

The excellences of soorah Bani Israa'eel

﴿ كَأَنَ النَّبِئُ سُلُّ اللَّهُ مُ اللَّهُ عَلَى فِر اشِهِ حَتَّى يَقُرَأُ بَنِي إِسْرَ اثِيلَ وَالزُّمْرَ ﴾ Aa'ishah (R.A.) Says:

"The messenger (pbuh) of Allah did not sleep in his bed until he recited soorah Bani Israa'eel and soorah Az-Zumar.

(Sunan Tirmizi, Hadeeth: 2,920 Good, Strange)

The relationship of soorah Bani Israa'eel with the Book

- 1- In the previous soorah (An-Nahl), there was the prophecy for migration to Madinah and its excellence. (Verses: 41, 110)
 Here, in soorah Bani Israa'eel, the prayer for migration has been taught properly. (Verses: 80, 81)
- 2- In soorah Bani Israa'eel, the good news of the establishment of Islamic government after migration to Madinah has been prophesied and its basic principles have been explained. Like the ten commandments of Torah, the last Ummah has been given commandments so that the foundation for an Islamic society and Islamic state could be laid.
- 3- In the next soorah (Al-Kahf), it has been told that one of the purposes of the revelation of Quran is to warn the Israelites for ascribing off-springs to Allah.

 (Verse: 4) Here, In soorah Bani Israa'eel the brief account of the rise and fall of the Israelites has been given.

Important key words and subjects

1- The special features of holy Quran and its excellences:

The attitude of the polytheists about the holy Quran has been described in soorah Bani Israa'eel along with describing its special features and excellences.

- (a) The holy Quran guides towards the straightway. ﴿ إِنَّ هَٰذَا الْقُوْانَ يَهْدِينَ لِلَّتِي هِيَ ٱقْوَمُ ﴾ "Surely, this Quran guides to the way which is perfectly straight." (Verse: 9)
- (b) In order to admonish and advise the people, things have been explained in different ways in the holy Quran. In spite of this, the hatred of the unbelievers is increasing. ﴿ وَلَقَلُ صَرِّفَتَا فِي مُلَا الْقُرُانِ لِيَنَّ كُرُوْا وَمَا يَزِيْدُهُمْ إِلَّا نُفُورًا ﴾ "We have indeed explained things in various ways in this Quran so that they may receive admonition, yet, it has only added to their aversion." (Verse: 41)

(c) In the holy Quran, the philosophical facts have been described in different styles in order to complete the argument against mankind. "Tasreef" (alteration) means to describe the same thing in different styles and methods. In spite of this, most of the people persist in unbelief.

﴿ وَلَقَدُ مَرَّ فَمَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هٰذَا الْقُرُ انِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَقَلٍ. فَأَنِّي آكُثُرُ النَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا ﴾

"In this Quran, We have used different methods to make the people understand the message, yet, the majority of them persist in unbelief." (Verse: 89)

(d) The holy Quran is a double-edged sword. It is a cure and mercy for the believers but it causes increase in the loss of the unbelievers.

﴿وَثُنَرِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُعُومِيثُنَ، وَلايَزِيْدُ الظُّلِيدُ فَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴾

"We have revealed the Quran which is a healing and a mercy to the believers while to the wrongdoers it adds nothing but loss." (Verse: 82)

(e) The holy Quran is the guidance only for those who believe in the hereafter, while it becomes a veil for those who do not believe in the hereafter.

﴿وَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرُانَ جَعَلُمَا بَيْنَكُ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُومِنُونَ بِالْأَحِرَةِ عِمَا بَّامَّسْتُورًا ﴾

"When you recite the holy Quran, We put a hidden barrier between you and those who do not believe in the hereafter." (Verse: 45)

- (f) The angels attend the Fajr prayer to witness the recitation of Quran during the prayer. ﴿ اَمُّ الصَّلُوةُ قُلُ اللَّهُ ا
 - "Establish Salah from the decline of the sun till the darkness of the night (Zuhr, Asr, Maghrib and Ishaa) and read the Quran at Fajr (dawn); for the recitation of Quran at Fajr is witnessed (by the angels)." (Verse: 78)
- (g) The holy Quran was revealed from the "Protected Tablet" to the most pure heart of the messenger (pbuh) of Allah in segments during the period of twenty three (23) years with utmost vigilance so that he may recite it to the companions with deliberation.
 - "We have divided the Quran into sections so that you may recite to the people with deliberation, and We have sent it down in gradual revelations (to suit particular occasions).
- (h) When only One God is mentioned in the holy Quran, the polytheists turn away in hatred.

