

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

All Praises to Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

6th Taraweeh Summary, Ramadan 1446 Hijri
Summary of Verses 6:1 – 6:165

(Sura An'am is a Makkan Sura)

Sura Al-An'am (The Cattle) (Verses 6:1-165)

Several verses of Sura Al-An'am address the superstition-laden polytheists of Arabia who believed that there was nothing except life on this earth and *"never shall we be raised up again."* (6:29)

There are 43 occurrences of the word "Say" in this Sura, sometimes occurring multiple times in the same verse, in which Allah instructs Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) to reason and plead with Arabia's polytheists, to summon their latent religious instincts to turn to the One True God. Some of these verses are:

Say: "Travel through the earth and see what the end of those was who rejected the Truth." (6:11)

Say: "To whom belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth?" Say: "To Allah. He has committed Himself to mercy and will gather you on the Day of Judgment, a day about which there is no doubt." (6:12)

Say: "Shall I take for my protector any other than Allah, the creator of the heavens and the earth? And He feeds but is not fed. Say: "No, but I am commanded to be the first of those who bow to Allah in Islam, and do not be of the company of those who join gods with Allah." (6:14)

Say: "What could be the greatest testimony?" Say: "Allah is witness between me and you. This Quran has been revealed to me by inspiration so that I may warn you and all whom it may reach. Do you really believe there are other gods besides Allah?" Say: "No, I cannot bear witness." Say: "But in

truth, He is the one Allah, and I am innocent of the guilt of joining others with Him."(6:19)

Say: "Think, if Allah took away your hearing and your sight, and sealed up your hearts, who - a god other than Allah - could restore them to you?" See how We explain the signs by various symbols; yet they turn aside. (6:46)

Say: "Think, if the punishment of Allah comes to you, whether suddenly or openly, will any be destroyed except those who do wrong? (6:47)

Say: "I do not say to you that Allah's treasures are with me, nor do I know what is hidden, nor do I tell you I am an angel. I only follow what is revealed to me. Say: Can the blind be held equal to the seeing? Will you then not consider?" (6:50)

Say: "Who is it that delivers you from the dark recesses of land and sea, when you call upon Him in humility and in secret. 'If He only delivers us from these dangers, we vow we shall truly show our gratitude.'" Say: "It is Allah who delivers you from these and all other distresses. And yet you worship false gods!" (6:63-64)

Say: "Shall we call on others besides Allah, things that can do us neither good nor harm, and turn on our heels after receiving guidance from Allah? Like one whom Shaitan has made into a fool, wandering confused through the earth, his friends calling, 'come to us,' vainly trying to guide him to the Path. Say: Allah's guidance is the only guidance, and we have been directed to submit ourselves to the Lord of the Worlds, to establish regular prayers, and to fear Allah. For it is to Him that we shall be gathered." (6:71-72)

On behalf of His prophet, Allah is reasoning with the Arabs who see the truth in front of them but who are unable to break free from dogma and blind adherence to sterile traditions. The arguments are clear and logical, woven together with compelling metaphors. *"Lost indeed are those who treat it as a falsehood that they must meet Allah, until on a sudden the hour is on them, and they say, 'Ah! woe unto us that we took no thought of it'; for they bear their burdens on their backs, and evil indeed are the burdens that they bear!" (6:31)*

In Allah's creation, we find creatures who exhibit highly developed social structures and cohesion. This includes not only the human kingdom but also the animal kingdom. Birds migrating with stars to navigate vast distances over land and sea for food and warmth, fish returning upstream from oceans to the natal river where they were born to spawn and begin the life cycle anew with a new generation of hatchlings, ants whose brains develop special structures and functions for cooperation and connection with their community – all these point to Allah's wondrous creativity. *"There is not an animal that lives on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but forms communities like you. Nothing have We omitted from the Book, and they all shall be gathered to their Lord in the end."* (6:38)

Allah tests nations with suffering and adversity so that they may learn humility. (6:42) Instead, *"their hearts became hardened, and Shaitan made their sinful acts seem alluring to them."* (6:43)

A consequence of this allure and indulgence is that people become heedless of Allah's warnings. They do not realize that obsessive worldly attachments lead them to their doom until it is too late. *"But when they forgot the warnings they had received, We opened to them the gates of all good things, until, amid their enjoyment of Our gifts, on a sudden, We called them to account, when lo! they were plunged in despair!"* (6:44)

Allah is Omniscient and Omnipotent: *"With Him are the keys of the unseen, the treasures that none knows but He. He knows whatever there is on earth and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but with His knowledge. There is not a grain in the darkness or depths of the earth nor anything fresh or dry, green or withered, but is inscribed in a record clear to those who can read. It is He who takes your souls by night and has knowledge of all that you have done by day. By day does He raise you up again, that a term appointed is fulfilled. In the end unto Him will you return; then will He show you the truth of all that you did."* (6:59-60)

The fact that on the Day of Judgment Allah will reveal to us the motives and machinations of all our earthly deeds occurs numerous times in the Quran

(see verse 6:108 below.) The Day of Judgment will not only be a Day of Reckoning but also a Day of Clarity.

