

In the previous two *rukus*, we read how *Children of Israel* were given the call to embrace Islam and accept Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as Messenger of Allah (SWT), and thus fulfill the covenant (Surah *Al-Araf* : 157) that they made with Him. From here on, through the several sections that follow, brief mention of the major incidents that happened in *Jewish* history are given. Allah (SWT) reminds the *Children of Israel* the favors that He bestowed upon them and their forefathers, and how He preferred them above all nations, sent them Messengers from among them and revealed His books to them. He also reminds them of the evil deeds and falsehoods that they committed. There are several incidents concerning *Jews*, which are discussed here briefly. The detail of these incidents is given in the *Makkan* part of the *Qur'an*.

(47) *“O’ children of Israel!, remember the blessings and favors that I bestowed upon you, and I preferred you and raised you above all other nations.”*

At one time in history, Allah (SWT) chose the *Jews* above all other nations. Because they were the only one who possessed the truth from Allah (SWT) and were given the Books revealed to Messengers among them. This status was not granted to any other people except them because at that time they were entrusted with the task of directing others to the truth and were expected to serve and worship Allah (SWT).

(48) *“And be mindful of the day when no soul shall in the least avail another, no intercession shall be accepted, no ransom will be taken, and no help shall be given to them.”* As we will read in the following sections, the *Jews* believed that they will be saved from the *hellfire* as they are the chosen ones, and this is the major reason which corrupted their beliefs and they did not remain mindful of the *hereafter*. So Allah (SWT) states that those people who do not believe in the Messenger (SAW) of Allah (SWT) and the *Qur'an*, then on the *Day of Judgment* their lineage, nor intercession of their leaders will help them and no ransom will be accepted of them. Further Allah (SWT) states, on that day no one will have the authority to help them and they will be helpless themselves. Everyone shall face his own

accountability, and no one will bear others burden, whether it be parents, children, relatives or their leaders.

(49) *“And remember when We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh who afflicted you with severe torment, killing your sons and sparing your daughters, which was a tremendous trial from you Lord.”* Meaning, Allah (SWT) did you a favor by saving you from the persecution and torture from the hands of the people of Pharaoh, and it was a trial for you as Allah (SWT) wanted to see whether you are grateful to Allah (SWT) or not.

(50) *“And remember, We divided the sea for you and saved you and drowned Pharaoh's people within your very sight.”* When Moses (ASW) along with *Children of Israel* escaped Pharaoh, he went out in their pursuit but Allah (SWT) helped Moses (ASW) and the *Children of Israel* escape by parting the sea and letting them cross it. On the other hand, Allah (SWT) drowned Pharaoh and his followers in the sea while the *Children of Israel* watched, bringing relief to their hearts and humiliation to their enemy.

(51) *“And remember when We called Moses (ASW) for forty nights¹, and in his absence you took the calf for worship, and thus became evildoers.”*

(52) *“Even after that We forgave you, so that you might become grateful.”*

(53) *“And We gave Moses (ASW) the Book(Torah) and the criterion of right and wrong so that you might be rightly guided.”* When Moses (ASW) was summoned to *Mount Sinai*, he was given the *Torah* by Allah (SWT) which is a criterion i.e. it contains the understanding and guidance of religion which differentiates the truth from falsehood.

(54) *“And remember when Moses (ASW) said to his people: "O my people! You have indeed wronged yourselves by your worship of the calf so turn in repentance to your Creator and kill yourselves.”* Allah (SWT) ordered that those who worshipped the calf be killed by those who did not worship it.. This is the punishment of Shirk in Islam, just as

it was given in *Torah*, which states that seventy thousand of them were killed. The total number of the children of Israel was six hundred thousand when they left Egypt with Moses (ASW), and out of those seventy thousand worshipped the calf, in the absence of Moses (ASW) when he went to meet his Lord at *Mount Sinai*. Moses (ASW) ordered those who did not worship the calf to kill all those seventy thousand people, with every tribe killing his own men, whether they be their parents, brothers, or relatives, and this is what is meant by *killing there ourselves*. And Allah (SWT) says; *"It will be better for you in the sight of your Creator."* i.e. killing the wrongdoers among you will be best for you in His sight. *"Then He accepted your repentance; for surely He is Oft-returning, Most Merciful."* For Allah (SWT) is very Merciful to his servants, and He forgave all of them i.e. those who were killed as well as those who remained alive².

