

Lajna Ta'leem Lesson Plan Outline

Month: October 2017

- Key points from Surah Al Baqarah Fourth Ruku

Verse 31:

- The verse is intended to convey that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is not the first Prophet; others have gone before him and Adam was the first link of the chain. Thus, by making a reference to the ministry of Adam, God removes the doubt agitating the minds of disbelievers about the mission of the Holy Prophet pbuh. It does not matter, if they do not understand his mission; even the angels did not understand the purpose of prophethood at its inception.
- Adam, the progenitor of the present human race, is only the first link in the present cycle, and not the very first man in God's creation.
- The word Khalifa used about Adam in the verse has, a reference to the fact that he was a remnant or successor of the old race and was selected by God to bring into being a new race; it also means a vicegerent of God-an Imam or leader appointed by God to fulfil a special mission.
- The reason why angels have been mentioned in this verse in connection with the mission of Adam is that, as indicated above, one of the functions of the angels is to help the Messengers of God; so whenever a new Prophet is raised in the world, the angels are bidden to serve him by bringing into play the different forces of nature to help his cause.

Verse 32:

- This verse shows that man cannot attain to divine knowledge without a correct conception of God's اسماء or attributes and that this can be taught only by God. So it was necessary that God should have, in the very beginning, given Adam knowledge of His attributes so that man should know and recognise Him and attain His nearness and should not drift away from Him.
- The word اسماء may also mean the qualities of the different things in nature. As man was to make use of the forces of nature, God gave Adam the capacity of knowing their qualities and properties.
- God showed Adam in a kashf (vision) certain human beings from among his progeny who were to be the manifestations of divine attributes in the future. Such beings were the Prophets or other holy persons who were to enjoy such nearness to God as to become His image and through whom God was to reform mankind. The angels were then asked whether they could manifest the divine attributes like them. This is what is meant by the words; Tell Me the names of these, occurring in the present verse.

Verse 33:

- As the angels were conscious of their nature and limitations, they frankly confessed that they were unable to reflect God's attributes as man could do, i.e., they could reflect only such of His attributes as He, in His eternal wisdom, had given them the power of reflecting. Man was a fuller image of God than the angels, or, for that matter, any other created being. Says God: We have created man in the best of constitutions (95: 5).

Verse 34:

- man proved the necessity of a being who might secure from God the faculty of volition or the power of will by means of which he might voluntarily take to righteousness, (or, for that matter, to sinning) and might thereby reveal to the world the glory and the greatness of God.

- The words, and I know what you reveal and what you conceal, mean that God knew which divine attributes the angels manifested in themselves and which they were incapable of manifesting.

Verse 35:

- The word (sajdah) has been used here in the sense of "obedience," and "submission." Thus the verse means that God bade the angels serve Adam, -that is, assist him in his mission.
- been here described as disobeying God, the angels have been described as ever 'submissive' and 'obedient.'
- Iblis is really an attributive name given, on the basis of the root meaning of the word, to the Evil Spirit opposed to the angels.
- Iblis was not the satan spoken of in 2: 37 below is apparent from the fact that the Qur'an mentions the two names side by side, wherever the story of Adam is given, but everywhere a careful distinction is observed between the two i.e. wherever the Qur'an speaks of the being who, unlike the angels, refused to serve Adam, it invariably mentions the name Iblis, and wherever it speaks of the being who beguiled Adam and became the means of his being turned out of **جَنَّة** (garden), it invariably mentions the name 'satan'.
- At yet another place, God says that Iblis was one of the jinn i.e. a secret creation (18: 51). And about the jinn God says: I have created the jinn and men only that they may serve Me. (51 : 57).

Verse 36:

- The word Jannah occurring in this verse does not refer to Heaven or Paradise but simply to the garden-like place where Adam was first made to live.
- The Qur'an makes mention of two kinds of (1) (good tree) and (2) (evil tree) for which see 14 : 25 & 27. Pure things and pure teachings are likened to the former, and impure things and impure thoughts are likened to the later. In the light of these explanations, the verse would mean: (1) that Adam was enjoined to avoid quarrels; (2) that he was warned against evil things, because although the verse does not specify evil or good, yet the prohibition cannot but refer to impure and evil things.
- The concluding clause, lest you be of wrongdoers, means that the result of approaching the prohibited tree would be that Adam would become one of those who do not observe propriety in their actions.

Verse 37:

- The first two clauses of the verse mean that a satanic being enticed Adam and his spouse from the place where they were and thereby deprived them of the comforts they enjoyed. As explained in 2: 35 above, it will be noted that he who beguiled and brought trouble on Adam was Shaitan and not Iblis, who is spoken of as refusing to serve Adam.
- The concluding words of the verse, i.e. for you there is an abode in the earth, also prove that the Qur'an lends no support to the idea of anybody ascending to the heavens alive, for the verse clearly fixes the earth as the life-long abode of man. Thus the Qur'an rejects the idea that Jesus or, for that matter, anybody else ever went up to the heavens alive.
- Iblis is the name given to the Evil Spirit who belonged to the jinn and refused to serve Adam, thereafter becoming the leader of the forces of evil in the universe, the word 'Satan' is used about any evil or harmful being or thing, whether a spirit or a human being or an animal or a disease or any other thing. Thus Iblis is a 'satan;' his comrades and associates are 'satans;' enemies of truth are 'satans;' mischievous men are 'satans' 'injurious animals are 'satans' and harmful diseases are 'satans.'

Verse 38:

- This verse tells us that when 'satan' deceived Adam, and God informed him of his mistake, he prayed to God for forgiveness in words which he learnt from God Himself. These words have been mentioned by the Qur'an elsewhere and they run thus: Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves; and if Thou forgive us not and have not mercy on us, we shall surely be of the lost (7 : 24). This was the prayer that Adam learnt from God. The prayer was heard and Adam was forgiven.
- The fact that God Himself taught Adam the words of this prayer shows that he was a chosen one of God and was a recipient of divine revelation. The verse also tells us that on special occasions God Himself teaches His servants the words in which they should pray to Him.

Verse 39:

- As Adam was to become the progenitor of a great race and the harbinger of a new era, a timely announcement was made to mankind through him that they should be prepared to receive guidance from their God from time to time.
- The verse holds out the promise that among the descendants of Adam there would continue to appear great souls who would invite people to truth and guidance, and that those who followed such holy persons would attain salvation. No fear about the future or regret about the past would trouble them, as they would attain nearness to God and their hearts would be to them a paradise.

Verse 40:

- Along with the glad tidings given in the preceding verse, a warning is issued in the present verse for such people as might reject God's guidance. They will fall into a fire and will never enjoy inward happiness and satisfaction of mind.
- The last clause of the verse, therein they shall abide, does not mean that they will remain in Hell forever. Islam does not believe in the eternity of Hell, but looks upon it as a sort of hospital where men will be sent for treatment and cure. Islam teaches that there will come a time when the dwellers of Hell, after having been cured of their spiritual diseases, will leave it for Heaven (see under 11 : 108, 109). In contrast to this, the reward of Heaven is truly everlasting (11 : 109).