

Surah al-An'aam (continued)

The juzz starts by commenting on the claim of the mushrikeen, that they will believe if they are shown a miracle. In reply, they are told that they are liars and that they will not believe enough if the dead came back to life and spoke to them. The Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam is being consoled, by telling him not to worry, as the majority of people reject to follow the truth when they are shown it. Furthermore, Allah guides us to the fact that:

“And if you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allah. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but falsifying.” (Ayat 116).

This shows us that the concept of ‘majority vote’ is not necessarily the best way to decide an issue, in fact it is most likely to misguide its adherers, if it is not in line with the revealed guidance and knowledge.

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

1. Ayat 122 gives a similitude of the believers, compared to the disbelievers:

“And is one who was dead and We gave him life and made for him light by which to walk among the people like one who is in darkness, never to emerge there from?”

2. Emaan and guidance is solely in the hands of Allah, He Guides whom He wills.

3. After mentioning the guided and misguided groups of people, Allah states that He will gather us all on the Day of Judgment and He will judge according to our deeds. (Ayat 128 – 129).

4. Allah mentions the absurd practice of the mushrikeen, in which they would apportion a share from their cattle and crops for Allah, and their partners (idols). However, they would not allow the share of their partners to be mixed with Allah’s share, but would not mind it, if Allah’s share was mixed with the share of their partners. (Ayat 136).

The second absurd practice was that of killing their daughters out of fear of poverty (Ayat 137). The Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam taught that the birth of a daughter is neither a matter of shame, nor a means of poverty. In fact, he guaranteed paradise for the proper upbringing of two or more daughters.

The third absurd practice was of dividing the cattle into different groups or types; one type was dedicated only for the soothsayers and religious leaders, another type were banned from being used in any way such as transport etc, and another type of cattle could only be slaughtered in the name of their idols. (Ayat 138).

Their fourth absurd practice was that they would consider the animals that were born alive, to be halal for men, but haraam for women. However, if the animal was born, dead, then it would be halal for both men and women. (Ayat 139).

After, highlighting these practices, Allah reminds us of His diverse and innumerable blessings such as gardens, olives and pomegranates. He also reminds us that He is the One Who created the cattle for our transportation and consumption in the form of meat and milk. There is also emphasis on the fact that only Allah has the right to legislate what is halal or haraam; He can make whatever He wills halal and whatever He wills haraam.

5. There is mention of the 10 commandments, which were common throughout the previous nations. These commandments are universal, as they provide their followers with protection and a dignified life in this world, and honour and respect in the hereafter. The 10 commandments mentioned here are :

1. Worship Allah alone, without associating partners with Him.
2. To be kind to your parents and not to harm them in any way.
3. Not to kill your children due to fear of poverty.
4. To abstain from all indecency, whether it be hidden or open.
5. Not to take the life of another person.
6. Not to take the orphan's wealth.
7. To give due measure.
8. To be fair and just when dealing with people.
9. To fulfill Allah's covenant.
10. To follow the straight path.

After this, Allah commands the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam to openly announce to the mushriken that Allah has guided me to the true deen just like Ibraheem alaihis salaam and the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam is commanded to say:

"Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds. No partner has He. And this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims." (Ayat 163).

The surah ends with a reminder that this duniya and whatever is in it, is a test, in order to distinguish between the momin and the kaafir, and the good-doer and the evil-doer.

Surah al-A'raaf

This is a Makkan surah which consists of 206 ayaat. Just like the other Makkan surahs this also emphasises the 3 basic beliefs, as mentioned earlier. The surah starts with mentioning the everlasting miracle given to the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam, i.e. the Quran.

The surah also reminds mankind of the favour that Allah created everyone from Adam, so that they may become a single brotherhood and support each other. Allah also mentions these favours on man:

- a. He created man with His own hands.
- b. Breathed into man His spirit.
- c. Commanded the angels to prostrate to man.

There is also mention of the shaithan and the way he plots against us, and there is advice on always trying to keep away from his plots and schemes. The surah also reminds us that he is our eternal enemy, and that there will remain a struggle between good and evil until the last day.

One unique aspect of this surah is the fact that Allah has addressed mankind as a whole on 4 occasions, by saying, O Children of Adam!

