

ALI 347: Sura Shu'ara, verses 10-33

Session One

Please have a copy of the Quran with English translation

Read and reflect on verses 10-13.

What understandings do you derive from these verses?

To reflect;

- 1) Identify the points mentioned
- 2) Ponder over specific words
- 3) Ask questions
- 4) Make connections

Agenda

- Introduction to Sura Shu'ara
- The mission entrusted to Nabi Musa (a)
- The response of Nabi Musa (a)

Sura Shu'ara

The sura talks about seven Prophets and their struggles to face the disbelievers and rejecters of faith; Prophets Musa, Ibrahim, Nuh, Hud, Salih, Lut, and Shauyb (a).

The Surah has the following verses repeated 8 times; once for the Holy Prophet and then seven times at the conclusion of each of the seven stories mentioned in the Sura.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ
وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

Most surely there is a sign in this but most of them do not believe. And most surely your Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful.

A Reassurance

The stories and the concluding verse is for the Prophet (s) and the early Muslims who were very small in number.

It is to :

- Reassure them that past peoples have also faced much opposition and were apparently weak but the end was what God wanted. This was a comfort for their hearts.
- Make them realize that history reveals the true nature of human beings. It is a pattern that is always repeated. What they are facing was not unique or unnatural.
- Help them not be too disappointed in the people and give up on them.

Other places in the Quran

The story of God giving the responsibility of Prophethood to Nabi Musa is also mentioned in other Suras in the Quran.

Sura Taha (#20) has a detailed description of the conversation between Allah and Nabi Musa.
Verses 11-48.

Sura Naml, no. 27, verses 7-12

Sura Qasas, no.28, verses 29-35

Meaning of ظلم

ظلم or injustice can have different meanings;

- 1) Associating others with Allah. Shirk is a form of injustice . The Quran says; And when Luqman said to his son while he admonished him: O my son! do not associate anyone with Allah; most surely polytheism is a grievous injustice (31:13)
- 2) Injustice against the self. And whoever does evil or acts unjustly to his soul, then asks forgiveness of Allah, he shall find Allah Forgiving, Merciful (4:110)
- 3) Injustice against others.
Firaun and his people were guilty of all three forms of injustice .

Response of Nabi Musa

- *I fear they will reject me*

Fear was of rejection of the mission, not of himself.

- *My chest is straitened and my tongue is not eloquent.*

These could be two more reasons he was worried about going to Firaun or it could be the consequences of the first reason. Tafsir Namune says these are three separate reasons. Tafsir al Mizan says the two are offshoots of the first reason. Because he is afraid of their rejection his chest feels tight and his tongue does not speak smoothly.

خشية and خوف

Khawf is defined as an inner sense of discomfort, an apprehensiveness, an anticipation of evil or harm. It starts with a thought and lead to an emotion then a physical reaction. It is a process that allows the human being to face the threat and plan to face the challenge. Fear of human beings is acknowledged in the Quran; *And if you fear treachery on the part of a people, break off the treaty with them in a like manner (8:58)*

Khashyat is similar but without the ability to repel the harm due to the overpowering danger. This is only recommended for Allah, as in a fear of His power, His might, His displeasure. *And they are apprehensive for fear [awe] of Him. (21:28)* ALI 347:Quranic Insights Sura 26

Why was Nabi Musa afraid?

- 1) It was a reasonable and logical response considering the power that Firaun had.
- 2) Responsibility cannot be taken lightly. The more God conscious you are the more heavily responsibility weighs down on you.
- 3) Working for God with people requires *sharhus sadr* - a big heart and broad mindedness. It needs patience, forbearance, tolerance.
- 4) Nabi Musa is honest and clear about his needs. No-one is unlimited in their abilities not even a Prophet. It is only God who can claim that.

Some Points

- Knowing history helps to deal with present life.
- Give responsibility even when the person is limited in capacity if they have potential, sincerity, determination . . etc.
- Many weaknesses can be compensated for. A weakness is neither an excuse to not take on responsibility nor to not give responsibility. Thought must be put into what can be done so the weakness does not obstruct the fulfillment of the responsibility.

■ Struggle against wrong, evil, oppression, is at the heart of human life. It was the chief mission of the Prophets and is the challenge in every believer's life.

■ Allah commands Nabi Musa to address the people of Firaun. No-one can oppress completely alone. It is people who support oppression and allow the oppressor to oppress.

■ Turn to Allah for help in fulfilling His responsibilities. He is aware of our weaknesses and what can help compensate for them.