be obliged to believe in him. Unfortunately, however, these ummahs have not believed in the last prophet, and have, instead, committed themselves to disbelieve in him and oppose him and his true followers.

The juzz ends by making it very clear that Imaan and kufr are opposites which cannot be reconciled in any way. Hence, the people who apostate from the truth are condemned, because they prefer misguidance over guidance and die in a state of kufr.