

As mentioned earlier, the third ruku gives us the summary of the call towards the *Qur'an*. In this ayah Allah (SWT) says, يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ (O' Mankind), meaning that this message is not only for a particular race or region but for the whole Mankind. Unlike other Messengers who came prior to the advent of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) were sent to their respective people and nations but Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was not sent to a particular tribe, race or set of people, but rather to all Mankind.

(21) “O mankind! Worship your Lord, Who hath created you and those before you, so that you may acquire righteousness.” The word used here is *Ibadah* (Worship), which means total obedience to Allah (SWT) by carrying out what He has commanded with all sincerity, submissiveness and love. If a person is obedient but not sincere or he is sincere but not obedient then this will not be accepted of him as *Ibadah*. A person should worship Allah (SWT) with all humility and submissiveness, as this is the only purpose of the creation of man as Allah (SWT) says,

‘I have not created Jinns and mankind except to worship Me’¹

This is the sole purpose of the creation of the *Jinns* and the humans. Allah (SWT) commands His servants to worship Him alone who is their Creator and Sustainer, and He also created those who came before them. A person tends to follow his forefathers religion and prefers it instead of truth when it comes to him. But Allah (SWT) says, that it is He who has created them as well as their forefathers and the message given to you is the same as was given to them. Therefore, worship Allah (SWT) alone so that you may acquire *Taqwa* (righteousness) and save yourself from the displeasure of Allah (SWT) and His punishment.

(22) *"Who has made this earth a resting place for you and raised the sky as a canopy over you, and He sends down rain from the sky and creates from it different kinds of fruits, grains and vegetables as means of sustenance for you. Then do not set up rivals with Allah (SWT)." Meaning that Allah (SWT) is the creator, the Sustainer, the Owner and the Provider of this life and the hereafter. Hence, He alone deserves to be worshipped and no one and nothing is to associated with Him. This is the essence of *Tawhid*, that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah (SWT), so obey Him, worship Him and submit yourself to Him with all humility and sincerity.*

(23) *"If you are in doubt as to whether the revelations that we have sent down on Our servant Muhammad (SAW) are from Us or not, then produce similar to what he has brought to you." The second article of faith is Prophethood (*Risalah*), that is to believe in the messenger hood of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Here Allah (SWT) says that if you think that Muhammad (SAW) has forged it then bring something similar to it. This is a general challenge to all especially the Arab disbelievers who were so eloquent in their language to bring a surah even similar to the smallest surah of the *Qur'an*. And Allah (SWT) says, *"Using the help of all your witnesses among humans and the Jinns, if you are truthful."* i.e. Your hearts have already accepted that it is from Allah (SWT) and not a speech of any human being, but because of your arrogance and pride you don't want to proclaim it. This is what Allah (SWT) says that if you really are truthful in your doubts about this *Qur'an* then produce only one surah like it.*

(24) *"Then if you cannot produce a surah like it, and you can never do so." This statement of Allah (SWT) is in itself a miracle of the *Qur'an*. Every word and meaning of the *Qur'an* is unsurpassable, it is true, just and full of guidance. It is not poetry which only contain description of women, horses or alcohol or might be in praise of them but it does not bring any*

benefit to anyone and is full of insignificant descriptions and repetitions. But as for the *Qur'an*, it is full of guidance and wisdom. Every part and word of it brings some benefit and the more you read it the more fruitful and beautiful it becomes. That is why not a single poet, no matter how eloquent he is in Arabic language has accepted the challenge and succeeded till to date. Even to bring something like surah *Kausar*, the smallest surah of the *Qur'an* is not possible because Allah (SWT) says these disbelievers will never be able to surpass the eloquence of this *Qur'an*. And Allah (SWT) says, "*So let them fear the Hellfire prepared for them, whose fuel is men and stones, which is prepared for the unbelievers.*" Stones refer to the idols which were worshipped instead of Allah (SWT).

(25) "*O' Muhammad (SAW) give glad tidings to those who believe and do good deeds, that for them will be gardens under which rivers flow. Whenever they will be given fruits to eat from that garden, they will say This is similar to the one we were given before, resembling each other, meaning they will have dates, grapes and pomegranates in Jannah, similar in shape but different in taste. They will also have therein purified spouses and they will abide therein forever.*" This is the basic call of the *Quran*. Belief in *Tawhid Al-Ibadah* which is to worship none except Allah (SWT), belief in the *Qur'an*, that it was revealed by Allah (SWT) to His servant Prophet Muhammad (SAW) with all sincerity, and if you have doubts then bring a surah like that of *Qur'an* if you are truthful. But if you still disbelieve, then prepare for a painful punishment. On the other hand, those who have believed will have a reward from their Lord and will abide in *Jannah* forever.