(55) *"And remember when you said: "O' Moses (ASW)! We shall never believe in you until we see Allah (SWT) with our own eyes," a thunderbolt struck you while you were looking on and you fell dead."* The seventy men which Moses (ASW) took with him to *Mount Sinai* demanded that they will not believe in Allah (SWT) until they see Allah (SWT) publicly with their own eyes. So Allah's (SWT) wrath fell upon them and a thunderbolt struck them while they were looking, and they all died.

(56) *"Then We raised you again after your death, so that you may be grateful."* Allah (SWT) reminds the *children of Israel* of His favors that He bestowed on them. He raised them after they died when lightning struck them because of their demand that they wanted to see Allah (SWT), and when Moses (ASW) prayed to Allah (SWT), He forgave them.

After recounting the calamities that Allah (SWT) saved the *Children of Israel* from, He mentions the favors that He bestowed upon them. The Israelites, six hundred thousand in number, left Egypt and came to the *Sinai* desert. They had a very long journey in the desert without having any shade to save themselves from the scorching heat, nor they had any food and drink.

(57) *"We even provided you the shade of clouds"*. Allah (SWT) bestowed His mercy on them and provided for them shade of clouds, so as to save them from the heat

in the desert. He saved them from Pharaoh, parted the sea for them and drowned their enemies. Further Allah (SWT) says, *"We sent down for you Manna and Salwa, and said: "Eat of the good things We have provided for you"."*

The *Manna*, something like a seed which was whiter than milk and sweeter than honey, used to rain down on *Children of Israel* like snow flakes when dew fell. *Manna* provided sufficient food even when eaten alone, because it was so nutritious. As for the *Salwa*, it was a bird that looked like a quail³. They used to come in thousands and Israelites would catch as many of them as they could for a day. And Allah (SWT) says; *"Eat from the pure things which We have given you."* referring to *Manna* and *Salwa*. But in spite of these favors they violated Allah's (SWT) commandments. However, Allah (SWT) says; *"By violating our commandments they did not harm Us, but they harmed their own souls."* i.e. Allah (SWT) commanded them to be grateful of what He has given them and perform acts of worship but they rebelled and became ungrateful.

(58) *"And remember when We said, Enter this town and eat whatever you wish to your hearts."* Most of the scholars agree that the city mentioned in this *ayah* is Jericho(*Ariha*). After the period of wandering extended over forty years, Allah (SWT) allowed them to conquer the holy land in *Jerusalem*. Jericho was the first town captured by them. And Allah (SWT) said, *"Eat bountifully therein with pleasure and delight wherever you wish."* When they conquered the holy land, Allah commanded them to *"Enter its gate bowing down in humility and say, Hittah (seeking Allah's (SWT) forgiveness)."* But instead, they entered while their heads were raised with defiance and arrogance and distorted the words. And Allah (SWT) says to the *Children of Israel*, if you show humility and submissiveness, *"We shall forgive you your sins and We shall increase the provisions for the righteous among you."* Here it is important to point out that when Muhammad (SAW) entered *Makkah* after victory, his forehead was touching the hair of his horse with humility and total submissiveness to Allah (SWT). Such was the virtue of our Prophet (SAW). A verse of *Al-Farazdaq* poem fits him very much and the best one to be said of:

"He casts his eyes modestly but the eyes of others are cast down due to his solemnity, and words issue out of his mouth only while he is smiling."

