

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

All Praises to Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

9th Taraweeh Summary, Ramadan 1446 Hijri

Summary of Verses 9:94-11:49

Sura At-Taubah (Repentance) (Verses 9:94-129)

In the last few verses of Sura Taubah, we get yet another vivid description of believers: *"Allah has indeed purchased from the believers their lives and wealth in exchange for Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah and slay or are slain. This is a true promise binding on Him in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Quran. And whose promise is truer than Allah's? So rejoice in the exchange you have made with Him. That is truly the ultimate triumph. Those who turn to Allah in repentance, who serve Him and praise Him and go on seeking His acceptance, who bow down and prostrate in prayer, who enjoin good and forbid evil and observe the limits set by Allah."* (9:111-112)

Notice that verse (9:111) describes Allah as having "purchased" from believers their lives and possessions in return for paradise. This is Allah's covenant with humankind. It is reflected in the daily covenant we make with ourselves – each one of us - in which the self's nobler part takes on its baser part to hopefully subdue and conquer it, given our limited free will. We fight for Allah's cause and carry out His will. In return, He gives us eternal salvation, the fulfillment of our highest spiritual hopes, and the ultimate triumph. The "purchase" in this transaction does not imply the actual selling of the life and possessions of Allah's servant to Allah in the literal sense, for Allah is the real Owner of our lives and possessions. We possess nothing of our own to sell and Allah does not need to buy anything because everything already belongs to Him. The transaction only refers to the actions that proceed from the limited free will Allah has given us. In effect, Allah is telling us: "If you voluntarily, and not by compulsion or coercion, acknowledge that your life, your property,

and everything in this world belongs to me and that you are only the trustees of these gifts, and dedicate yourself to doing good and have faith, then, in return, I will give you gardens in the eternal life of the Hereafter." The one who makes this bargain with Allah is a believer, for faith is another name for this bargain. On the other hand, the one who refuses to make this bargain, or after making it, denies having made the bargain, loses both the Here and the Hereafter. (The Qur'an has many references to profitable and ruinous transactions, warning against the foolishness of buying "*the present life at the price of the world to come*" (2:86) Read also (95:4-6) "*Indeed, We created humans in the best form. But We will reduce them to the lowest of the low in Hell, except those who believe and do good. They will have a never-ending reward.*")

Believers are exhorted to spend in the Way of Allah for a multitude of rewards. "*And whenever they spend anything for the sake of Allah, be it little or much ... is recorded in their favor, and Allah will grant them the best reward for all that they do.*" (9:121)

The two concluding verses of this Sura contain such hope and assurance that it can move believers to tears: "*There surely has come to you a messenger from among yourselves. He is concerned by your suffering, anxious for your well-being, and gracious and merciful to the believers. But if they turn away, say, 'Allah is sufficient for me. There is no god worthy of worship except Him. In Him, I put my trust. And He is the Lord of the Mighty Throne.'*" (9:128-129)

Memorizing and reciting from the heart the last two verses of Sura Tauba (9:128-129) can benefit us in innumerable ways.

(Sura Yunus is a Makki Sura)

Sura Yunus (Verses 10:1-109)

In many verses of the Quran, we learn that no prophet was immediately accepted and followed by his people. The only exception was prophet Yunus (AS) and the people of Nineveh: *"For, alas, there has never been any community that attained to faith in its entirety, and thereupon benefited by its faith, except the people of Yunus."* (10:98)

Those who worship false deities or do not believe in a Higher Power are often obsessed with worldly gains. They, and others like them through the ages, are encouraged to observe and contemplate Allah's creation so that their dormant intellectual and spiritual instincts may awaken through knowledge, reflection, and listening. *"It is He Who made the sun to be a shining glory and the moon to be a light of beauty, and measured out stages for her, that you may know the number of years and the count of time. Allah creates these in truth. Thus does He explain His Signs in detail for those who know."* (10:5) *"... Thus do We explain the Signs in detail to those who reflect."* (10:24) *"It is He Who has made you the night that you may rest therein, and the day to make things visible to you. Surely in this are signs for those who listen."* (10:67)

The "know" and the "reflect" in verses (10:5) and (10:24) are relatively easy to grasp but what about "listen" in (10:67)? What do we listen to in the signs in Allah's creation to deepen our faith and enhance our spirituality? We can begin by listening to the sounds of nature. Whose heart has not been moved by the sound of wind rustling the leaves of trees, the music a stream makes after rain, birdsongs filling the dawn sky, waves carrying the roar and the sigh of the sea, the plaintive call of migrating birds? Such audio wonders woven into nature's rhythms transcend language, yet we no longer feel any connection to them and the natural world because we no longer feel ourselves a part of the wider and wilder universe, preferring instead the artificial din of the digital dystopia. Listening to the sounds of the earth can

open our hearts and renew our sense of cosmic belonging and earthly entanglements. We need to learn to listen to our hearts and trust the inner voice that is the center of spirituality and transcendence. As Rumi said: "There is a voice that doesn't use words. Listen."