We are to turn away from any discussion in which people mock Allah's revelations: *"When you see men engaged in vain discourse about Our Signs, turn away from them unless they turn to different themes."* But Allah is aware of our frailties and so, *"should Shaitan cause you to forget, take leave of the wrongdoers as soon as you remember."* (6:68)

Prophet Ibrahim's (AS) spiritual and intellectual development as he searched for the One True God is a powerful reminder of how logic and reason, combined with spiritual longing, that is, mind and heart working together, can help us discover the Truth. First, it was the star, then the moon, then the sun, and then, realization! *"When he saw the sun rising in splendor, he said: 'This is my Lord; this is the greatest of all.'" But when the sun set, he said: "O my people! I am indeed free from your guilt of giving partners to Allah. For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah."* (6:76-78)

Eighteen of the 25 messengers and prophets (Ibrahim, Ishaq, Yaqub, Nuh, Daud, Sulaiman, Ayub, Yusuf, Musa, Harun, Zakariya, Yahya, Isa, Ilyas, Ismail, Alyasa, Yunus and Lut) mentioned in the Quran are found in verses (6:83-86). (For the 25 names and additional details, please read the 5th Taraweeth summary.)

When those who invent lies against Allah and deny His Truth suffer the agonies and terror of death, they will be told, *"And behold! You come to us bare and alone as We created you for the first time. You have left behind you all the favors which We bestowed on you. We do not see with you your intercessors whom you thought to be partners in your affairs. So now all relations between you have been cut off, and your fancies have left you in the lurch!"* (6:94)

In other words, wealth, power, influence, or talent will be of no use to anyone on Judgment Day.

From time immemorial, voyagers have used stars as guides to navigate the seas: *"And He is the One Who has made the stars as your guide through the darkness of land and sea. We have already made the signs clear for people who know."* (6:97)

Allah created us from a single soul. It is one of His wonders that from one, we have grown to be so many, each blessed with different faculties and capabilities. *"And He is the One Who originated you all from a single soul, then assigned you a place to live and another to be laid to rest. Detail Our signs for those who understand."* (6:98)

Only the most willfully ignorant fail to see God's creativity in His creation: the grain and the date that split and sprout, the living that issue from the dead and the dead from the living, the eternal wonder of dawn breathing away the darkness, the night created for rest and tranquility, the sun and the moon as celestial markers of time, the sound of waves breaking on the shore, rain that produces vegetation, grains, dates, grapes, olives, pomegranates and other kinds of fruits, similar yet different in taste and texture. *"Behold! In these are signs for people who know ... understand ... believe."* (6:95-99)

It is instructive to read verses (6:99) and (6:141) together to get a sense of the profound subtlety of words used in the Quran: *He is the One who sent down water from the heavens. Then We brought forth with it vegetation of all kinds. Then from it, We brought grains set upon one another. From the palm trees, from their spathes, come forth the low-hanging bunches. We produce vineyards and the olive and the pomegranate, either resembling or not resembling one another. Look (unzuru) at its fruit when it bears fruit, and at its ripening. Surely, in all this, there are signs for people who believe.* (6:99)

Here the emphasis is on the appearance of fruits. Some fruits may appear the same to our eyes but have markedly different tastes. In contrast, *He is the One who has created gardens, trellised (supported) and not trellised, and date palms and crops with a variety of edibles, and the olive and the pomegranate, some similar to one another, and some dissimilar. Eat (kulu)*

of its fruit when it bears fruit, pay its due on the day of harvest, and do not waste. Surely, Allah does not like the wasters. (6:141) Here the emphasis is on taste. Some fruits may appear different to the eyes but may be similar in taste. Such is the wondrous variety found in Allah's creation.

(Note the last clause of these two verses where Allah warns us that He does not love people who waste. If waste is a sin, there is hardly any Muslim community that is not guilty of it, particularly during Ramadan. The more affluent the community, the more the waste. The sheer volume of waste during Ramadan negates the spirit of self-restraint at the heart of fasting. How can we aspire to Allah's mercy if we are indifferent to His warning that he does not love wasters! We must make Ramadan green by eliminating waste and increasing the number of reusables. This is especially urgent in light of climate change that poses an existential threat to humankind. We must make conservation - reducing, recycling, reusing, and repurposing - a priority throughout the year, particularly during Ramadan.