(59) "Allah says; *But the wrongdoers changed Our Words from that which they were asked to say.*" Instead of *Hittah*, they distorted Allah's (SWT) words and mocked at His command and said *Hintah*, meaning, grain, seed or barley. This shows the worst kind of rebellion and disobedience to Allah (SWT) and that is why Allah (SWT) unleashed His punishment upon them, when He said, "*So We sent down a scourge from heaven as a punishment for their transgression.*"

(60) "*And Remember the time when Moses (ASW) prayed for water for his people.*" There was not enough water at that time in the desert to suffice for six hundred thousand people, and there was also a shortage of food for which Allah (SWT) gave them *Manna* and *Salwa*. They started cursing Moses (ASW) for their condition and started to remember the time when they were in Egypt, under Pharaoh's rule when although they were slaves, they used to have grains, barley, wheat and lentils to eat. And so they became ungrateful to their Lord. They came to Moses (ASW) and asked him to pray to his Lord for water. Allah (SWT) says; "*We said: 'Strike the rock with your staff.'*" *Thereupon We caused twelve springs to come out of that rock. Each tribe was assigned its own drinking-place.*" The number of springs were twelve because the Israelite tribes were also twelve in number. Allah (SWT) bestowed another favor on them by providing one spring for each tribe so that they will not fight each other for water. And Allah (SWT) commanded them, "*Eat and drink of what Allah (SWT) has provided and do not create mischief in the land.*" i.e. Do not commit acts of disobedience which in return might cause the favors to disappear.

(61) "*Remember when you said: 'O' Moses (ASW)! We cannot endure one kind of food; call on your Lord to give us a variety of food which the earth produces, such as green-herbs, cucumbers, garlic, lentils, and onions.*" Allah (SWT) gave them *Manna* and *Salwa*, a good pure, beneficial, nutritious and easily acquired food, but they became ungrateful and demanded Moses (ASW) for something different. They asked Moses (ASW) to exchange this type of food for an inferior type that consists of vegetation i.e. a diet consisting of lentils, onions, garlic and herbs, which they used to eat when they were in Egypt. "*Moses (ASW) asked. Would you exchange the better for the worse?.*" i.e. Allah (SWT) gave you a food easily acquired, living an easy life and still you want to have inferior things instead of that which is better in sight of Allah

(SWT). Moses (ASW) said to the *Children of Israel*; "If that's what you want, then go back to some city; there you will find what you have asked for ⁴." i.e. what you are asking for is easy, as it is available in abundance in any city, so go and settle down in any town or city, and you will get what you are asking for. "They were covered with humiliation and misery; they drew on themselves the wrath of Allah." This is a very important *ayah* which indicates that the *Children of Israel* were plagued with humiliation, and that will continue, meaning it will never cease. "This was because they went on rejecting the signs of Allah and slaying His messengers without just cause. Furthermore, it was the consequence of their disobedience and transgression." Allah (SWT) says, that the reason of their humiliation is the great crimes that they have been doing which are also recorded in their own history. They defied the truth, disbelieved in Allah's (SWT) *ayat*, rejected Allah's (SWT) Messengers and killed them and for that Allah (SWT) penalized them with humiliation and misery, and descended upon them His wrath only because they rebelled and transgressed the bounds set by Allah (SWT).

(62) "Those who believe (in the *Qur'an*) and those who follow the Jewish (Scriptures) and the Christians and the Sabians." Sabians belonged to a monotheistic religion which followed John the Baptist (ASW) but nothing can be said about them for sure. Some say they are the same group called *Subbi* ⁵ which lives in Iraq at present time, but if one examines their beliefs, it does not seem likely that they are the same Sabians that *Qur'an* has mentioned. And Allah (SWT) says: "who believe in Allah (SWT) and the last day and work righteousness shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve." Allah (SWT) stated that the earlier nations who were righteous and obeyed Allah (SWT) received their due reward for their good deeds. And this shall remain the case till the *Day of Judgment*. So whoever believes in Allah (SWT), His Messenger, the *Day of Judgment*, and does righteous deeds will have his rewards with Allah (SWT), and they shall acquire eternal happiness and shall neither fear nor shall they be grieved.

