Summary of Juz 16

Surat al-Kahf continued

The story of Musa and Khidr continues. Musa humbly requests to accompany Khidr, who reluctantly allows him but with the caution - don't question me. Three incidents occur. Khidr deliberately damages a fishing boat, kills a young boy and rebuilds the wall of a rundown house. Musa is annoyed with these actions and questions each one. But only at the end does Khidr gives an explanation: "The boat belonged to poor fishermen, I damaged it because the king was coming to forcefully seize all sea-worthy boats. The boy's parents were believers, but we feared he would distress them by being disobedient. The house belonged to orphans in the town and there was treasure buried beneath the wall. Since their father was a righteous man your Lord wanted them to reach maturity, so they could dig up their treasure. this was your Lord's kindness. What I did, it wasn't done by my will; you couldn't be patient about them" (79-82).

The fifth story is about the travels of Zulqarnayn, a king and a just ruler. Wherever he went he did something good. His effort to build a wall between a tribe that was harassed by the Gog Magog is the most interesting one.

Surat Maryam - The mother of Prophet Isa

Juz 16 continues with this early Makkan surat that was revealed before the first wave of migration to Ethiopia, in the fifth year of the Prophet's ﷺ mission. It opens with the prayer of Zakariyya who wished for a successor. He was old, childless and worried about his heirs. The prayer is a reflection of his deep faith: "My prayer has never gone unanswered by My Lord" (4). Allah blessed him with Yahya "The soft-hearted, pure and pious" (13).

The story of the miraculous conception and the birth of Isa emphasizes the Power and Majesty of Allah, the one beyond the law of cause and effect. The first words Isa said are, "I am a servant of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet and made me blessed wherever I go" (31).

The Quran rejects the belief in the Trinity. It is completely unacceptable to Allah: "What a monstrous thing you have said! Even the skies would crack, the Earth would rip apart and the mountains crumble" (89–91). The Divine anger is a powerful condemnation of idolatry.

A highly charged conversation then follows between a nephew and an uncle: Ibrahim very gently tries to dissuade and win over Azar, his uncle from idolatry. The courtesy and logic he employs are persuasive enough to move even a heart of stone. However, idolatry makes one deaf, locks the mind and seals the heart. Ibrahim sets a wonderful example for preachers and obedient sons on how to differ politely.

There are four stories: Zakariyya and Yahya; Maryam and Isa; Ibrahim and Azar; Musa and Harun. They reflect a father and son, a mother and son, Uncle and nephew and two brotherly relationships. The relationships between prophets and their communities also reveal the great importance of human relationships. Faith bolsters these relationships.

A glowing tribute is paid to Prophets Musa, Ismail, Idris, Yaqub and Nuh: "Allah favoured these wonderful men; the prophets from the children of Adam, and they came from those We carried with Nuh, and they were from the children of Ibrahim and Yaqub. We guided and selected them. When the verses of the Kind Lord were recited to them, they fell in prostration tearfully" (51-58).

The Quran condemns those generations who were the children of prophets yet, "After them came generations who neglected the prayer and followed their lusts. Soon they will face the consequences of their evil" (59). Salah is a powerful expression of a person's relationship with Allah, the Lord. Neglecting it demonstrates a lack of commitment to the relationship. This is followed by four short passages about the disbelievers' denial of the resurrection, their plight in the hereafter, they regret doubting their prophets (64-87).

The Surah ends with good news for the believers: "The Kind Lord will put love for those who believe and do righteous deeds in people's hearts" (96). This could mean, The Kind Lord loves them dearly. The Surah continues "We made the Quran easy in your language so you can give good news to the pious and warn the opponents with it. How many generations have We destroyed before them? Do you find anyone of them alive or hear as much as their whisper? (97-8)

Juz 16 continues with Surat Taha. An early Makkan surah which clarifies how 'Allah guides humanity through His messengers.' It begins by featuring the story of Musa when he is returning from Madyan to Egypt. He is appointed as a messenger and given miracles. The surah flips back to the time of his birth, recalling how as a baby he was rescued from Pharaoh's murderous plan. "I wrapped you up in My Divine Love so that you may grow up under My watchful gaze" (39). Musa heads straight for Pharaoh's court. A heated conversation follows, and the Pharaoh is angry, but Musa boldly invites him to Allah. Despite witnessing the two miracles the Pharaoh refuses to listen. He mistakenly believes Musa is a magician so challenges him to fight his magicians. A vivid description of the duel offers insights into the working of magic, and why magic failed. These expert magicians realised that Musa was not a magician, so they accepted his victory and his prophethood. The Pharaoh was enraged and had them martyred.

Even after this humiliating defeat and witnessing nine miracles, Pharaoh still refuses to accept Musa عليه السلام. Finally, Musa عليه السلام leads the Israelites out of Egypt. The Pharaoh chased them but was drowned. Once in the Sinai Peninsula, the Israelites enjoyed the freedom and were blessed with the heavenly gifts of quail and Manna. When Musa left them for a short while to visit Mount Sinai the Israelites under the influence of Samiri the Goldsmith, forged a golden calf to worship. On his return, Musa was angry with Harun for not stopping them. Musa cursed Samiri for his blasphemy.

As a commentary on the story of Musa, the Makkans are taught a lesson: the Quran is a reminder and warns of the dire consequences of rejecting the Prophet ﷺ. The surah had opened by telling the beloved Prophet Mustafa ﷺ not to be stressed by the sarcastic and scornful attitude of Makkans, and at the end, he's told be patient, and seek help through prayer.