Fortunately, we are beginning to see the greening of Ramadan in our mosques, reviving Islam's long tradition of sustainability and care for the Earth. We are becoming more mindful of the impact of Ramadan on the environment. Mosques are increasingly dispensing single-use items, nonbiodegradable materials for cutlery, plastics and serving platters, with some banning the use of plastics altogether. Two educational websites that can help deepen our sense of responsibility toward the environment are <https://www.unep.org/al-mizan-covenant-earth> and <https://www.greenmuslims.org/>)

It is also instructive to keep in mind what the Prophet (s.a.w) said about eating: "A human being fills no worse vessel than his stomach. It is sufficient for a human being to eat a few mouthfuls to keep his spine straight. But if he must fill it, then one-third for food, one-third for drink, and one-third for air.")

Islam does not permit demeaning or undermining the faiths of others. Allah helps people overcome their ignorance and folly if they are sincere in their quest for the Truth. If people deliberately engage in evil, Allah will deal with

them in His way. *"Do not denounce those they invoke other than Allah, lest they denounce Allah in their ignorance. Thus have We made alluring to each people its own doings. In the end, they will return to their Lord and He shall then tell them the truth of all that they did."* (6:108)

("He shall tell them the truth of all that they did." On the Day of Judgment, Allah (SWT) will inform us of all our actions, hidden or manifest, and the motivations behind them. It also makes clear that the joys and sorrows of life are designed to bring us back to our Creator if we only take the time to reflect. We see the recurrence of this idea in numerous verses, including (5:105), (6: 60), (6:108), (6:159), (10:23), (31:15), (31:23), (58:7), (62:8), (64:7), (75:13))

In our motives and deeds, whether related to evil or good, there are infinite degrees of differentiation and rank. Everything is known to Allah, better than we know it ourselves: *"To all are degrees according to their deeds., for your Lord is not unmindful of anything that they do."* (6:132)

There are clear directives for a life of meaning and purpose, for being on the 'Straight Path' that we read in Sura Fatiha, (1:6), and for the meaning of Taqwa. Specifically, there are ten directives – five orders and five prohibitions - that we can think of as the "Ten Commandments," although we should not equate these to the Ten Commandments of prophet Musa (AS), since the Quran does not equate the two. Allah is telling His prophet to *"Say: Come, I will tell you what your Lord has ordained for you:"*

1. You shall not take other gods beside Him. (6:151)
(Shirk is the most grievous of sins)
2. You must be dutiful and kind toward your parents. (Our first duty toward our fellow humans begins with our mother and father, whose love gives us insight into Divine love. Parents are so important that they are placed right after our duty to Allah.) (6:151)
4. Avoid shameful deeds, open or secret. (6:151)
5. Do not take a life except by way of justice and law. (6:151)
6. Observe fairness and justice in weights and measures. (6:151)
7. Do not unjustly take possession of the properties of orphans. Improve

their properties and inheritance if you can. Release their properties to them when they attain maturity. (6:152)

8. Judge fairly and testify to the truth, even if a close relative is concerned. (6:152)

9. Fulfill the covenant of God. (6:152)

10. Always strive to be on the Straight Path. Follow it and do not follow other paths, for those paths shall lead you astray. (6:153)

"This is what He urges you to do, so that you may be conscious of Allah (and attain salvation.)" (6:153)

(Note that verses 17:23-39 in Sura Isra can be read as commentaries on the commandments listed in Sura An'am in verses 6:151-153.)

We are reminded of the blessings of the Quran: *"And this is a Book which We have sent down, bringing blessings and confirming the revelations which came before it so that you may warn the Mother of Cities and all around her. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in this Book, and they are constant in guarding their prayers."* (6:92) Again: *"And this is a Book which We have revealed as a blessing, so follow it and be righteous, that you may receive mercy."* (6:155)

We are asked to shun sectarianism: *"As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, you have no part in them in the least. Their accountability is with Allah. He will, in the end, tell them the truth of all that they did."* (6:159) For those who do good, the rewards for each good deed are multiplied manifold while for wrongdoers, the punishment for each evil deed is one-to-one: *"He who does good shall have ten times as much to his credit. He who does evil shall only be recompensed according to his evil. No wrong shall be done unto them."* (6:160)

The Sura ends with three sublime affirmations:

Say: "My Lord has guided me to a straight path, to an upright religion, the faith of Ibrahim who joined not gods with Allah." (6:161)

Say: "Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are all for Allah, Lord of Creation." (6:162)

(Notice how this affirmation is echoed in the *Attahiyatu* that we recite in every prayer: "*At-tahiyyatu lillahi was-salawatu wat-taiyyibatu ...*" All good deeds and acts of worship are for the pleasure of Allah ... Verse (6:162) also defines the characteristics of a believer animated by Taqwa.)

Say: "Should I seek a Lord other than Allah when He is the Lord of everything? ... No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another ..." (6:164)

We are not the authors of our gifts; Allah is. What is required of us is that we do the best with whatever gift Allah has blessed us with, instead of being envious of the gifts of others. Gratitude is the key. "*It is He Who has made you the inheritors of the earth. He has raised you in ranks, some above others so that He may try you in the gifts He has given you. For your Lord is quick in punishment: Yet He forgives often and is Most Merciful.*" (6:165)

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