Some wrong headed and evil mongers in our time have tried to deceive people arguing erroneously from this *ayah*. They say that to achieve salvation one does not need to believe in the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the two articles of faith discussed here i.e. belief in Allah (SWT) and in the *hereafter*, are enough for

ones salvation. On the other hand this *ayah* makes it clear that it is not giving the detail of all the articles of faith which one should believe in. Those are mentioned elsewhere at numerous places. In fact this *ayah* clarifies the misconception that the *Jews* had, that they are the chosen ones and only they would enter the Paradise. On the contrary Allah (SWT) says that your salvation does not depend upon your lineage or your race but on the basis whether you are righteous or not.

As far as the belief in Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is concerned, we would like to point out the fact that, in the sixth *ruku* of this surah, Allah (SWT) invites the *Jews* to accept Islam by believing in the Prophethood of Muhammad (SAW) in order to achieve salvation and eternal bliss. So how can it be that the belief of a person is complete without believing in Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The context of this *ayah* clarifies that those people who were *Jews*, *Christians* or *Sabians*, and followed their own Prophet before the advent of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and they believed in Allah (SWT) and the hereafter, did righteous deeds will have their rewards from Allah (SWT). But once Allah (SWT) revealed *Qur'an* to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), it has become incumbent on a person to believe in him and the last revealed Book, along with other articles of faith.

(63) “Remember O’ Children of Israel when We took a covenant from you and when We lifted the Mount (Sinai) over your heads.” Moses (SAW) had been away for forty days and his people were becoming restless, for they did not know that Allah (SWT) had extended his time by a further ten days. On his return Moses (SAW) saw his people worshipping the calf statue. Allah (SWT) punished the people who worshipped the calf as we have already seen, then Moses (SAW) went to speak to his Lord with seventy men from the *Children of Israel*. They repented to their Lord, and made a firm covenant with Him. Allah (SWT) stated that when He took this pledge from them, He raised the Mount of Sinai above their heads, so that they strongly affirm the pledge that they gave to Allah (SWT) and abide by it with sincerity and seriousness.

A lot of supernatural phenomena were shown to the *Children of Israel* and to the previous generations, but not to this present Muslim Ummah as Allah (SWT) says that the only miracle given to this Ummah is the *Qur'an* which in itself is the greatest miracle.

Further Allah (SWT) said to them; "*Hold firmly to what We have given you (meaning the Torah). And follow the commandments therein, so that you may guard yourself against evil.*" This means that you should read *Torah* and implement it. "*So that you may fear Allah.*"

(64) "*Then after that you turned away.*" Yet after that firm covenant that the Children of Israel made with Allah (SWT), they rebelled and broke their pledge. "*Had it not been for the grace of Allah.*" Meaning, by forgiving them and by sending His Prophets and Messengers to them. "*Indeed you would have been among the losers.*" i.e. in this world and the hereafter.

(65) "*You very well know the story of those amongst you who transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath.*" *Sabbath* is for Saturday. Allah (SWT) commanded the Israelites that they should rest and worship on this day and were required to abstain from worldly pursuits. This commandment was so strict that the violation of the *Sabbath* day was to be punished by death⁶. This story relates to the torment that Allah (SWT) sent on the village that disobeyed Him, and broke their covenant to observe the sanctity of *Sabbath* Day. This story is explained in detail in surah *Al-Araf*. In return of their rebellion and deviation, Allah (SWT) punished them and said, "*Be you monkeys despised and rejected*".

(66) "*Thus, We made their fate an example to their own people and to succeeding generations, and a lesson for the Muttaqeen.*" i.e. Allah (SWT) made them an example for those who lived at their time, as well as a reminder for those to come, by preserving their story. The punishment that this village suffered was because of their rebellion and disobedience of the commandments of Allah (SWT). Hence Allah (SWT) says, those who have *Taqwa* should be aware of their evil behavior, so that this punishment does not befall them as well.