(26) "*Verily, Allah (SWT) is not ashamed to set forth a parable even of a mosquito, or even lesser than that.*" The *Qur'an* employs similes in many places to explain certain truths or to drive home important points of the message, by likening it to something well known or describing it in a pictorial manner.

For example, it uses similes and metaphors to describe the eternal bliss of heaven and the terrible agony of hell, but in this earthly life, none can form even remotely a precise idea of that bliss or agony. So Allah says that He is not ashamed of giving examples even of mosquitoes or even more insignificant of the creatures.

The believers believe in these parables whether they concern large or small matters, because they know from their *fitrah* ² that it is the truth from their Lord. *"And those who deny the truth, they say, what does Allah (SWT) intend by this parables and examples. By it Allah (SWT) causes many to stray and many He leads towards the right path."* This is because these hypocrites deny the parables and similes given by Allah (SWT) which they know are true, thus He misguides them, and those *Muttaqun*, (God fearing) who save themselves from evil, Allah (SWT) guides them. But also know that *"Allah (SWT) does not misguide except those who are Fasiqun* ³."

(27) *"Those who break Allah's (SWT) Covenant after accepting it, and who cut aside what Allah (SWT) has ordered to be united and cause mischief on earth. It is they who are the losers."* The *Qur'an* relates an event of a covenant taken from all the humans administered by Allah (SWT) known as the Primordial Covenant (*Ahd Alast*). The ayah relating to this states:

"When thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam - from their loins - Their descendents, and made them testify concerning themselves: 'Am I not your Lord?'; They replied, Surely! We do testify!..." ⁴

The question here arises as to when and from whom this oath was taken. Apparently, this event took place before creation of the material realm, that is, in the realm of spirits (*Aalam-e-Arwah*). The covenant was taken from the souls (*Arwah*) of the human beings by Allah (SWT) before they were sent to the physical world.

So these *Fasiqun* who have rejected this covenant after their souls have accepted it are the ones who are doing mischief on this earth, and it is they who are the losers.

(28) *"How can you deny Allah's (SWT) existence, and He brought you from the state of non-existence to life, then He will cause you to die and again bring you to life, and unto Him you will return."* The question arises as to the reality of two creations and two deaths. The answer to this enigma lies in understanding that the original creation (*creation ex nihilo*) was that of our souls (before they were aligned with the material body). The realm of the first creation was in a realm known as *Aalam al-Amr* which was created before the creation of the physical realm. This is the realm which existed before the *Big Bang*. It is at this time that the *Primordial Covenant* took place and thereafter the souls were put to sleep. This was the first death. Thereafter, after the *Big Bang* the material realm came into being. This realm is known as *Aalam al-Khalq*. Human beings have been created in this realm with a material body fused with the spiritual soul. This is the first revival of life. When Allah (SWT) causes us to die here on earth, this will be the second death. Once our souls return to Allah (SWT) and are brought back to life in the hereafter, this will be the second revival. Hence, the process of two deaths and two resuscitations is explained in this way.

(29) *"It is Allah (SWT) who has created for you all that is on earth."* There is a hadith of Prophet (SAW) who said, *'This world has been created for you and you have been created for the Hereafter.'* Meaning that Allah (SWT) has created this universe for man. This subject will be discussed in the following *ayat* in great detail. Then Allah (SWT) says *"He turned towards the Heaven and made them seven Heavens, and His knowledge encompasses all His creations."*

(30) *"And remember the time when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to place a Khalifah(vicegerent) on earth". The angels said, "Will You place therein those who will make therein mischief and shed blood, while we glorify You with praises and sanctify You". Allah said, I know, what you don't know."*

This *ayah* gives the true nature of man and his position in the universe. The modern civilization has reduced the position of man to that of an animal, and those who lead an animal existence, who only follow their animal desires that dominate their minds, and do not reflect upon the true status given to man by Allah (SWT). But Allah (SWT) says that we have placed man as a *vicegerent* on earth, and has made him the best of all creations. In another *ayah* Allah (SWT) says, *"O' Iblees! What prevented you from prostrating yourself to the one whom I have created with My own hands"*.⁵ This subject, Allah (SWT) willing, will further be discussed in surah *Bani Israel*.