- a. "O children of Adam, We have bestowed upon you clothing to conceal your private parts and as adornment. But the clothing of righteousness - that is best. That is from the signs of Allah that perhaps they will remember." (Ayat 26)
- b. "O children of Adam, let not Satan tempt you as he removed your parents from Paradise, stripping them of their clothing to show them their private parts. Indeed, he sees you, he and his tribe, from where you do not see them. Indeed, We have made the devils allies to those who do not believe." (Ayat 27)
- c. "O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid, and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess." (Ayat 31)
- d. "O children of Adam, if there come to you messengers from among you relating to you My verses, then whoever fears Allah and reforms - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve." (Ayat 35).

A noteworthy point here, is that the first 3 occasions address the 'libaas' (dress) and its importance. Humans are fundamentally different to animals with respect to dress, as this bestows dignity and respect to humankind. Whereas shaithan endeavours to remove this dignity and honour from mankind, and thus comes with many fanciful ideas to persuade man to expose himself and indulge in indecency. These fanciful persuasions may come in many forms e.g. in the form of gender equality, female liberation and freedom etc. In all, these persuasions aim to misguide mankind from the real aim of worshipping Allah.

The other main topics in this juz are as follows:

1. The mushrikeen would perform tawaf (circumambulation) of the kaa'ba in a 'naked' state, and they would claim that this was not only the practice of their forefathers, but it was commanded by Allah. Allah denies their claim by saying: "Say, "My Lord has only forbidden immoralities - what is apparent of them and what is concealed." (Ayat 33).

Islam is the deen of fitrah, and hence it provides guidance on all the needs of humanity and guides to what is best. It neither deprives humans of their basic needs nor does it encourage extravagance.

On one occasion, when the companion Salman al Farsi radhi Allahu anhu discovered that another companion by the name of Abu Darda radhi Allahu anhu, fasts everyday, prays throughout the night and as a result is unable to fulfill the rights of his wife, he advised him by saying:

"Your Lord has a right upon you, your self has a right upon you, your family has a right upon you, hence fulfill everyone's right." When Abu Darda radhi Allahu anhu related this to the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam, the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam replied: "Salman has spoken the truth."

2. There is a comparison between two opposing groups of characters: On the one hand is the group who are arrogant, proud and stubborn, whose destination is jahannum. Whereas on the other hand there is a group who are humble and submissive, possessing emaan and obedience. They, by the favour of Allah, will enter jannah.

When these two groups reach their respective destinations, the Quran mentions a dialogue between the two. The dwellers of jannah will ask the dwellers of jahannam:

"Do you believe in the promise of your Lord? To which they will reply that they have found the promises to be true. Then the dialogue will continue as follows:

"And the companions of the Fire will call to the companions of Paradise, "Pour upon us some water or from whatever Allah has provided you." They will say, "Indeed, Allah has forbidden them both to the disbelievers."

" Who took their religion as distraction and amusement and whom the worldly life deluded." So today We will forget them just as they forgot the meeting of this Day of theirs and for having rejected Our verses." (Ayat 51-52).

May Allah make us from the righteous group (aameen).

A third group of people is also mentioned, known as 'ashaab al a'raaf' i.e. people who have been left behind by the dwellers of jannah in terms of their good deeds. They will neither enter jannah nor jahannum, and their affair will be postponed, but will eventually enter jannah by the Mercy of Allah. They will also engage in a dialogue with the dwellers of jahannum.

After this, there is mention of the power and oneness of Allah in a number of ways:

1. The creation of the seven heavens, their vastness and the fact that they are all standing without any pillars or support.
2. The throne of Allah is such that all the heavens and the earth cannot encompass its vastness. The throne is so vast, that it cannot be imagined. The simile given here is that the kursi of Allah in comparison to the throne is the same as the comparison of a ring in a desert. The throne and the kursi are things that we believe in as they are from the knowledge of the unseen i.e. 'ghaib'.
3. The third evidence of Allah's greatness is the creation of the sun, moon and stars, all of which are under the control of Allah. They are all fixed in their perfect orbits, which they do not transgress, and neither do these orbits collide or interfere with each other.

The above evidences are followed by the stories of 6 prophets and their people: Nooh, Hud, Saleh, Luth, Shuaib and Musa alaihim us salaam. The lessons and wisdom mentioned in these stories can be summarised as having the following purposes:

1. To console the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wasallam over the difficulties put forward by his enemies.
2. To warn that Allah may delay the punishment, but it is certain to take place and the wrongdoers will be fully recompensed.
3. A witness to the truth of the Prophethood of the Prophet sal Allahu alaihi wasallam, that despite being unlettered, he presented these lost historical accounts with such precision.
4. To provide people with lessons and opportunities to reflect and mend their ways.