(67) "*And remember when Moses (ASW) said to his people: "Allah (SWT) commands you to sacrifice a cow".*" The Israelites had become accustomed to cow-worship, and in order to outgrow and overcome this, they were ordered to slaughter a cow. So their faith was being tested and they wanted to stay away from this and thus

started to make excuses. So *"They replied, "do you make fun of us?". Moses (ASW) answered, "I seek refuge with Allah from being one of the ignorant.""* i.e. I am the Messenger of Allah (SWT) and His Prophet, so how can I do such an ignorant act just to make fun of you.

The Israelites tried to shelve away from this issue and started asking unnecessary questions, and this was why Allah (SWT) made it even more difficult for them.

(68) *"They said, "Request your Lord, to give us some details of that cow". Moses (ASW) replied, "Allah (SWT) says, the cow should neither be too old nor too young but of middle age" i.e. It is neither too old nor too young for breeding i.e. when it is strongest and fittest. "Do, therefore, what you are commanded!."*

(69) *"They said, "Request your Lord again", "to clarify for us her color." Moses (ASW) replied, "Allah (SWT) says, the said cow should be of a rich and bright yellow color which is pleasing to the eyes."*

(70) *"Again they said, "Request your Lord to clarify for us the exact type of cow, for us all cows look alike, if Allah (SWT) wills, we shall be rightly guided.""*

(71) *"Moses (ASW) replied: "Allah (SWT) says, the said cow should have neither been used to till the soil nor water the fields, without markings of any other color.""* This meant that the cow does not suffer from any defects. *"Then they said "Now you have brought us the accurate description,""*. And Allah (SWT) says, *"Then they slaughtered her, after they had nearly declined."* i.e. after all the questions and queries the Jews were still reluctant to slaughter the cow because of their stubbornness and obstinacy.

(72) *"And remember when you killed a person from amongst you and started disputing each other as to who killed him, and Allah (SWT) brought forth what you concealed."*

(73) *"We said, "Strike the dead body with a piece of the slaughtered cow.""* They struck him with it and he came back to life, and disclosed the story of the crime. *"That's how Allah (SWT) brought the dead to life to show you His Signs so that you may understand."*

Allah (SWT) made this incidence proof against the *Jews* who did not believe that resurrection will occur. That is why Allah (SWT) showed them His signs so that they may understand that as Allah (SWT) brought this dead person to life, He will also bring you to life again in the hereafter.

(74) *“But even after seeing that, your hearts became hard like a rock or even harder.”* Here Allah (SWT) criticized the *Jews* because they witnessed great signs and miracles from Allah (SWT) including bringing the dead person to life. But still their hearts became so hard and stubborn that they were unlikely to accept any admonition with no hope of their hearts ever softening. Unfortunately, Muslims today are also in the same situation. We have the greatest miracle, the *Qur’an*, but if we do not obey Allah (SWT) and follow His Messenger (SAW) we may also meet the same fate, and our hearts (*Allah forbid*) may become hard. The *ayah* continues, *“For there are some rocks from which rivers gush out, and there are some which break asunder and water comes out of them, and there are some which fall down with the fear of Allah (SWT). And Allah (SWT) is not unaware of what you do.”*

(75) *“Do you, O’ Believers, still hope that they will believe in what you say.”* This *ayah* addresses the Muslims and tells us about the *Jews* of *Madinah*. It continues, *“When some of them have already heard the word of Allah (SWT) and perverted it knowingly after they understood it.”* i.e. These *Jews* already knew from their scriptures that what Muhammad (SAW) brought is the truth, but they distorted their books, being fully aware of their erroneous interpretations and distortion of their scriptures.

(76) *“When they meet the believers they say: “We too are believers,””* This *ayah* also refers to the *Jews* of *Madinah*. Further Allah (SWT) says, *“But when they meet each other in private they say: “Would you disclose to the believers what Allah has revealed to you. So that they may use it as an argument against you before your Lord? Have you no sense””*

When some of the *Jews* met the Muslims they believed that Muhammad (SAW) is the Messenger of Allah (SWT), but was only sent for the Arabs, and they told them the prophecies present in *Torah* about the advent of Prophet Muhammad

(SAW). And when the *Jews* met each other they would say, do not tell the prophecies of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to the Muslims and that we were waiting for him and whose coming we find foretold of in our Book. Therefore, do not believe in him and deny him. They thought that if they tell the Muslims of the prophecies, then they might use it as an argument against them before Allah (SWT) on the Day of Judgment. And they thought that Allah (SWT) does not know what they hide. So Allah (SWT) says;

(77) *"Do they not really know that Allah knows what they conceal and what they reveal."* Even if they do not reveal to the Muslims, what they conceal, still Allah (SWT) knows what they reveal in front of the Muslims and what they say to each other when they are alone.