(31) *"Allah (SWT) taught Adam (ASW) the names of all things, and then presented those names to the angels and said, Tell me the names of these things taught to Adam (ASW), if you really are true in what you say."* The names Allah (SWT) talks about here are the two forms of knowledge, that which is revealed and that which is humanly acquired. *Revealed knowledge* is what was revealed by Allah (SWT) to His Prophets (ASW) which is unchanging and above question. Knowledge that is derived from our five senses and our own thinking, observation and experience is the *Acquired knowledge* which is subject to error and can be questioned. These both forms of knowledge were given to Adam (ASW) which matured with the passage of time, just like a seed which with all its stages grows into a tree. This does not in any way mean that he was given the knowledge of Modern science and technology, but Allah (SWT) gave him and his children the faculties through which they could attain this knowledge with the passage of time.

Further Allah (SWT) says to the angels to tell the names, the two forms of knowledge taught to Adam (ASW) if they are truthful. This does not imply that the angels were raising objection against making man a vicegerent on earth, rather it was just an inquiry out of curiosity.

(32) *"All the angels replied, Glory be to You, O' Allah (SWT). We have no knowledge except the knowledge that you gave us."* This indicates that the angels are not given the knowledge of everything. They were created for the specific purpose of serving Allah (SWT) and carrying out His commands. Some angels are in a state of constant worship of Allah (SWT), prostrating before Him and never raising their heads. While man was given the faculties to obtain a vast treasure of knowledge. This is the basic difference between humans and other creations of Allah (SWT), He did not give this knowledge to any other of His creations except the humans, and thus Allah (SWT) says that *"I know and you know not"* and the angels only have the knowledge about the subject or things they are appointed to administer by Allah (SWT).

(33) *"Allah (SWT) said, O' Adam (ASW) tell them the names and when he told them all the names, Allah (SWT) said to the angels, Did I not tell you that I know the Ghayb(unseen), in the heavens and the earth, and I know all that you reveal and all you have been concealing."* This signifies the virtue of Adam (ASW) over the angels who were ordered by Allah (SWT) to devote themselves to man's service and whenever man wanted to take use of the knowledge and powers given by Allah (SWT), they have to co-operate with him and allow him to do whatever he likes whether right or wrong. This can be understood by an example of how the employees work under an appointed viceroy or governor of a particular government. When the Queen of England appointed the British viceroy in Delhi, all the employees were thus ordered to obey him, whether he was doing it right or not, as long as the

Queen permits him to exercise his authority. Similarly Allah (SWT), the sole Sovereign has ordered the angels, to obey the humans and serve them devotedly by His permission but if humans transgress the limits set by Allah (SWT) then it is the same angels who are ordered to destroy him or put an end to his life.

(34) *"And remember the time when We said to the angles, prostrate before Adam (ASW) and they all prostrated except Iblees, who refused in his arrogance and became a disbeliever."* Iblees was apparently included in this command with the angels, although he was not one of them and was a *Jinn*, as Allah says in surah *Kahaf* :

*"All prostrated themselves except Iblees, who was one of the Jinns."*⁶

Although *Iblees* was a dweller of Paradise and was allowed to be with the angels due to his obedience and worship of Allah, he was not from the angelic community, rather he was a *Jinn*. His name was *Azazeel* but he was called *Iblees*, meaning one who has lost all hope for Allah's mercy. The *Jinn* are created from fire whereas the Angels are created from light(*noor*). Unlike the angels, who are bound to serve and obey Allah (SWT), the *Jinn* are not free from sins. In this respect, they are more like humans: they may be obedient or disobedient to their Creator, and at this time he became proud and refused to obey, because Allah (SWT) made humans superior to all His creations which made *Iblees* jealous and arrogant and thus he rejected the command of Allah (SWT) to prostrate to Adam (ASW) which by default made him amongst the disbelievers.