"When in the Quran you mention His Oneness, they turn their backs in disgust."

(Verse: 46)

- - "We have made the Vision (Al-Israa') which We showed you (as an eye witness and not as a dream), and the cursed tree of "Zaqqoom" (Cactus) which is mentioned in the Quran, a test for mankind. We are giving them warning to be fearful but it only increases their inordinate transgression." (Verse: 60)
- (j) The holy Quran has challenged that if the whole mankind and the Jinns get together and help each other to write a book like the holy Quran, they will never be able to write it because the word of the created cannot be like the Word of the Creator.
 - ﴿ قُلُ لَٰ أَنِ اجْتَهَ عَبِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْحِنُ عَلَى اَنْ يَأْتُوْ الْمِعْلِ هِلَا الْقُرُانَ لَا يَأْتُوْنَ مِعْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضِ طَهِيْرًا ﴾ "Declare, even if all human beings and Jinns combined their resources to produce the like of this Quran, they would never be able to compose the like thereof, even if they backed up each other (as best as they could)." (Verse: 88)
- 2- A special word "Istifzaaz" has been used three times in soorah Bani Israa'eel.

The word "Istifzaaz" has been used only in this soorah. It means to evict and uproot.

(a) Allah challenged Iblees that he may try to evict people from the obedience of Allah as best as he can. He may attack them with his infantry and cavalry. He may be their partner in their wealth and children and try to allure them with false promises; but he will not be able to overpower the pious servants of Allah with his tricks.

وَشَارِ كُهُمْ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ ، وَعِدهُمْ ، وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْظِنُ إِلَّا عُرُورًا ﴾

"You may try to allure whomsoever you can with your seductive voice, muster against them all your cavalry and infantry, be their partner in their riches and children, and promise them what you will - the promises of the devil are nothing but deception." (Verse: 64)

(b) Pharaoh was an oppressive dictator who wanted to uproot the Israelites from the land of Egypt but Allah drowned him along with his army commanders.

"So he (Pharaoh) resolved to remove وْفَارَادَانْ يُسْتَفِزّ هُمْ مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ فَأَغُرُقُنْهُ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ جَمِيّعًا ﴾ "So he (Pharaoh) resolved to remove them (Moses and the Israelites) from the face of the earth, but We drowned him and all who were with him." (Verse: 103)

(c) Like pharaoh, the Quraish of Makkah also wanted to uproot the messenger (pbuh) of Allah from the land of Makkah. They were warned that they will not be able to stay for long after him.

"They almost scare you off the land, to expel you from it. If they do so, they will not be able to stay here much longer after you." (Verse: 76)

3- The charge sheet against the Israelites and the invitation of Islam to them:

(a) Allah gave Torah to prophet Moosaa for the guidance of Bani Israa'eel that they should not commit Shirk by making anyone their protector except Allah.

"We gave Moosaa the Book and made it a guide for the children of Israel, saying: 'Do not take any other protector besides Me'." (Verse: 2)

(b) The Israelites were told that they will create mischief twice in the land and will show arrogance and exaltation.

"And We forewarned the children of Israel in their holy Book that you will do mischief in the land twice through becoming arrogant transgressors (and each time you will be punished)." (Verse: 4)

(c) The Israelites know very well that Pharaoh declared prophet Moosaa to be bewitched, although he had brought nine miracles.

"To Moosaa we gave nine clear signs. Ask the children of Israel, when he came to them and Pharaoh told him: O Moosaa! I think that you are bewitched."

(Verse: 101) Later on, the same objection was raised against the messenger (pbuh) of Allah that he is a bewitched person. (Verse: 47)

(d) The Israelites were told that when the moment of the promised Day will come, Allah will bring all of them together.

"And We said to the children of Israel: 'Settle down in the land and when the time for the promised Last Day will come, We shall assemble you all together'." (Verse: 104)

- 4- The amazement of the unbelievers over the possibility of life after death and their punishment have been described.
- (a) Those who did not believe in the life after death, wondered that when their bones will become rotten and powdered, will they be raised to life again?