The link between belief and good deeds - faith and action - is emphasized: "*So that He may reward those who believe and do good deeds*" (10:4) and, "*Those who believe and do good works, their Lord shall guide them through their faith*" (10:9) and, "*For those who do good there is a good reward and more besides.*" (10:26)

The phrase "*Believe and do good*" occurs 61 times in the Quran while "*Do khayr (do good)*" by itself occurs 12 times in the Quran.

A believer is a doer, not an idler, a whiner, a maker of excuses, or a blamer of kismet. Believers are resilient, picking themselves up when life's inevitable challenges knock them to the ground. When we face hardship, we feel helpless and implore Allah for help. Unfortunately, our pleading for Allah's help fades as soon as hardship eases, arrogance replacing humility. The Sura instructs us to be always conscious of Allah's favors to us and to remember Him in both trying and tranquil times. "*When misfortune befalls man, He pleads to Us lying on his side, or sitting, or standing. But as soon as We lift his affliction, he goes on as if he had never sought Our help. Thus their misdeeds are made alluring to the wrongdoers!*" (10:12)

Stories of Prophets Nuh, Hud, Saleh, Shuaib, Musa (AS) and others testify to Allah's justice. The Prophet (s.a.w) is told: "*Generations before you We destroyed when they did wrong. Their messengers came to them with clear signs, but they would not believe. Thus shall We recompense the guilty. Then We made you heirs in the land after them, to see how you would behave!*" (10:13)

The eternal and immutable nature of the Quran is emphasized: *"This Quran is not such as can be produced by other than Allah ... it is a confirmation of revelations that went before it, and a fuller explanation of the Book, wherein there is no doubt, from the Lord of the worlds."* (10:37) When we sincerely strive to understand the Quran, we begin to glimpse its depth, its subtleties, and its ineffable wonder.

The Quran is a healing for whatever ails us and whatever trials and tribulations afflict us. In one such "healing" verse, the Quran tells us, *"O humanity! Indeed, there has come to you a warning from your Lord, a cure for what is in the hearts, a guide, and a mercy for the believers."* (10:57)

In this verse are identified four attributes of the Quran: counsel from Allah, a cure for diseases (including diseases of the heart), guidance and mercy.

Allah forgives until the very end but at the very moment when death strikes, it is too late to repent. This is what happened to Pharaoh. When about to drown, Pharaoh cried, *"I believe that there is no God except whom the children of Israel believe in. I am one of those who submit to Allah in Islam. (It was said to him) Ah now! But a little while before, you were in rebellion ... This day We shall save you in your body that you might be a sign for those who come after you ..."* (10:90-92)

(For perspective, note that Pharaoh as an oppressor is mentioned 74 times in 29 chapters of the Quran. Injustice and oppression and their dire consequences are mentioned over 290 times in the Quran.)

Allah instructs His prophet (s.a.w) to tell people *"not to call on deity other than Allah, who can neither profit you nor hurt you, for if you do, surely you will be of those who do wrong."* (10:106) and *"... those who receive His guidance, do so for the good of their souls. Those who stray, do so to their*

loss. And I (the prophet) am not set over you to arrange your affairs."
(10:108)

(Sura Hud is a Makki Sura)

Sura Hud (Verses 11:1-49)

The Sura opens with a reference to the Quran as a "*Book, whose fundamental verses are well-expressed and explained in detail, from the All-Wise and All-Knowing.*" (11:2)

The Quran takes us from the barren land of shirk to the fertile realm of Tawhid: To worship none but Allah, to seek His forgiveness, and to turn to Him in repentance. Those who are patient, "*do good and humble themselves before their Lord*" (11:23), are promised forgiveness and a great reward.

Of use is the reminder. Stories of Prophets Nuh, Hud, Salih, Musa, and Harun are repeated, each narration containing something new for us to reflect on and act accordingly.

Particularly instructive is the story of Nuh (AS). When the flood threatens to engulf the earth, "*... he said, embark you on the ark in the name of Allah, whether it moves or is at rest! For my Lord is, be sure, Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.*" (11:41)

But Nuh's distress is deep. He implores his son to embark on the ark and not be with the unbelievers. "*The son replied: 'I will betake myself to some mountain. It will save me from the water.'* Nuh said: '*This day nothing can save from the command of Allah, any but those on whom He has mercy!*' *And the waves came between them, and the son was among those overwhelmed in the Flood.*" (10:43)

In anguish, Nuh begs Allah to save his son. "*And Nuh called upon his Lord and said: 'O my Lord! Surely my son is of my family! Your promise is true,*

and You are the best of Judges!" (11:45)

Allah replied: *"O Nuh! He is not of your family, for his conduct is unrighteous. So ask not of Me that of which you have no knowledge. I give you counsel, lest you act like the ignorant!" (11:46)*

Nuh said: *"O my Lord! I do seek refuge with You, lest I ask You for that of which I have no knowledge. And unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I should indeed be lost!" (11:47)*

In several verses in the Quran, we read that *"no bearer of burden can bear the burden of another."* (2:286, 6:164, 17:15, 35:18, 53:38) It is true not only for ordinary mortals but also for prophets. Even a prophet cannot save his child if the child chooses to go astray, yet another example of Divine justice.

© Evergreen Islamic Center, San Jose, CA 95148.

You can forward Taraweeh summaries to family members and friends but please give attribution to Evergreen Islamic Center of San Jose, California.