(35) *"We said to Adam, O' Adam (ASW) dwell with your wife in Paradise."* There is a difference of opinion among Muslim scholars whether this Paradise was in the heavens or on this earth. Most of the scholars believe that it was in the heavens and then afterwards they were sent down to this earth. But it was not the *Paradise* which the believers will dwell in after

resurrection, because once someone enters into that *Paradise* he will live therein forever. Allah (SWT) allowed Adam (ASW) and Eve (ASW) to reside in this Paradise for a while in order to test them and give man a glimpse of what he will get if he obeys Allah (SWT) and if he does not, then he will be deprived of it. Further Allah (SWT) says to Adam (ASW) and Eve (ASW), *"Eat both of you from this garden with pleasure and delight of things therein, from wherever you will, but don't go near this tree or you both will be among the wrongdoers."* There are conflicting opinions over the tree mentioned here but infact this is the knowledge which does not bring any benefit, rather it was just a test from Allah (SWT) to see how far they would follow His instructions. So Allah (SWT) ordered them not to go near that particular tree or else they will be amongst the wrongdoers.

(36) *"But Iblees made them slip from the garden and got them out of that state in which they had been in. We said, now you go down from here and you will be enemies to each other."* This means that *Iblees* and Adam (ASW) became enemies forever. *Iblees* prayed to Allah (SWT) to grant him life till the Last Day so that he can prove that these Humans whom Allah (SWT) has chosen above him and all creations, are disobedient to Allah (SWT), and thus he became an enemy to Adam (ASW) and his progeny. This is the basis of the struggle between good and evil, truth and falsehood. *Iblees* being an enemy to Mankind is understood, but one might wonder how Adam (ASW) and his progeny are enemies to *Iblees* and his followers. The fact is that the very *Fitrah* of a man on which he was born, makes this enmity incumbent on him. Then Allah (SWT) says *"Earth will be your dwelling place and means of provisions and livelihood for an appointed time."* i.e. When you will be resurrected for the final reckoning.

(37) *"Then Adam (ASW) received some sentences from Allah (SWT) and repented, and Allah (SWT) pardoned him and accepted his repentance. Verily, He is the Acceptor of*

Repentance and Most Merciful." When Adam (ASW) committed that act of disobedience, he wanted to repent and return to Paradise but he could not find the words to use them in his prayers, so Allah (SWT) bestowed His mercy and blessing on Adam (ASW) and taught him the words, with which he could pray and ask for repentance. They both prayed: *"Our Lord! We have wronged our souls. If You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers."*⁷ Indeed there is no deity to worship except Allah (SWT), the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

(38) *"And We said, get down all of you from here. There will come to you a guidance from Me, those who follow and accept it shall have nothing to fear or to regret."*

The word used here is **اهبطوا**, which means going down from a higher place to a lower one, and is also used for settling down in a place. We will discuss this Allah willing in the coming sections.

(39) *"Those who disbelieved and belie Our signs, are the people of Hellfire and they will dwell in it for ever."* i.e. They will remain in hell forever and will not find a way out of it.

As mentioned earlier, there are two forms of knowledge, acquired and revealed. We already read about the acquired knowledge in the *ayah* where Allah (SWT) mentions the names which He taught to Adam (ASW). Here Allah (SWT) mentions the Revealed knowledge, when He says to Adam (ASW), *"There will come to you a guidance from Me."* This guidance is the knowledge which Allah (SWT) reveals to His selected servants in order to guide people.

The first four *rukus* of this surah have been completed which give a brief summary of the *Makkan Qur'an*. The next ten *rukus* are directly addressed to the former Muslim Ummah, *The children of Israel*. These ten *rukus* can be divided into two parts, the first part upto seven *ayat* encourages the *children of Israel* to embrace Islam. In the second part

running through nine *ayat*, Allah (SWT) criticizes them for their sins and acts of disobedience.

(40) *"O' children of Israel⁸ remember My favors to you which I bestowed upon you and fulfill your covenant with Me, so that I fulfill My covenant with you, and you should fear none except Me."*

This is the call given to *children of Israel* to embrace Islam and believe in the unlettered Prophet (SAW). In surah *Al-A'raf*, in response to Moses (ASW) prayer to Allah (SWT) to bestow His Mercy on *children of Israel*, Allah (SWT) says, *"Special mercy is assigned to those who follow the unlettered Prophet (SAW) - whom they shall find described in the Torah and the Injeel."* i.e. Only those who believe in Prophet Muhammad (SAW) will be the ones who will prosper. And for that Allah (SWT) asks to fulfill your covenant, which you had made and believe in this Prophet (SAW) help him and honor him.