 ﴿وَقَالُوۤا: اَلِذَا كُتَاعِظَامًا وَرَفَاكًا وَالْكَابُ وَثُونَ صَلَقًا جَدِينَا؟ ﴾ They say: "What! When we are reduced to bones and dust, shall we really be raised up again into a new creation?" (Verse: 49)
- (b) Those who deny the life hereafter will be thrown into the Hell with their faces downwards. ﴿ وَتَحْدُمُ مُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيْمَةِ عَلَى وَجُوهِهِمْ عُمْيًا وَبُكُمًا وَعُمَّا مَا وَنِهُمْ جَهَنَّهُ كُلَّا عَبْتُ إِذْ لِهُمْ سَعِيرًا ﴾ "On the Day of Judgement We shall gather them all, prone on their faces, blind, dumb and deaf. Hell shall be their abode." (Verse: 97)
- 5- Use of the word "Wakeel" in soorah Bani Israa'eel to explain the Tawheed of Authority:

Allah's attributive name "Wakeel" has been used repeatedly in this soorah. This word is used for patron, guardian, the one who helps and the one who can be completely trusted. Only Allah Almighty has the complete authority. None of the creation possesses such authority. Hence, only Allah can be trusted. Mercy and Punishment are in His Hand. Only He can save from the sudden disasters. This is the topic of Tawheed of Authority.

- (a) Allah told Iblees clearly that he will have no authority over Allah's sincere slaves and His Authority controls everyone. He Alone deserves to be made the Guardian. His patronage is sufficient for the mankind. ﴿ "Your Lord is sufficient as their guardian." (Verse: 65)
- (b) The children of Israel were advised in Torah that they should not make anyone their patron and guardian except Allah. This was the demand of Tawheed of Authority. ﴿اللَّهُ تَعْضُلُوا مِن دُولِي وَكِيلًا ﴾ "Do not take any other protector besides Me."

 (Verse:2)
- (c) Allah has threatened them that if He makes them face a sudden punishment they will not find any protector. ﴿ وَنُمْ لَا تَجِهُ وَالنَّكُم وَ رَبِيلًا ﴾ "Then you will not find any one to protect you." (Verse: 68)
- (d) The prophet (pbuh) was told that he is not a guardian over the Makkan pagans. He has not got the authority to give punishment or reward. Only Allah has got the authority for mercy or punishment. ﴿ وَمَا اَرْسَلْنُكُ عَلَيْهِمُ وَكِيلًا ﴾ "We have not sent you to be their guardian. (Verse: 54)

(e) The prophet (pbuh) was told that Allah could deprive him of the revelation if He Willed. Then he will not find any protector against Allah who could give the revelation back to him. ﴿ الْمُونَّدُ الْمُعِنِّدُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا وَ كِيلًا ﴾ "Then you will find none to help you in getting it back from Us." (Verse: 86)

Macro-structure of soorah Bani Israa'eel

Soorah Bani Israa'eel consists of ten (10) paragraphs.

- 1- Verses: 1 to 10: In the first paragraph, the Israelites have been told the history of their rise and fall and they have been invited to Islam along with the Makkan pagans.
 - The good news of the conquest of Makkah and Jerusalem has been prophesied. The messenger (pbuh) of Allah was favoured with many observations during his night journey towards heavens. The Quraishi leadership was told that they should learn a lesson from the rise and fall of the Israelites. The Israelites were advised to follow the pure Tawheed and make only Allah their Guide and Protector, but they were ungrateful. They spread mischief in the land twice.

- 2- Verses 11 to 22: In the second paragraph, the principles of Man's success and ruin are described.

Describing the principles of Man's success and failure, it is said that every ones good and bad luck is hung in his neck. He has got the freedom of choice between good and bad. If he accepts guidance, it will be for his own good, and

if he is misled, he himself will suffer. ﴿ مَنِ اهْتَانَى فَالَّمَا يَهْتُرِي لِنَفْسِهُ وَمِّنَ هُلِّ فَالْمَا يَضِلُ عَلَيهَا ﴾
"He that seeks guidance, that guidance shall be for his own soul, but he that goes astray does so to his own loss." (Verse: 15)

Two principles for the annihilation of nations have been described. The first principle is that the nations are not ruined without raising a prophet in them and without completing the argument. The second principle is that before the annihilation, the prosperous leadership of the nation is ordered to become virtuous but when they disobey, they are ruined. Those who are involved in the love of this world will go to Hell and those who believe and do good deeds will go to Paradise. The life hereafter is much bigger and superior as far as the status is concerned. Hence, Man should believe in Tawheed and the life hereafter and try to do good deeds as much as possible.

3- Verses: 23 to 39: In the third paragraph, the basic principles of Islamic society and the Islamic state have been described.

Like the ten commandments of Torah, the basic teachings of Islam have been explained in this part.