(78) *"Among them there are some illiterates who do not know their Holy Book; they follow their own desires and do nothing but conjecture."* There were also a lot of illiterate *Jews* in *Madinah*, who did not know how to read or write, and because they lacked knowledge they fabricated the whole religion out of their desires and they used to read into their scriptures what they wanted. The same can be said for the Muslims today, most of them recite the *Qur'an* but they do not know what its meanings are. They spend long years learning science and literature but are not prepared to even learn Arabic so that they can understand the *Qur'an* when they read or listen to it.

Another reason for the *Jews* not to learn their Books was their wishful thinking. As we will read in the following *ayat*, they thought of themselves as the chosen ones and that they will not enter the hellfire except for a few days. Similarly the Muslims today have also fabricated some beliefs that as they are from the Ummah of Muhammad (SAW) their salvation is guaranteed and the Prophet (SAW) will intercede for them.

(79) *"Woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say: "This is from Allah (SWT)" so that they may sell it for a petty price!"* This is another category people within the *Jews*, the rabbis. They altered the Book of Allah (SWT), changed it and wrote another book with their own hands. They interjected into it their interpretations of the scriptures and then said, *"This is from Allah (SWT)"*. And

they did this for a petty price. The small amount here means this life and all that it contains. So Allah (SWT) says, "*Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they have earned*" i.e. Because of what they have written with their own hands - the lies, falsehood and the alterations, they only earn a little in this world and hellfire will be their abode in the hereafter.

(80) "*The Jews say: "The fire shall not touch us except for a few days."*" The Jews believed that the Fire of hell will not touch them except for a few days, then they will be saved from it. They say it will only touch them for forty days then they will enter the Paradise, just by virtue of being Jews. So Allah (SWT) says, "*O' Muhammad (SAW) say, "Have you taken a covenant from Allah (SWT) which He would not break, Or do you say of Allah (SWT) what you do not know"*" Meaning, that if Allah (SWT) had made a promise that you would remain immune from the fire of hell, then Allah (SWT) would not break His promise. However, such a promise does not exist and they say about Allah (SWT) such things which they do not know themselves.

(81) "*Yea! Those who commit evil and become encircled in sin are the inmates of hellfire; they shall live there forever.*" The Jews believed that they will be saved from the hellfire even if they commit evil deeds, but on the contrary, Allah says; Whosoever does an evil deed, and abides deliberately in his error will be among the inmates of hellfire.

(82) "*As for those who believe and do good deeds, they will be the residents of Paradise and live therein forever.*" It means, that those who perform good deeds that conform with the Islamic law, and are Muslim, they will enter Paradise for eternity. They will receive their reward in the *Hereafter* i.e. they will be in Allah's (SWT) presence. That is salvation in the highest degree and the pinnacle of felicity in the hereafter.

Foot Notes

[1] This happened at Mount Sinai, where Moses (ASW) was summoned by Allah after their exodus from Egypt, and was given the ten commandments.

[2] At-Tabari, 2:73

[3] At-Tabari 2:96

[4] The word used here is **اهبطوا**, which we already read in previous sections meaning to settle down or come from a higher place to a lower one.

[5] Latest researches have revealed a small group of religious community numbering about 2000 people, in lower Iraq in Basra. In Arabic they are called 'Subbi'. They claim to be Gnostics, of Knowers of great life. Their book is Ginza which is in Aramaic dialect. They have theories of darkness and Light as in Zoroastrianism.

[6] Exodus, 31 ; 12-17.