Summary of Juz 9

Surat al-Araf continued

Prophet Shu'ayb who lived in Madyan, east of Sinai faced rejection and persecution: the arrogant leaders of his community said, "We will expel you from our town, Shu'ayb, you and all those who believe in you, unless you return to our way of worship." Eventually, "they were seized by an earthquake so violent that they ended up lying face down in their homes" (91).

The Quran laments "had they become believers they would have been blessed" (97). The more one ignores the guidance the harder it becomes to believe, they become stubborn and arrogant.

From here the amazing story of Musa is told as he faces the rage of Pharaoh. "We sent Musa with our miracles to Pharaoh and his leaders, but they rejected them" (103). Musa asked, "let the Israelites go with me". Pharaoh refuses to listen, despite seeing the miracle of Musa's staff turning to a snake and his palm shining brighter than the sun. Instead, he challenges him to have a contest with his magicians. When the contest takes place and the magicians are confronted with the truth, they give in to Musa's miracle and became Muslims. Pharaoh ordered that they are killed. They prayed "Our Lord, give us patience, and let us die in total submission to You" (126).

Pharaoh then threatens to punish the Israelites if they attempt to escape. Musa encourages them to be hopeful and patient. Eventually, Musa leads them out of Egypt. It is not too long before the Israelites forget the favour and make an outrageous demand "Musa, let us have a god-like their gods." Of course, he is disgusted with their attitude.

Musa goes to Mount Sinai to speak with Allah. "We kept Musa on mount Sinai … for forty nights". Meanwhile, they made a calf as a god. When Musa returned from Sinai he was appalled by their behaviour. The Quran explains their problem as arrogance that blinds people to the blessings of Allah's guidance, "because they denied Our signs and paid no attention to them" (146).

"Then Musa chose seventy men from his people to meet Allah" (155). These elders demanded to see Allah literally, so they were struck with lightening for their rudeness that killed them. Musa prays for forgiveness; "Decree for us in this world what is good and in the Hereafter; we return in humility to serve you" (156). So, they were resurrected.

After witnessing this disobedience, you wonder what does a man of faith look like? All we have seen is rebellion and rejection of the truth. Well, read this description of the people of Allah, the blessed ones: "those who believe him, honour him, support him, and obey the light that was sent with him, they shall be successful." The beloved Mohammed is told to declare his universal message: "Say, People, I am the Messenger to you all from Allah,

the sovereignty of the heavens and the Earth belongs to Him; He is the only God, He gives life and death. So, believe in Allah and His Messenger."

After this digression, we again pick up the story of Musa where it was left, in Sinai. They needed water so each of the twelve tribes was given a fountain to drink from. Later, some of them settled on the shores of the Red sea and were commanded not to work on the Sabbath. Saturday was reserved for worship and rest. But they broke the Sabbath law; "When they disrespectfully continued doing what they were forbidden, We said, 'Become like apes, despised!'" (166)

Further punishment was that they would be scattered around the world: "Let there arise against the wrongdoers, people who will inflict the terrible torment on them from now until Judgement Day." A fact of Jewish history. A warning to Muslims too, if you disobey Allah, you will face the same.

The nature of humanity is Divine, made by Allah with the potential of recognising and believing the Creator. "Remember when Your Lord brought out the children of Adam from their sides and made them witnesses of each other. He said, 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Yes, we bear witness.' This is so you will not be able to say on Judgement Day that we were unaware of this contract" (172). This was the first assembly of human souls; the pledge of loyalty.

Temptations are a problem that we find difficult to fight. The story of Ballam ibn Baur demonstrates this. He was a scholarly follower of Musa, who became arrogant and contested Musa; "If We wanted We could have raised his status because of it, but he inclined to lower things and followed his whims" (171).

The Quran gives an unusual example of the deniers, it likens them to a panting dog. "Anyone Allah guides is truly guided but anyone He allows to go astray; such people are the losers" (178). In order to avoid a wretched fate, we are cautioned to reflect and recite the beautiful names of Allah.

The reality of idolatry, of associating anything with the mighty Lord is highlighted as an injustice.

"Do they have legs to walk? Do they have hands to hold? Do they have eyes to see? Do they have ears to hear?" Satan is the main mastermind of idolatry, but the pious avoid being trapped by Satan: by seeking Allah's refuge. He is Hearing, Knowing." They are good listeners, who pay attention to the Quran.