The foundation of the Islamic society and the Islamic state is the belief in Tawheed. So, the beginning and the end of this paragraph is the invitation of Tawheed. Tawheed is Allah's right. The rights of parents are more important after the rights of Allah. It is essential to treat them nicely. After the parents, it is also necessary to treat the other relatives nicely. The command to avoid extravagance has been given; otherwise, it will not be possible to fulfil the rights of the relatives. Killing the children and committing fornication is forbidden. Islam has persuaded for marriage, which helps establish a righteous society. Killing without a right is forbidden. Patronage of the heirs of the person who has been killed unjustly and protection of the property of orphans is the moral and legal obligation. Fulfilling the covenant is obligatory. The ear, the eye, the heart and mind will be questioned on the Day of Judgement. The commandment to give full measure and weight has been given. The door of superstitions, suspicions, conjectures and unfounded allegations has been closed by forbidding to follow anything without knowledge. Walking arrogantly on earth and being intoxicated with power is forbidden. Then at the end, the topic of Tawheed has been repeated, the Shirk has been condemned and it has been told that its punishment is Hell.

4- Verses: 40 to 60: In the fourth paragraph, the beliefs of polytheists have been refuted and their objections have been answered.

The creed of Shirk has been refuted that the people of the Book ascribe sons to Allah and the Makkan pagans thought that the angels were Allah's daughters. Their hatred is increased when they hear about the invitation of Tawheed. (Verse: 41) They have been given the rational argument that if there were other gods with Allah they would have tried to overpower the Owner of the Throne. The unblemished Being of Allah is free from all the weaknesses they ascribe to Him. Everything of the universe confesses that He is unblemished and glorified. But the invitation of Tawheed has become a veil for the Makkan pagans who do not believe in the life hereafter. They say that the prophet (pbuh) is bewitched as was said to Moosaa (pbuh). (Verse: 47)

- (b) The Makkan pagans used to express their astonishment over the possibility of life hereafter and used to say: How the decayed bones could be brought back to life again? (Verse: 49) They were given the rational answer that whether you become stone or iron or anything else like ashes, dust and smoke, the same Allah who created you for the first time, will create you for the second time as well. They asked: "When"? They were told that the Day of Resurrection is near. The Makkan pagans were told that Allah can have mercy on them and He can punish them as well. Allah is the Guardian. The messenger (pbuh) of Allah has not been made a guardian over them. They have been advised to learn a lesson from the history and especially from the annihilated nations. It was explained about the angels and others whom they took as gods that they cannot repel any disaster. They themselves need mediation, nearness and mercy of Allah. The objections of Makkan pagans against the Night Journey and "Zaqqoom" (Cactus) were answered that these were the source of trial for them.
- 5- Verses: 61 to 70: In the fifth paragraph, the traps of Iblees and the honour and superiority of mankind are mentioned.
- (a) Iblees (who is a Jinn and who has been granted the freedom of choice between good and bad), showed arrogance and denied to bow down to Adam because he was created from clay. He became jealous of Man's honour and superiority and vowed that he will uproot the children of Adam. In response to his challenge, Allah declared that He will throw all his followers into Hell. He told Iblees that: (1) He may try to uproot them by his disturbance, (2) he may attack them with his infantry and cavalry, (3) he may become partner in their wealth and children, (4) and he may try to deceive them by the traps of

desires; he will not have any power over Allah's sincere slaves.

"As for My slaves, you shall have no authority over them." (Verse: 65) Allah is sufficient to be their Protector and Guardian.

- (b) The ingratitude of Man has been mentioned that in spite of witnessing the blessings and authority of Allah, he does not accept Him as his Guardian and Protector; although Allah Almighty can sinle him in the earth, kill him with the stormy winds or drown him.
- (c) The honour and superiority of children of Adam: The honour and superiority of mankind has been mentioned that Allah has provided them with the means of conveyance in the land and sea, gave them pure sustenance and gave them superiority over most of His creation.
- 6- Verses: 71 to 77: In the sixth paragraph, the good news of the failure of the plans of uprooting the messenger (pbuh) of Allah from earth has been given.
- (a) The tricks of the Quraishi leadership have been mentioned in this part that they wanted to uproot the prophet from Makkah. They have been warned that on the Day of Judgement, they will be checked. Every nation will be called along with their leader. They will be asked to read the book of their deeds. No injustice will be done against anyone.
- (b) The plans of the Quraishi leadership have been exposed that they want to turn the prophet (pbuh) away from the revelation of Allah and make him their friend. The prophet (pbuh) has been consoled that if Allah had not given him steadfastness he would have leaned towards the polytheists and would have deserved double punishment. In the end of paragraph, Allah's tradition has been mentioned that the nation that expels their prophet cannot survive for long.
- 7- Verses: 78 to 82: The seventh paragraph contains the instructions for prayer, recitation of holy Quran, Tahajjud (night prayer) and relationship with Allah.
- (a) This part contains the instructions for regularity in the prayers. The Fajr prayer which is witnessed by the angels has been stressed because the angels are present in it. Longer recitation of holy Quran has been ordered during the Tahajjud prayer because it guarantees the status of praise.
- (b) The prophet was taught the prayer for migration from Makkah to Madinah and he was also taught the prayer to get the support of Allah consisting of His special help for establishment of a righteous Islamic society in Madinah. The falsehood is about to be obliterated and the Truth is going to spread in the