(41) *"And believe in My revelations, which testify and confirm that which is with you."* *Qur'an* confirms that *Torah* and *Injeel*, given to Moses (ASW) and Jesus (ASW) respectively, were also revealed by Allah (SWT). And Allah (SWT) says *don't become the first ones to disbelieve* in this *Qur'an* and Prophet Muhammad (SAW) after you have heard about him in your scriptures. *"And do not charge a small price for my ayat."* i.e. Do not sell your faith only for this world and its wealth which is bound to extinction. And Allah (SWT) warns them not to disbelieve and *"Fear Me and Me alone"*.

(42) *"And don't mix truth with falsehood, or knowingly conceal the truth."* Allah (SWT) forbade the *Jews* from hiding the truth, which is that they knew that Muhammad (SAW) was the final Messenger, they have been waiting for and about whom they have been told in their scriptures, but instead they hide it and spread falsehood. Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) description

could be found in Torah and Injeel but these *Jews* and Christians distorted their scriptures and hid the knowledge of it.

(43) *"And establish Salah and give Zakah."* Allah (SWT) commanded them to pray *Salah* behind Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and give *Zakah* to him.

Salah and *Zakah* have always been an integral part of *Shar'iah* in Islam. The Prophets of *children of Israel* laid stress on performing the *Salah*, but they became very negligent of their duties. And Allah (SWT) says to them; *"Bow down before Allah (SWT) along with those who bow down in worship."* Allah (SWT) orders them to pray *Salah* in congregation, with the Muslims of *Madinah* whom they saw bowing and prostrating.

(44) *"Do you enjoin others to be righteous and forget to practice it yourself."* The *Jews* and the hypocrites used to command people to pray and fast but they themselves would not practice them and do not act on what they call others to. So Allah (SWT) reminds them of their behavior, that the one who enjoins righteousness to others should be the first to obey and act on that command. And Allah (SWT) says; *"Even though you read your scriptures. Don't you understand."* This means that these *Jews* used to command others to fulfill their covenant and pray and give *zakah* which they read in their scriptures, but they themselves would not believe in Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and *Qur'an* revealed to him. They have no sense of truth at all and they became blind from the lies and falsehood they spread.

(45) *"Seek Allah's (SWT) help with patience and prayers (Salah), it is indeed very hard to be patient and be punctual in Salah but except for those people who fear Allah (SWT)."* Allah (SWT) commanded His servants to use patience and *Salah* for the good of this life and to save themselves from the hellfire. Allah (SWT) says it is indeed very hard to follow this command but those who follow

Allah's (SWT) commandments, should know that the reward with Allah (SWT) is much more than this worldly life and they should fear Allah (SWT) alone.

(46) *“Those who believe that they will have to meet their Lord and that they have to return to Him.”* Indeed *Salah* and Patience are hard to follow but those people who know that they have will return to Allah (SWT) and meet Him, it becomes easy for them to perform the acts of obedience and refrain from the prohibitions.

Foot Notes

[1] Surah *Az-Zariyat*, ayah 56.

[2] *Fitrah* is also associated with Islām and being born as a Muslim. This is when *fitrah* is viewed in respect to *shahādah* – that there is no god but Allāh and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh – which makes a person a Muslim. *Fitrah*, in this sense, is the faculty, which He has created in mankind, of knowing Allāh. It is the natural constitution with which the child is created in his mother's womb, whereby he is capable of accepting the religion of truth. Islam is also called *din al-fitrah*, the religion of human nature, because its laws and its teachings are in full harmony with the normal and the natural inclination of the human *fitrah* to believe in and submit to the Creator. Furthermore, since this *fitrah* comes from Allah, it naturally follows that only laws capable of guiding man back to it must also come from Allah.

[3] Fasiq means transgressor, disobedient, who is rebellious in nature, against the commandments of Allah.

[4] Surah Al-A'raf (7) : 172.

[5] Surah Sad (38) : 75.

[6] Surah Kahf (18) : 50.

[7] Surah Al-A'raf (7) : 23.

[8] Israel is the word of Hebrew language which means Abdullah, *“the slave of Allah (SWT)”*, and it is the title given to Jacob (ASW) by Allah (SWT) and his progeny is called *the children of Israel*.