world. It contains the good news of the establishment of Islamic government in Madinah, the conquest of Makkah and expansion of Islam throughout the world. All these successes can be achieved as a result of prayers, following the Quran and relationship with Allah.

- (c) The holy Quran is a double-edged sword. It is a cure and mercy for the believers while it increases the loss of the wrong-doers.
- 8- Verses: 83 to 100: The eighth paragraph contains the answer for the objections of the polytheists and the challenge to bring a book like the holy Quran.
- (a) The human psychology has been described that Man exults when he is blessed and despairs during the trials. The prophet (pbuh) has been consoled that the holy Quran is a great Mercy and Blessing of Allah. The challenge was given that the whole mankind and the Jinns cannot write a Quran like it even if they all get together and help each other. (Verse: 88)
 - The polytheists were told that the demand for a visible miracle in the presence of holy Quran was absolutely foolish.
- (b) The objections and demands of the polytheists have been reported. It is said that they will not accept Muhammad (pbuh) as the messenger of Allah until (1) he rends asunder the earth and brings forth a spring of water from it, (2) has a garden of grapes and date-palms in which streams flow, (3) or makes a piece of sky fall and shows it to us, (4) or brings Allah to show us, (5) or makes the angels stand before us, (6) or has a house of gold, (7) or climbs up the sky, or brings down a book from above which they could read. In answer to these foolish demands they were told that it was not within the power of any messenger to do such things. This authority belongs to Allah Alone. The messenger (pbuh) of Allah is only a man and a messenger.
- (c) They objected that why an angel was not sent as a messenger? They were answered that if the angels lived on earth, an angel would have been sent as a messenger. A man has been sent as a messenger to human beings.
 They objected that how the life after death is possible? They were answered that the Creator of the heavens and earth Who has created human beings for the first time has complete power to create them again.
- 9- Verses: 101 to 104: In the ninth paragraph, the Quraishi leadership were told that their attitude was like that of the pharaoh.
- (a) In this paragraph, the leaders of Quraish were threatened that they can also be punished like Pharaoh. Their attitude towards the messenger (pbuh) of Allah

is like that of Pharaoh with prophet Moosaa (pbuh). Prophet Moosaa was also called to be bewitched. (Verse: 101)

- (b) Pharaoh also tried to uproot prophet Moosaa from the earth, but Allah drowned him and those who accompanied him. (Verse: 103)
- 10- Verses: 105 to 111: In the last paragraph, the advice to believe in the holy Quran and follow the unadulterated Tawheed has been given.
- (a) The messenger of Allah has been sent as the giver of good news and a Warner. The holy Quran was revealed to him gradually in segments so that he may recite it to the people with deliberation.
- (b) The attitude of the learned people about the holy Quran: The envy of polytheists was incited that the learned people cry when they hear the revelations of Allah and they fall on their faces prostrating to Allah. Their humility and fear of Allah increases and they confess that Allah is unblemished.
- (c) It has been advised that the Quran should be recited in a low voice during the prayer.
- (d) In the last verse, the advice to thank Allah and express His Greatness and Grandeur has been given. He has no children and no one is His associate in His Kingdom. He is neither helpless nor weak that He may need any helper or supporter.

Central subject

The good news of establishment of an Islamic state in Madinah, the conquest of Makkah and the conquest of Baitul-Maqdas is prophesied as a result of following the Tawheed, having trust in Allah, being steadfast and migrating to Madinah. Like Pharaoh, the Quraishi leadership also wants to uproot the messenger of Allah from Makkah, but Allah will uproot them.

